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Egypt

Omar Suleiman – The "Black Box" is Gone



Steven A. Cook

Tales of Omar Suleiman

"On July 19, Suleiman died of a heart attack while undergoing medical tests in a Cleveland hospital. He had been suffering from amyloidosis, a chronic disease related to abnormal protein deposits in tissue that affects the heart and liver, and his sudden passing came as a shock to his enemies and admirers alike. Suleiman's dismissal of reform was just as startling. It wasn't just the sound of his ample fist hitting the faux oak, but because his rejection of the idea was so straightforward" [.....] "Suleiman's death has provoked a sense of satisfaction -- even glee -- among some of the Mubarak regime's opponents. That is understandable, but the happiness is misplaced. He was just the product of a system that has yet to be overturned. Whatever energy is expended celebrating his death is wasted at the expense of building a new political order"

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Louisa Loveluck

Egypt's Intelligence Agency: Emerging from the Shadows

"Suleiman's death may mark the end of a significant chapter in Egypt's history, but the GIS he leaves behind remains a potent force. Regardless of internecine struggles to come, the loss of the Mukhabarat's figurehead will do little to diminish a power that runs far deeper than its public fascia"

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MB's & SCAF Battle Over Power Round 2: Judicial Activism Disease



Arabist

Kritarchy in Cairo

"Now the standoff between the Muslim Brothers and the military is set to be resolved in various court proceedings, rather than through a political consensus. This makes Egypt's activist judges a mirror of the theologians they claim to fear, a kind of wilayat al-faqih of establishment secularists or, more plainly, a kritarchy — a system ruled by judges. A decade ago, the American judge Robert Bork, once a U.S. Supreme Court hopeful, warned that "the rule of law has become confused with — indeed subverted by — by the rule of judges." Judicial activism is sometimes seen to be an especially American disease, but as Bork has also written, "it is a judicial disease, one that knows no boundaries."

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Shadi Hamid

A Democratic Transition in Trouble: the Need for Aid Conditionality in Egypt

"The Muslim Brotherhood has been criticized for running roughshod over the rule of law, leading some to question the group's commitment to the 'separation of powers'. But the very meaning of such a separation is itself contested. Under the Mubarak regime, the executive branch dominated the legislature and the judiciary. In the new Egypt, the old power imbalances persist. Usually, separation of powers assumes an independent judiciary, something that Egypt does not currently have. The judiciary, populated with Mubarak appointees, is part of the old regime and has acted as a virtual

extension of the military. Its decision to effectively dissolve parliament was coordinated with Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). In an interview with the New York Times, Judge Tahani Gabali, deputy president of the Supreme Constitutional Court, admitted she had assisted SCAF – the executive branch – in drafting constitutional provisions that would guarantee the military's ability to intervene in domestic politics. She also advised the ruling military council to indefinitely postpone parliamentary elections. "I knew the elections would bring an [Islamist] majority," she said by way of explanation"

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New PM, Hisham Kandil: The Technocrat

Zeinobia

Morsi appoints Hisham Kandeel as PM

"President Mohamed Morsi has appointed Hisham Kandeel, the minister of irrigation in the cabinets of Sharaf and Ganzoury as Prime minister today. Kandeel is going to meet Morsi shortly to discuss the negotiations about the new cabinet which he should form it in a week according to news sources. Kandeel is the Youngest Prime minister in the history of Modern Egypt and he is also the first Islamist to hold this". He was graduated from faculty of engineering, Cairo University in1984. He got his MA degree and PhD in irrigation and sewage systems from North Carolina Universty and university of Utah"



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Magdi Abdelhadi

Mohamed Morsi's Choice of PM Confirms Egyptian Fears

Morsi, picked a minister from the outgoing cabinet for the post. This being the same cabinet he and his Islamist Justice and Freedom party campaigned against for months, but failed to force from office through a vote of no confidence" [....] "His choice of prime minister is once again a bitter reminder for those who supported the revolution that it is still far from complete, and will remain incomplete as long as the old nomenklatura in the army, the police and the top mandarins keep their chairs. Morsi cannot be

the revolution's president and continue to rely on the old guard. Cohabitation Egyptian style will prove to be a recipe for, at best, crab walk; at worst, paralysis" [.....] "But there are those who believe that Morsi, far from being coerced into making certain choices, is pursuing a deliberate plan. ***He seems to think that they can rule Egypt without dismantling the old machinery – instead he wants to take command of it. If that is indeed what he is trying to do, he will have proven critics of the Muslim Brothers right: they have more in common with Mubarak's old ruling party, the now-dissolved NDP, than they are willing to admit****"*

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Sharif S. Elmusa

Qandil and The Mystique of Technocratic Governments

"The first problem to be resolved in Egypt is the struggle for "power over" between President Morsy and the military and their respective backers. Until this happens, ***the best hope for the country is that the technocrats in the new government would represent a wide spectrum of political forces, and that the media and civil society would keep track of and influence the policies and performance of the government****. Only in this way might Egypt move in the direction that millions of those who took part in the 25 January revolution aspired for"*

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Between Two Revolutions



Mahmoud Salem

January vs. July

"The aim of the July 23rd revolutionaries was to create a strong Egyptian state, and given that they were all military men who witnessed the armies of super powers, they believed that military strength is the only way to make their country into a world power, and acted accordingly. They didn't comprehend that the world powers were world powers not because they had advanced armies, but because their state had other foundations (social, political, cultural, economic) that made them strong and contributed to the strength of their military, and that without those foundations any state would be doomed to fail the way theirs did over and over again. This is why the ***January 25th revolutionaries believe in their heart of hearts that their revolution came to end the July 23rd revolution –***

***because the values of these two revolutions are in complete contradiction**."*

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Salamamoussa

The UnEgyptians

"The last century in Egyptian history is book-ended by the dual revolutions of 1919 and 2011. The first had its cry of "Egypt for the Egyptians" and the second had a subtle variation on that "The Egyptians are here". It is universally accepted that Egypt is the oldest nation state and has one of the most clearly delineated national characters"

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Syria

The Baathist Ideology Need To Be Revised



Hassan Hassan

Taint of Baathist Ideology has Poisoned Syria For Too Long

"There are many religious extremists who choose not to fight; others who choose to fight are not religious. The Baathist ideology has exploited sentiments - cultural, economic, social and sometimes religious - to incite violence for political gain. As a radical ideology that requires complete social, political and cultural transformation, there is an inevitable propensity for violence. Despite the Baathist regime's brutality in Syria, some intellectuals still argue that these acts of violence are anomalies. Is it chance that the Baathist rulers - Saddam Hussain, Hafez Al Assad and his son - all shelled cities, terrorized, tortured and killed their people? ***This ideology needs to be understood if its legacy is to be rejected. It is not enough for the regime to fall"***

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Is Brigadier General Manaf Tlass The Next President?

Huffington Post

Manaf Tlass, Defected Assad Confidant, Seeks Syrian Unity

*"Brig. Gen. Manaf Tlass, who has been described as a former close confidant of President Assad, defected in early July and is now in Saudi Arabia, where he told the Al-Sharq Al-Awsat daily that he does not see a future for Syria with his former friend at the helm."I will try and help as much as I can to unite all the honorable people inside and outside Syria to put together a roadmap to get us out of this crisis, whether there is a role for me or not," he said" [....] "**The meeting in Doha will focus on forming a transitional administration that could step in as a stopgap government if rebel forces topple Assad. It marks the most comprehensive bid to bring together various Syrian opposition groups and show world leaders a credible alternative to Assad**"*

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Jadaliyya

My 50 Minutes with Manaf

"On July 24, after leaving Syria some 12 days prior, Manaf Tlass for the first time announced his opposition to the regime that he embodied, as though its transgressions had begun in March 2011. And the external "opposition" benevolently embraced him, as did the Saudis, who admitted Manaf to their kingdom for the 'umra'"

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Mike Giglio

Syrian Rebel Leader Mustafa al-Sheikh Says Victory Against Assad Not in Sight

*"**The general who heads the Free Syrian Army says his forces are dangerously divided and underfunded, al Qaeda is gaining a foothold in the conflict, and a major win that could topple the regime, like seizing Aleppo,** is still out of reach" [....] "Those pushing Western governments to play a greater role in Syria often contend that failing to do so invites extremist groups to fill the void. "Extremist groups, al Qaeda-plus and all, are definitely in Syria," says James Prince, founder and president of the Democracy Council. "We need to learn from similar lessons in Iraq, Afghanistan and Egypt and not leave democracy activists fighting for their own freedoms swinging in the wind."*

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EANewsFeed

US Promoting General Tlass as Transitional Leader



"Efforts to find a transitional figure who is palatable to the Assad regime's Russian backers and leading Arab states, as well as to the opposition, have taken on added urgency as rebel fighters make gains in major Syrian cities and more high-level officials defect" [...] "The officials said Gen. Tlass is one of the few figures in opposition to the regime who could potentially help restore order in Damascus and secure Syria's vast chemical-weapons stockpile" [.....] "unlike the Assad clan, a Sunni Muslim—which Western officials hope could make him acceptable as a transitional figure to the country's rebel fighters and opposition leaders, who are also largely from the Sunni sect of Islam"

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Syria as a Jihadist Magnet & FSA's Responsibilities



Juan Cole

Free Syrian Army Controls Border Areas

"Free Syria exists along Syria's borders with Turkey and Iraq. The Free Syrian Army, somewhat to my surprise, is beginning to take and hold territory, acting more like a conventional army than like a guerrilla movement. Admittedly, the territory is in the boondocks" [....] "The refugee problem is growing by leaps and bounds. Thousands of Syrians are said to be streaming into Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. (Jordan has maintained its open border policy and is setting up camps for the Syrians, contrary to what I mistakenly reported yesterday [note to self: twitter is unreliable if not corroborated]. Even before the recent, dramatic events, the UNHCR was reporting that the number of refugees seeking assistance had tripled since April, to 120,000. If the regime and the fighting are emptying out Damascus, that number could easily grow by a factor of 10"

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Iyad El-Baghdadi

I want to close this where I started - my year-long warning that #Syria can become a Jihadist magnet...

For #Syria to become a Jihadist magnet two things are required: attraction & opportunity.

The attraction factor isn't lacking with enough bloody footage to recruit any sufficiently passionate/gullible young Muslim. #Syria

The opportunity however is recent - significant areas beyond regime control so Jihadist groups can slip in.

In fact, with regime control shrinking, Jihadists can not just slip in but actually set up shop and start operating. #Syria

To avoid this, both the #FSA and the world at large have responsibilities. The FSA must become more organized and centralized. #Syria

To avoid this, both the #FSA and the world at large have responsibilities. The FSA must become more organized and centralized. #Syria

The #FSA should also attempt some form of local governance in liberated areas, even if by the residents themselves. #Syria

Finally the #FSA must make a clear stand against any opportunistic groups attempting to establish their own command in #Syria

If the #FSA is lousy & disorganized enough, such groups may be able to organize and operate in liberated #Syria.

However if the #FSA organizes and centralizes, and a credible provisional government is formed, things won't get that bad. #Syria

As for the rest of the world, they must first realize the risks involved if #Syria devolves into a sectarian civil war.

If #Syria devolves into civil war it will spread to Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq; Jordan & Israel will suffer as well.

If #Syria or part of it become a Jihadi Salafi safe haven, the risk won't be contained to Syria or even the Middle East alone.

I strongly believe that a major factor that made the world intervene in #Libya was to avoid it becoming a Jihadist magnet/safe haven. #Syria

With the mix of regime Migs, Jihadis, FSA gains & chemical weapons, I think a #Libya-style intervention in #Syria can be back on the table.

The worst outcome in #Syria would be a sectarian civil war. The best would be a totally peaceful, #Tahrir-style revolution.

However, right from the start we said that in #Syria we're not looking for the best option but for the least bad exit.

Let's not kid ourselves - #Syria under Assad will not have a Tahrir square. That ship as long sailed.

The least we can do, then, is make sure the worst of the worst outcomes (sectarian civil war) is avoided. Syria

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Heading Towards Temporary Partition



Bassem Sabry

Is Syria Heading Towards Temporary Partition, a Green Line?

"There are a few scenarios being floated already. Quickly: one assumes ***Assad uses the remainder of his firepower and Shabbiha to attempt to crush the FSA "at any cost," another even imagines the regime using chemical weapons to literally obliterate the resistance and - by extension - scores of citizens as well. Others assume the FSA would somehow win, whether through a continued series of assassinations that would wipe out regime figures, and/or high-ranking defections, possibly even an eventual coup.*** *There is another scenario, very outlandish, but one that I wanted to throw out into the ether for the sake of pseudo-intellectual banter" [.....] "If that - in turn - happens, one of two possibilities then could take place. This first would be that one side eventually pushes towards the other, if the situation allows for it. The second would be that a standoff ensues, with two governments ruling different parts of Syria, a modified North-South Korea situation that is likely to last a much shorter amount of time than its Korean counterpart, but still remain for some considerable time, until a permanent settlement is reached or imposes itself"*

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Kurdish Liberation Movement & Liberated Cities

Rudaw

Kurdish Liberation Movement in Syria Continues Despite Criticism

"Following the withdrawal of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces from a number of Kurdish areas, more than six towns were declared liberated, including Kobane, Efrin, Amude, Derek, Girke Lege and Dirbesiye. The Kurdish flag was raised on government buildings in these areas. But the Kurdish liberation movement has been criticized by both Kurdish and Arab politicians" [...] "In a press conference on Monday, Abdulbasit Sieda, a prominent Kurdish politician and president of the Syrian National Council (SNC), accused some Kurdish factions – particularly the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the KNC – of cooperating with the Syrian regime in order to take over Kurdish parts of Syria"

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Liberated Kurdish Cities in Syria Move into Next Phase

*Syrian governmental forces have retreated from the Kurdish regions of Syria without a fight; the liberated cities are now being ruled evenly by the People's Council of Syrian Kurdistan (PYD) and the Kurdish National Council (KNC)" [.....] "**The Free Syrian Army (FSA) is present in many parts of Syria, but not in the Kurdish regions**. "There is a sort of agreement between KNC and SNC. The FSA will not come to the Kurdish regions and the Kurds will not go the Arabic regions"*

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"Kurdish Spring": A Turkish Angle



HÜSNÜ MAHALLİ

Turkish Intervention in Syria: Two Birds with One Stone

Turkey is contemplating creating a buffer zone inside Syrian territories and is using the excuse of Kurdish control south of its border to justify military intervention, perhaps with Western support. *Erdogan explained that Turkey "has not and will not stand idle concerning the developments in northern Syria." It will take the necessary measures to tackle any threat from that region.He maintained that creating a buffer zone or security strip in those areas is one of the alternatives proposed for discussion in the Turkish government to counter any provocation from Syrian Kurds*

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ERTUĞRUL ÖZKÖK

The Arab Spring has transformed into the Kurdish Spring

"From now on we have a 1,200 kilometer long border with the Kurds. If you look at the map, you will see another reality. On this side of the border, at least 800 to 900 kilometers long, the Kurdish population of Turkey is residing. This means: The "Kurdish Spring" has arrived at our border. To counter a "spring charge" launched by Kurds, based on the de facto situation in the two neighboring countries, we should respond with a serious policy, one that is backed by the whole of Turkey, not by the fantasies of an academic. I might have oversimplified the matter, but the realities facing us are that simple..."

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MURAT YETKİN

Changes in Turkey's Borders?

"Concern about the rise of the PYD (Democratic Union Party) caused Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan to convene an emergency meeting in Ankara with his top security and foreign policy team members. Another matter of concern to Ankara was the fact that some of the Syrian Kurdish militants in Syria have been sheltered and trained by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq, while the KRG's leader Masoud Barzani has promised Erdoğan that he will convince the PKK (based in his territory) to give up its "armed struggle" against Turkey. The government is going to take some "additional measures" against the PKK presence along the Turkish borders with Syria and Iraq, according to a statement issued following the meeting" [.....] Following the instability of borders in regions northwest and northeast of Turkey, now the Arab Spring has caused instabilities on Turkey's southern and southeastern borders, which consist mostly of straight lines drawn in the sand by Mr. Sykes and Mr. Picot according to their strategic value as determined by energy resources. As the territorial integrity of Syria and Iraq is in greater jeopardy with every passing day, the borders become more unstable and the Kurds arise as independent actors in regional politics"

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Barçın Yinanç

Barzani's Kurdish initiative in Syria takes Turkey by surprise

*"**Ankara was caught off guard when Iraqi Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani began cooperating with Kurds in northern Syria who are affiliated with Kurdish militants in Turkey**. Turkey became uneasy after the coalition between Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) President Barzani and the Democratic Union of Kurdistan (PYD), which is close to the outlawed Kurdistan People's Party (PKK), took control of several northern Syrian districts along Turkey's southern border" [.....] "The Syrian administration is annoyed by Turkey's involvement with the developments in Syria. It wanted to demonstrate the consequences of [this behavior] to Ankara. Actually, Turkey had asked Syria to improve the rights of the Syrian Kurds. In fact, Turkey was siding with the Syrian Kurds against the Bashar al-Assad regime. Syria took a reverse act and tried to score against Turkey by strengthening the PKK against other Kurdish groups. The Syrian administration dropped a crisis into Turkey's lap by leaving certain areas [in the country] to the coalition"*

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Fazel Hawramy

Kurds Must Feel Included in the Syrian Opposition

"A few days before last week's attack that killed four of Assad's top aides in Damascus, the main Syrian Kurdish groups – the Kurdish National Councils (KNC) and the Democratic Union party (PYD) – signed an important agreement in Erbil to set up a Supreme Kurdish Council to co-ordinate their efforts. They agreed to form a popular defence force consisting mainly of Kurdish Syrian soldiers who have defected to Iraqi Kurdistan since the uprising began in March last year. These soldiers are being retrained in military camps funded by the oil-rich KRG and are preparing to enter the Kurdish areas in Syria to defend towns such as Kobani (Ayn al-Arab) that are in the hands of the Kurdish activists" [.....] "The insistence of SNC members to retain the word "Arab" in the official name of the country – the "Syrian Arab Republic" – has been one of the main stumbling blocks for the Kurds to trust the SNC as their legitimate voice in a post-Assad Syria"

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"Alawistan"



Katie Paul

Syria's Alawite Refuge

*"**The most likely scenario**, **Abi Ali says, is that rebel forces would concentrate on Daraa, Deir al-Zour, the Homs-Idlib corridor, and rural areas around Aleppo and Damascus, while government forces could continue to hold Aleppo, Damascus, and the coastal areas**. As the capabilities of the two sides equalize, fighting would gradually progress into conventional warfare, with much of the Alawi civilian population forced toward the coast."[.....]"Alawi elites are divided on the future of the coastal mountains, seeing little choice but to fight for control of the entire country. According to one high-ranking Alawi general in Homs with direct knowledge of the thinking in Damascus, the regime leadership is not formulating any plans for separation. At the same time, he says, the demographic changes are happening organically on their own, driven by the violence in central Syria and fear of the unknown in Damascus. He has already sent his own family coastward, citing the area's security and environment as "suitable for us."*

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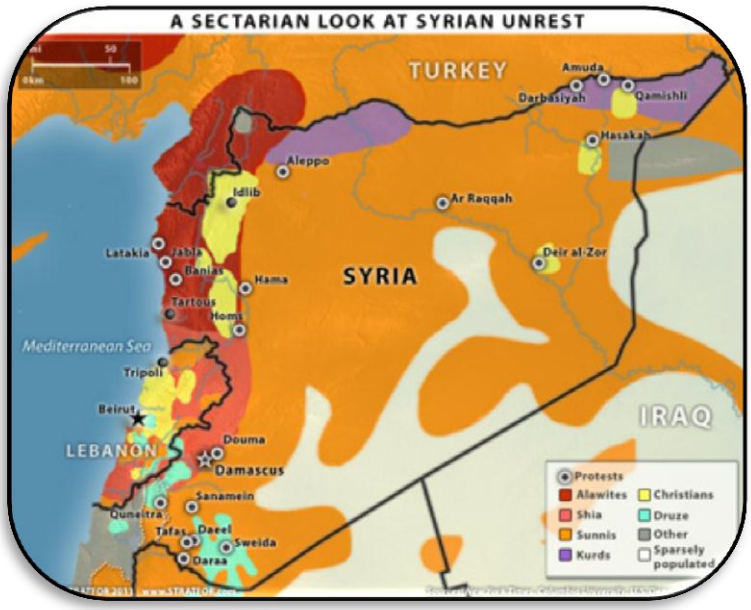
Tony Badran

Alawistan

"As heavy fighting rages on in the cities of Damascus and Aleppo, the regime is losing control over the Syrian interior and the Kurdish northeast. The predominantly Sunni areas of Syria are falling from Assad's grasp, and there is no realistic way for him to reassert his authority there. But Assad has one card left to play: ***The Syrian regime has been setting the stage for a retreat to Syria's coastal mountains, the traditional homeland of the Assads' Alawite sect, for months now. It is now clear that this is where the Syrian conflict is headed****. Sooner or later, Assad will abandon Damascus"[.....]"Some will argue that an Alawite enclave is unviable in the long-term, but Assad has an insurance policy to protect his retreat. As the Assad regime just reminded the world, it possesses a large stockpile of chemical weapons. While most observers are worried about Assad passing these weapons along to third-party actors like Hezbollah, he is more likely to hold on tightly to them. These weapons are his last remaining and most formidable deterrent against his Sunni foes, and precious leverage to guarantee the quiescence of the outside world"*



[Read More]



Joshua Landis

Five Reasons Why There Will Not Be an Alawite State

"Many opposition figures and journalists insist that the Alawites are planning to fall back to the Alawite Mountains in an attempt to establish a separate state. This is unconvincing. Here are the top five reasons why there will not be an Alawite State"

1. *The Alawites have tried to get out of the mountains and into the cities. Assad's Syria further accelerated the urbanization of the Alawites as they were admitted into universities in large numbers and found jobs in all the ministries and national institutions for the first time.*

2. *The Assads planned to solve the sectarian problem in Syria by integrating the Alawites into Syria as "Muslims." They promoted a secular state and tried to suppress any traditions that smacked of a separate "Alawite" identity.*

3. *Assad has done nothing to lay the groundwork for an Alawite state.*

4. *No country would recognize the Alawite state.*

5. *Most importantly, an Alawite state is indefensible. Alawite shabbiha and brigades of Special Forces may fall back to the Alawite Mountains when Damascus is lost.*

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The Palestinians Turning against Assad



Budour

The Myth of Palestinian Neutrality in Syria

"The Palestinian political elite in Syria have been divided. Some factions have desperately attempted to appear neutral, distancing themselves from the unrest. Others, such as Ahmad Jibril's PFLP-GC, Fatah al-Intifada, and the Palestinian-Baathist militia al-Sa'iqa, have actively supported the regime, bolstering its propaganda campaigns and crushing civil dissent inside the camps" [....] "It is both painfully ironic and incredibly moving that Yarmouk, built to host ethnically cleansed Palestinians, has now turned into a safe haven for Syrians fleeing the shelling on Tadamon and Midan; that UNRWA schools became shelters in the last few days; and that Palestinian residents of the camp have donated mattresses, meals and medicine for their wounded Syrian neighbors. These acts of solidarity have been beacons of inspiration amid the endless cycle of violence and grief that has descended upon Syria"

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The Druse Start to Turn against Assad



Blake Sobczak

Golan Druse start to turn against Syria's Assad

"In Druse villages close enough to hear the fighting, families and friends are divided between backers of the revolt and supporters of the regime. A Druse doctor predicted his people would demand Assad's downfall, while a butcher in a nearby town denounced the Syrian uprising as a foreign conspiracy" [.....] ""Most of the people here cannot distinguish between Assad and their homeland. They are looking to him as the face of the homeland and waiting for him to liberate us from the (Israeli) occupation," said Ali Abu Awad, a doctor in the village of Bukata. "But these days, when they can see what Assad is doing there, the big lie has started to fall. I think they will demand the fall of Assad"

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Lebanon

#Sidon: Al-Assir Burning Tires



Naharnet

Seeking Pacification in Sidon after Rival Demos, Unrest

"On Friday, angry protestors blocked Sidon's al-Murjan roundabout with burning tires to reject the sit-in launched by al-Asir on the city's eastern highway against Hizbullah's arms" [.....]"Dozens of businesses have suffered financially from the sit-in, which the Salafist cleric has said would be open ended until his demands to find a solution to Hizbullah's arsenal are met"



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The Syrian Opposition in Lebanon



Ziad Al-Zaatari

Syrian Fighters and the Lebanese Coffee Break

"Syrian opponents of the regime have become accustomed to residing in Lebanon. Although they accuse the intelligence agencies of going after them, they generally move about freely, except in a few areas. Many consider parts of the country to be a support base for the "Syrian Revolution" [....] "Despite the support already afforded to these groups, any restraint they observed in Lebanon ended with the incident involving the arrest of Shadi al-Mawlawi and his release under popular and political pressure. That signaled the start of a new phase for the Syrian opposition in Lebanon: one of "political immunity", in which Lebanese security agencies would not be allowed to arrest any Syrian activists, no matter what their activities entailed"

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Saudi Arabia

The Salafi's The MB's & "Bandar Bush"



Aaron Y. Zelin

Democracy, Salafi Style

*Salafis -hardline conservatives who model their lives on Prophet Mohamed and the first three generation of Muslim leaders following his death - are setting aside years of theological opposition to democracy to participate in the political game. This sea change was driven home earlier this week when Saudi Salafi heavyweight Sheikh Salman al-Awdah took to his Twitter feed and Facebook page to proclaim: **"Democracy might not be an ideal system, but it is the least harmful, and it can be developed and adapted to respond to local needs and circumstances."** Although Awdah notably made his announcement on his English and not Arabic social media platforms, where his audience numbers in the millions rather than the tens of thousands, the sentiment is*



still positively Churchillian - echoing as it does the late British prime minister's maxim: "It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried" [....]"Awdah's remarks highlight an important ideological shift within the Salafi movement over the past year and a half. It suggests that the United States should continue to pursue a policy that helps and encourages the emerging Arab democracies to open up so that individuals within them can shape their own futures. Salafis are poised to become key political players in the new Middle East, and should be given the space to continue their ideological evolution"

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Sultan Al Qassemi

Morsy to Renew the Brotherhood-Saudi Relationship

"President Mohamed Morsy's visit to Saudi Arabia last week was a success. The fact that the visit even took place is major for the Muslim Brotherhood, an organization that suffered under deposed President Hosni Mubarak and had been regarded with suspicion by the latter's allies in Riyadh"[.....] " According to Saudi reports, ***about 1.6 million Egyptians live and work in the kingdom, making it the largest concentration of Egyptian expats in the world and, therefore, a significant voting block****. Morsy promised the Egyptian expats there a host of economic concessions and appointed a presidential adviser for expatriate affairs"[.....]"on the economic front, Saudi's much-needed aid started to make its way to Egypt immediately after the first visit by senior Brotherhood officials to the kingdom back in May. Additionally, presidential spokesperson Yasser Ali said the* ***Saudis agreed to increase both Saudi investments that are estimated to reach US$27 billion, and the number of work visas issued to Egyptians workers****"*

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Al-Monitor

New Saudi Intelligence Chief Appointed in Surprise Move

"Royal Order A/161 instructed "the appointment of Prince Muqrin as advisor and special envoy of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, with the rank of minister," and "the appointment of Prince Bandar as head of the GID." Bandar will



also retain his position as Secretary General of the National Security Council with the rank of minister" [.....] "Bandar is close to the political and diplomatic circles in Washington, where he worked as an ambassador for his country for 22 years. He is also one of the key engineers of the arms deals signed by his country during the last two decades. Given the size of US influence in the kingdom, such a serious move cannot be overlooked"

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Libya

The Defeated Islamists



Omar Ashour

Libya's Defeated Islamists

The question remains: what happened to the Islamists? They spearheaded the opposition to Qaddafi, were advised by their Tunisian and Egyptian brethren, and larded their rhetoric with religious symbolism in a conservative Muslim country. For many, however, this was not enough"[.....] "Libya's Islamists could not unite in a coalition as large as that of Mahmoud Jibril, the former prime minister under the National Transitional Council, who heads the NFC. Instead, their votes were divided between several parties, six of which are significant. But another reason for the strong "liberal" turnout is the "blood" factor. A third reason for the Islamists' defeat had to do with their campaign rhetoric. "It is offensive to tell me that I have to vote for an Islamic party," Jamila Marzouki, an Islamic studies graduate, told me. Marzouki voted liberal, despite believing that Islam should be the ultimate reference for Libyan laws. "In Libya, we are Muslims. They can't take away my identity and claim that it's only theirs."

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Elected members of the National Congress by Constituency

The Full List



Libya Business News

It's Over to You, Dr Jibril

"In a race involving 374 party lists, Dr Jibril's alliance won just under 50 per cent of the 80 seats reserved for parties alone. But he won an even greater percentage of the votes cast, 62 per cent, and it is reckoned that he would

have won more seats had his alliance contested every available district. The second-placed party, identified with the Muslim Brotherhood, obtained 21.3% of the vote" [....] "The challenge before Dr Jibril, his adversaries and their successors is to create a democracy in unprecedented circumstances. If Western observers want to be able to follow the events as they unfold, we must stop assuming that Libya's politics can be mainstream"



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Umar Khan

Elections in Libya —The Surprises

"After subsequent predictions that Jibril's National Forces Alliance (NFA) would therefore gain a majority in the 200-seat congress, the picture that is emerging in regard to the 120 seats reserved for individual candidates is rather different. Candidates linked to other parties and genuine independents appear to have won the majority there" [.....] "The NFA is likely to remain as a separate bloc in the congress, as their call for the grand coalition has not found any support among other parties, at least not yet. With the other parties working to form the "nationalist" alliance and NFP's decision not to join any coalition it will be hard to establish the majority in the first elected congress of Libya"

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Morocco

Morocco Reforms & Feb20s Rise and Fall



Ibnkafka

Morocco Reforms: Criminalizing Dissent

"The pro-democracy February 20 Movement continues to experience a steady decline in numbers, and analysts are already forecasting the movement's "fall." Yet, the recent July 22 protest and the regime's swift repression and crackdown on activists indicate that while the movement may have declined, its core, however small, remains persistent and is considered a nuisance by the regime. The Casablanca judge's decision to

*charge the activists for associating with an "illegal movement" indicates a sharp deviation from the regime's limited tolerance of the movement. While the former communications minister, Khalid Naciri, employed harsh words in describing the movement, no regime official had ever described it as "illegal." [.....]"**By criminalizing the movement, the regime has indicated that its commitment to democratization is nothing more than well-crafted PR-talk aimed at molding an image of stability and content for outsiders**. Times are certainly changing for the only kingdom in North Africa – but not for the better"*

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Ahmed Benchemsi

Feb20s Rise and Fall: A Moroccan Story

"At the time of writing (March 2012), the freshly appointed Benkirane cabinet still enjoys a honeymoon with the people. This may last a few more months, maybe a year. But then what? The sources of the 2011 revolt are still in place. Corruption, a major factor for discontent, is at peak level. Morocco's position on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index has been worsening for years, going from 52nd in 2002 to 80th in 2011. Unemployment is also higher than ever, especially among university graduates (the official rate is 19% in 2011 (39)). Given the depth of these problems and the profound structural reforms that they require, the odds are small that Mr. Benkirane and his government assuage popular anger quickly enough. With months passing and the economy degrading, in the absence of democratic freedoms developed enough to act like a safety valve, serious street protesting is likely to resume. The question is whether the next round of popular anger will be channeled; and if so, by whom and whether or not this will be done properly to seize the momentum and maintain it while exerting efficient—and this time, focused—pressure on the Makhzen. The PJD cannot play that mobilizing role anymore, now that it has been closely associated to the Makhzen. The remaining activist movements that can do the channeling are Al Adl Wal Ihsan or, maybe, a reformed Feb20-like coalition—provided Morocco's democratic and secular activists learn lessons from the 2011 fiasco and manage to build a real grassroots movement with an identified and appealing agenda.Will this ever happen? The answer depends on the ability of Morocco's liberals to overcome their divisions, build effective unity and rally behind legitimate national leaders—ones who are able to balance charisma and strong convictions with political wit and strategic finesse. That such people exist, however, is yet to be proven"

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