



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

PREVENTION

PREVENTION NEWSLETTER

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MISSION

The USIP's Center for Conflict Management (CCM) designs and manages the Institute's efforts to *prevent* the initial outbreak of violent conflict, *resolve* ongoing conflicts, and *stabilize* areas emerging from conflict. The Center also conducts research, identifies best practices, and develops new tools for conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

CALENDAR

March 10: 4th USIP-Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU) Washington Workshop.

March 20: Second Round of Presidential Elections in Haiti (tentative)

March 24: Summit of the European Council

March 27: Local Elections in Chad (tentative)

March: The UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon is expected to finalize and issue indictments.

March-April: U.S. assistance to Lebanon could be hotly debated as bi-partisan concern over the direction of Lebanon's new government mounts.

April 9: Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Nigeria.

April: Pakistan and Indian Foreign Secretaries' meeting (tentative).

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Dear Colleagues,

In the aftermath of the dramatic developments in the Arab world, I would like to note some of our past and future conflict prevention related work. For more than three years, our former Muslim World Initiative focused on problems of political reform and power sharing in the Arab world through an innovative *Arab Political Oppositions Project*. The Project highlighted the ways that leaders of political parties, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations, and official bodies in the Arab world have, or have not, mobilized support for a common vision of political reform. We also convened dialogues in Cairo, including participants from a new generation of political leaders, aimed at preventing low-level ideological conflicts in the Muslim world from escalating into violence. Our new Project on *Conflict, Democracy and Security* expands and extends our previous work on political reform, conflict prevention, and security.

The crisis in Egypt also sparked debates about the role of early warning in preventing conflict and instability. A challenging but critical way to improve early warning is to anticipate triggers that will plunge countries at risk into crisis. We are supporting new research on triggers with the goal of helping policymakers to design strategies to anticipate and manage triggering events.

Finally, I am pleased to let you know that USIP's second annual Conflict Prevention conference will be held on June 1, 2011 at our new headquarters on the national mall. The conference is designed for both scholars and practitioners in the conflict prevention field. The goals of the conference are to spotlight the importance of conflict prevention, address specific challenges facing conflict prevention efforts, and identify priority areas for USIP's future work on conflict prevention. About 150 leading policymakers, scholars, and leaders of NGOs participated in the inaugural conference last year, and we are aiming for as large, or even a larger, number of participants this year. I hope you will note this upcoming event in your calendars. We will send out further conference details in due course.

Abiodun Williams

Vice President

Center for Conflict Management



SPOTLIGHT

Uncertain Transitions in the Middle East



Crowd in Midan El-Tahrir during the 2011 Egyptian protests.

Source: Essam Sharaf (own work) at Wikimedia Commons.

It is far too early to conclude that the momentous events that have rocked a good part of the political order in Egypt and Tunisia will lead to democratic revolutions in either country, and/or to similar dynamics in the wider Arab world and Iran. Indeed, the violent reaction of authorities to the public protests which erupted in Algeria, Bahrain, Iran, Yemen and even Libya suggest that the one lesson that regimes are drawing from recent events is that they must nip protests in the bud, either by force or by persuasion. For now the emphasis is on force and repression, but we have also seen regime efforts in Jordan, Yemen and the West Bank Palestinian arena to preempt challenges to regime authority. In Yemen, President Saleh has promised that he will not seek yet another term after decades of rule, while in Jordan King Abdullah has dismissed his cabinet and appointed Marouf al-Bakhit to lead a new government, one whose mission will be to pursue “genuine political reforms.” While the Jordanian opposition has responded cautiously to this move, no opposition movement, including the Islamic Action Front, has questioned the authority of King Abdullah himself. Indeed, by positioning themselves above the political fray, some monarchs seem better positioned than party-linked strong-men presidents (such as the former presidents Ben Ali and Mubarak) to manage the political tremors emanating from Tunisia and Egypt. Thus, for example, Morocco’s King Hassan remains the *Amir al Mumineen* (Commander of the Faithful) over a liberalized autocracy whose basic institutions remain intact, in part through the king’s use of patronage networks in the country-side.

This efficacy of this kind of preemptive strategy will depend, not merely on local economic and political conditions, but also on the degree of success that democratic opposition forces in Egypt and Tunisia manifest as they endeavor to push military establishments to institute genuine democratic institutions, constitutions and laws. In both cases, and in particular Egypt, where military rule depended in no small part on the extensive role of the military in state-owned businesses, and on the military’s close relationship with the official political establishment, it is far from clear how much real power the military is ready to give up. Moreover, after decades of autocratic rule, we really do not know where the balance of power and influence lies in the myriad of groups that constitute the complex societies of both Tunisia and Egypt. While in both countries young, secular leaders and their followers played a leading role in the democratic opposition, it remains to be seen whether Nahda in Tunisia, and now the Muslim Brethren in Egypt (which has just established its own political party), will be ready or even more so capable of mobilizing support for a pluralistic political agenda. Indeed, in Egypt, where half of the 82 million population is rural, and much of that illiterate, the battle over the country-side may help to determine which groups will mobilize in favor of which kind of agenda. With presidential elections scheduled in six months, and the possibility of parliamentary elections to follow thereafter, the question is whether democratic forces (non Islamist or Islamist) will organize and project influence – especially beyond the cities. For this to happen, these forces will have to overcome divisions within their own ranks, and compel the military to take the young leaders of the April 6 movement and their impatient allies seriously. Whether democratization becomes a vehicle of intensified conflict, or advances reconciliation, negotiation and peaceful transition, remains to be seen.

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OVER THE HORIZON— HIGHLIGHTS

Pakistan

We have yet again been reminded of the fragility of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. On January 27, Raymond Davis, an officer at the U.S. Consulate in Lahore, shot and killed two Pakistanis, allegedly in self defense while a third bystander was killed, reportedly by a speeding Consulate car. The episode quickly escalated into a major diplomatic row and also led to the postponement of the high profile U.S.-Pakistan-Afghanistan trilateral meeting scheduled for February 23-24. Regardless of the outcome of this particular row, it will have lasting implications in terms of exacerbating the mutual mistrust between the two sides. The Pakistani media and populace see this as a vindication of some of the conspiracy theories surrounding American clandestine presence in Pakistan; at the very least, the episode will prove counterproductive to the U.S. public diplomacy agenda in the short term. The episode also highlights the clout of the Pakistani media and civil society in terms of constraining the Pakistani government's space. It may be a sign of the kind of difficulties the two governments may face in implementing tough, unpopular decisions even if they see them in their mutual interest. While this should not be construed as an imminent rupture, it certainly does suggest that the partnership will be put to similar tests in the future.

Keeping in mind the tenuous and oscillatory nature of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship, USIP's Pakistan program continues to conduct research and programmatic activities aimed at furthering conflict prevention objectives. Among other activities, the Pakistan program has been focusing on 'black swan' events that risk creating fresh tensions between the two sides. We recently examined U.S. options vis-à-vis Pakistan in case a future terrorist attack on U.S. soil is traced back to Pakistan. The program's outreach strives to enhance mutual understanding between the two sides and to provide U.S. policy makers with fresh analyses on Pakistan.

Korean Peninsula

In early 2011, Seoul and Pyongyang took initial steps to revive attempts to reunite families separated during the Korean War and restart inter-Korean military talks. Efforts on both fronts collapsed when North Korean military officials walked out of a meeting with their South Korean counterparts on February 9 in Panmunjom, the "truce village" located along the demilitarized zone. Following North Korean provocations and the dangerous escalation of tensions on the Korean Peninsula in 2010, these talks were held amid pressure from Beijing and Washington to reopen inter-Korean dialogue. China and the United States deemed the improvement in inter-Korean relations as an important step towards reinitiating the stalled Six-Party Talks.

However, following the North Korean military delegation's refusal to accept responsibility for the sinking of the South Korean warship the Cheonan in March, the likelihood of a modest thawing of relations appears low. This puts Beijing in a difficult position as chair of the Six-Party Talks. During President Hu Jintao's state visit to Washington, the two countries acknowledged that they had to cooperate more closely in order to bring North Korea back to the negotiating table. The afterglow of a successful state visit is fading as a result of China's refusal to refer North Korea's uranium enrichment program to the UN Security Council. China



A look at South Korea from the North at the Demilitarized Zone in Panmunjom.

Source: Gilad Rom at Wikimedia Commons.



has stated that it believes this matter is best dealt with in the Six-Party Talks. 2011 is off to a poor start on the Korean Peninsula.

Iran

Iran and the P5+1 held another round of nuclear negotiations on January 22-23 in Istanbul. These talks over Iran's nuclear program failed to produce any new developments. In the past, failure was largely underwritten by the United States' insistence that Iran halt its nuclear enrichment as a precondition to further talks, something Iran refused to do. In Istanbul, however, Iran demanded the suspension of all sanctions against the country and recognition of Iran's enrichment rights under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The history of talks suggests that ultimately both sides object to the other's demands as prerequisites rather than potential ends for talks; thus, preventing any movement on the issue.

The events in Egypt also caused a stir in Iran. The two countries have not had diplomatic relations since 1979. Hence, a new regime, sympathetic to Iran, could signal a shift in regional dynamics. Iran's political elite expressed support for the popular uprisings in Egypt, attributing them to an "Islamic Awakening" initially inspired by the 1979 Iranian Revolution. But Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei also stated that Iran would not meddle in Egyptian affairs, a decision perhaps stemming from the government's fear that such meddling could give justification for the external support of opposition movements inside Iran.

On the other hand, members of Iran's opposition Green Movement—who have been harshly suppressed by the regime's security forces since 2009, when trying to stage similar protests—said that it was the Green Movement that had inspired the movement for change in Egypt. Opposition leaders Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi asked the government for a permit to peacefully march on February 14 as a statement of solidarity with the Egyptian people. They were denied the permit, yet thousands of protestors still marched the streets while the opposition leaders themselves were put under house arrest.

Lebanon

A series of developments deepened Lebanon's ongoing crisis around the United Nations Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL). The court was established in May 2007 to prosecute suspects in the February 14, 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. On January 12, the Lebanese government collapsed after the Hezbollah-allied opposition withdrew its ministers from the cabinet. The government breakdown followed several months of intense regional negotiations led by Syria and Saudi Arabia, Lebanon's two primary regional powerbrokers. Following parliamentary consultations, as stipulated by the Lebanese constitution, President Michel Suleiman appointed Najib Miqati, a 55-year-old billionaire from the Sunni stronghold of Tripoli, as Lebanon's new prime minister. Miqati's appointment reflected a significant shift in Lebanese politics as a number of former Prime Minister Saad Hariri's allies in the March 14th movement switched allegiances, backing Miqati who also had the support of the Hezbollah-allied March 8th bloc. Miqati is currently working to form a new cabinet. The March 14th alliance has asserted that it will not participate in the new government, eliminating the possibility of a consensus cabinet. Instead, the new Lebanese government will likely consist of technocrats and March 8th politicians. It remains to be seen how many portfolios Hezbollah will have in the new government.

Meanwhile, the STL process also advanced as the court's prosecutor submitted indictments to the pre-trial judge on January 17th. The contents of the indictments remain sealed,

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but it is widely believed that Hezbollah will be implicated in the Hariri assassination. The pre-trial judge is expected to confirm and endorse the indictments sometime over the next few weeks, after which the contents may be made public, potentially serving as an explosive flashpoint inside Lebanon.

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

R2P's implementation has slowly progressed since the heads of state and government acknowledged their responsibility to protect populations from the most heinous mass atrocities during the 2005 World Summit. New steps have been taken to strengthen the UN's early warning capacity and R2P invocations have become more frequent over time, although inconsistencies remain. Within the UN system, the most recent development is the establishment of a new Joint Office for the prevention of genocide and the promotion of the responsibility to protect. The creation of this new Office is an important step for the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect. In December, the UN Secretary-General submitted a funding request for this office, which was approved by the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. This Committee is charged with governing the UN budget, and was advised in this matter by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ABACQ). Behind the scenes preparations are slowly underway for the next informal dialogue on R2P within the General Assembly, expected to take place in the summer. This dialogue will address the role of regional and sub-regional organizations in the implementation of R2P.

Worldwide Threat Assessment of U.S. Intelligence Community

In February, the Director of National Intelligence, James R. Clapper, highlighted several ongoing and potential violent conflicts in his public statement on the "Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community." This annual presentation to Congress provides a snapshot of the intelligence community's collective judgment about the most acute threats to U.S. national security. In addition to conflict situations in which the United States is already deeply involved (e.g., Afghanistan, Iraq), Clapper's statement cites several others, including "potential for unintended conflict between China and its neighbors," African conflicts that might be triggered by elections, "the potential for localized, small-scale violence to escalate" in Lebanon, unresolved conflicts in the Caucasus, and the potential for conflicts instigated by water scarcity. This testimony underscores the linkages between violent international conflicts and U.S. national security.

Côte d'Ivoire

The political stalemate, in which both the incumbent president, Laurent Gbagbo, and the challenger, Alassane Ouattara, claim to have won the November 28 presidential run-off election, continues. In the meantime, the regional response, led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), once united in recognizing Ouattara as the winner, has splintered. Furthermore, the broader African community has rejected ECOWAS' threat of a military intervention to oust Gbagbo and is also divided on their support of Ouattara's claim of victory.

While the financial, trade, and travel sanctions are beginning to be felt by the government and the citizens, they have thus far not succeeded in dislodging Gbagbo. Gbagbo continues to finance the military through special relationships he has with financial institutions and by



Map of Côte D'Ivoire.
Source: CIA World Factbook Map Collection.

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threatening key Ivorian businesses into paying taxes. Repeated efforts by the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS to negotiate a settlement between the two presidential contenders have also failed. At its January 28, 2011 meeting in Addis Ababa, the AU's Peace and Security Council named a High-Level Panel of Cote d'Ivoire, chaired by the president of Burkina Faso, and consisting of the presidents of Chad, Tanzania, Mauritania, and South Africa, to launch renewed mediation efforts. Gbagbo's staying power derives from his ability to pay the military. Reducing his funds to do so is a critical factor in ending the stalemate. As such, it is imperative that the financial, travel, and trade sanctions be strongly enforced by members of the international community.

The USIP-sponsored project of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding-Côte d'Ivoire on monitoring political violence in Côte d'Ivoire released its third report in January, focusing on the violent events following the November run-off.

Nigeria

Nigeria will hold national assembly, presidential, gubernatorial, and state assembly elections from April 2–16, 2011. The elections are particularly critical because of the mismanagement, violence, and disenfranchisement that characterized the 2007 general elections. USIP is co-sponsoring the effort by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding-Nigeria to train and deploy election observers for the upcoming 2011 general elections. As a follow-up to WANEP-Nigeria's November 2010 training workshop for election observers, USIP will sponsor WANEP-Nigeria's consultation of leading civil society organizations focused on reducing electoral violence in Jos, Plateau State, a hotbed of sectarian violence. The objective of the consultation, scheduled for March 2011, is to provide civil society organizations an opportunity to assess their efforts in addressing electoral violence and coordinate their work more effectively in the final leg of the electoral campaign.

WORKING GROUPS

- USIP convened research meetings in mid-January in Seoul with government think tank analysts and policymakers on two initiatives of the **Korea Working Group**. The first examines how China developed and is currently applying its indicators of stability in dealing with North Korea. The second assesses prospects for the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit in 2012. USIP also conducted KWG briefings for State Department and Defense Department officials in late January and early February. These briefings analyzed Chinese and U.S. efforts to facilitate an improvement in inter-Korean relations, which is now deemed to be a requirement for a resumption of Six-Party Talks. The KWG will continue to bring together the leading Korea watchers from the government and think tank communities to discuss pressing policy issues in the political, security, social, and economic fields.
- **The Lebanon Working Group (LWG)** will continue to monitor developments in Lebanon closely. In particular, the Working Group will likely sponsor a public panel discussion following the issuance of indictments to explore their implications. The Working Group also continues its outreach to the Hill, particularly as new staff grapple with questions regarding U.S. assistance to Lebanon in light of its new government.