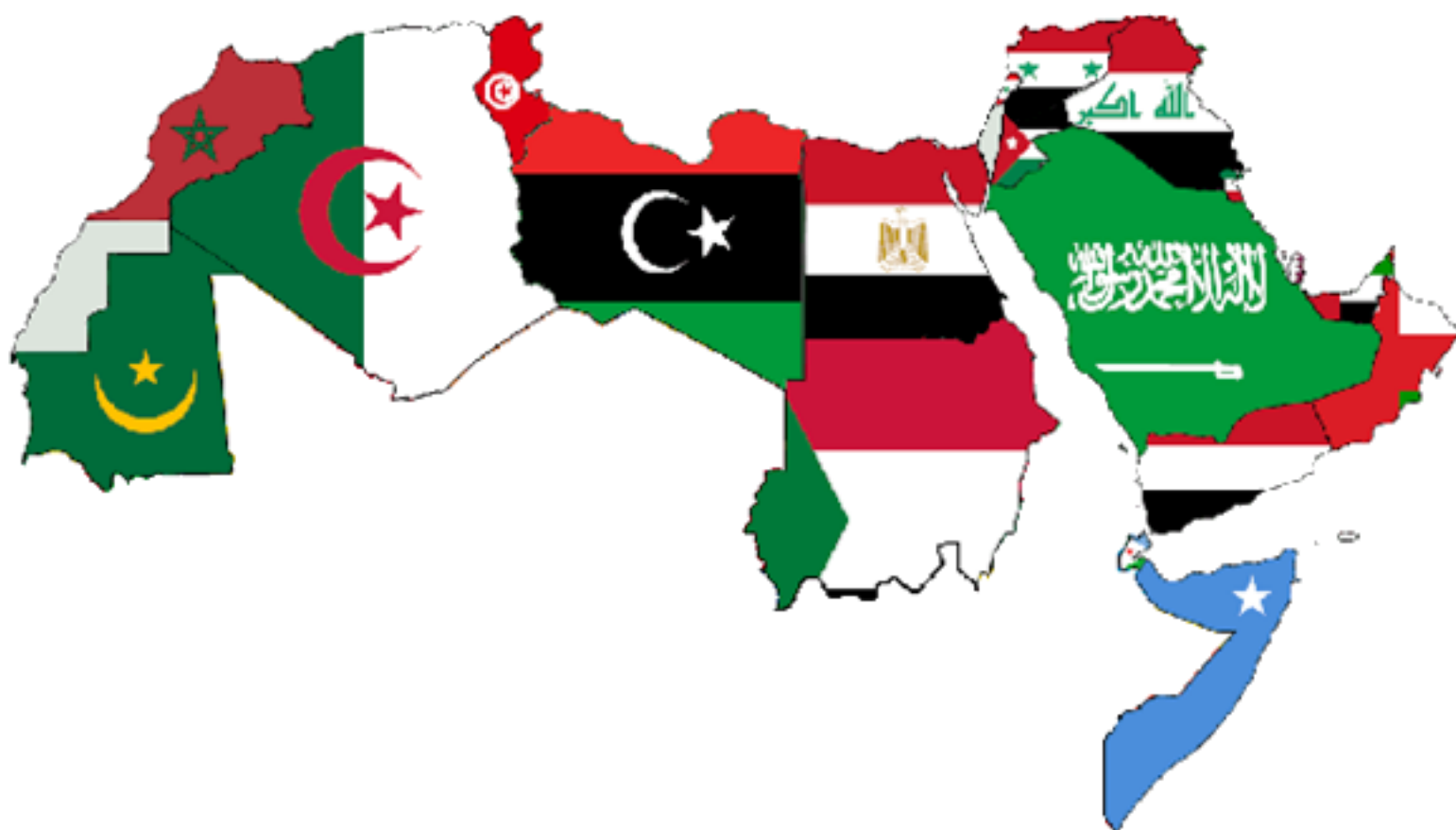


THE LONG HOT ARAB SUMMER: VIABILITY OF THE NATION-STATE SYSTEM IN THE ARAB WORLD

BY NAWAF OBAID



HARVARD Kennedy School

BELFER CENTER for Science and International Affairs

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Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

Harvard Kennedy School

79 JFK Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

Email: belfer_center@harvard.edu

Website: <http://belfercenter.org>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nawaf Obaid is a visiting fellow at the Belfer Center for 2012-2013.

Currently, he is a counselor to Prince Turki Al Faisal, Chairman of the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies.

From 2004 to 2007, he was a Special Advisor for National Security Affairs to Prince Turki Al Faisal while he served as the Saudi Ambassador to the United Kingdom & Ireland, and then the United States. He has been a research fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), and the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies.

He is a graduate of Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and has a Masters in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School. He began his doctoral work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Political Science Department and is currently completing work on his Masters/Doctorate of Philosophy in War Studies at London University (King's College).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The so-called Arab Spring has ushered in a great deal of hope that a number of Arab states might begin to develop and engender more socially responsive, economically prosperous and politically progressive indigenous conditions. Unfortunately, in the nine Arab nations I analyze here - Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Jordan and Iraq - this does not seem to be the case. Indeed, one might say that some or all of these nations are far worse off than they were before their social upheavals.

To understand how and why, I utilize a rubric central to the thinking of the leading theorist in nationalist studies - London School of Economics & Political Science Emeritus Professor Anthony D. Smith. The rubric consists of his six logical corollaries of national independence. In Professor Smith's view, a nation gains the right to call itself such based on its ability to (1) secure fraternity and equality into homogenous unit, (2) unify a single nation-state of extraterritorial nationals, (3) stress cultural individuality through accentuation of 'national' differentia, (4) drive for economic autarchy and self-sustaining growth, (5) expand the nation-state to maintain international power and status, and (6) renew the cultural and social fabric of the nation through sweeping institutional changes to maintain international parity effect the success and independence of the nation-state.

In each of the nine countries I examined, in every instance a lack of one or more (generally most or all) of Professor Smith's six logical corollaries indicates that the state in question is unable to function effectively in securing a unified nation. It is this incapacity that explains the high rate of failing states among those nations that experienced turmoil in relation to the Arab Awakening revolutions. By utilizing Professor Smith's six logical corollaries and seeing how their lack is impeding state progress in these nine nations, we gain a better understanding of what prerequisite conditions are necessary before a state can secure survivability, maintain stability, and achieve success.

INTRODUCTION

The so-called Arab Spring (more accurately described as the Arab Awakening) ushered in a great deal of hope among those who had been fighting or advocating for the democratization of the non-democratic authoritarian governments in most of the countries that make up the Arab world. From the fall of the leaderships in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, to the brutal civil war in Syria, to the increasingly complicated situations in Bahrain, Sudan, Jordan, and Iraq, there has been much talk of a major shift in the nature and prospects of the Arab state. And, of course, such a shift cannot be denied. The political landscape in all of these states has altered tremendously over the last several years, and there is cause for hope in these developments vis-à-vis the renewed state-society contracts that aim to secure a more prosperous future through the improved interactions between the government and its people.

However, hope, being a thing with feathers, is often a far cry from the realities on the ground. Indeed, were hope to look earthward for a moment, it would see that the beautiful, blossoming, revolutionary Arab Spring has given way to a very hot, sticky, and almost unbearable Arab Summer. This essay will seek to explain the reasons for this change in political weather, as well as discuss how the optimism of the Arab Awakening revolutions must engage with the ominous political realities that may render the nation-state system incompatible with the new emerging Arab world.

If one looks with a cold rational eye at the nine countries mentioned above, one sees that in every case a number of features are found. While the new leadership of these states boast legitimacy based on democracy and the elections that secured their power, these states fail to deliver the minimum expectations for a successful, secure, and stable nation-state. To understand what these expectations are, one is best to consult the work of the leading thinker in nationalist studies, Professor Anthony D. Smith. Just as Adam Smith is the founder of the study of modern economics, and when discussing the foundations of modern linguistics one must inevitably turn to the work of Massachusetts Institute of Technology Emeritus Professor Noam Chomsky, London School of Economics & Political Science Emeritus Professor Anthony D. Smith is the seminal figure in nationalist studies of the last few decades. Since his first publication, *Theories of Nationalism* (1971), and through his major works - *The Ethnic Origins of Nationalism* (1987), *National Identity* (1991), *Nationalism and Modernism* (1998), *The Nation in History* (2000), and more - Professor Smith has not only synthesized past nationalist theories into one over-arching conceptualization of what makes a nation, but he has laid out clear and extensive markers as to the necessary elements a nation-state must deliver in order to survive.

The clearest expression of these necessary elements lie in Professor Smith's six logical corollaries of national independence. In Professor Smith's view, a nation gains the right to call itself such based on its ability to (1) secure fraternity and equality into homogenous unit (2) unify a single nation-state of extraterritorial nationals (3) stress cultural individuality through accentuation of 'national' differentia (4) drive for economic autarchy and self-sustaining growth (5) expand the nation-state to maintain international power and status and (6) renew the cultural and social fabric of the nation through sweeping institutional changes to maintain international parity effect the success and independence of the nation-state. These logical corollaries are firmly established as a seminal rubric to test nation-state strength in the field of nationalist studies, delineating specific factors that are necessary for the survival, and thriving success, of a nation-state. Here, Professor Smith provides a perfect lens through which to examine the current situation in the Middle East, as the paucity and collapse of such corollaries has led to the failings of the new or renovated institutions in Sudan, Iraq, Yemen, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria.

In each instance, these states fail to secure fraternity and equality among their citizens, unify the nation and accentuate cultural individuality and national differentia. They suffer from disastrous economic situations, struggling with limited public revenues and a nearly collapsed monetary system that dilute the drive for economic autarchy and self-sustaining growth. Because these states are ideologically driven entities with leaders largely elected not due to their political qualifications but instead their relation to a specific inherently revolutionary Islamic movement such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the aforementioned Arab states are left wanting of effective bureaucrats who are able to expand the nation-state to maintain international power or initiate institutional changes to maintain international parity and keep up with the modern political world. Society has mobilized, and states have unified, around Islamic ideology instead of a political movement with plans for social stability, economic prosperity, and other aspects of state building.

While Sudan, Iraq, Yemen, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and to a certain extent Bahrain and Jordan, have all seen efforts to legitimize their governments through elections, their state institutions lack the necessary factors—iterated in Smith's logical corollaries—for the survival of emerging democracies. The degree of state disintegration, however, is diverse among them, as some of these states have historically entrenched institutions to help steer the post-conflict state-building process. Among these more stabilized nations are Tunisia and Egypt, countries that have hundreds of years of state building and the institutions of a nation-state to prevent a complete collapse of the state. Regardless, these states are still greatly strained under the current unrest and have a long road of institution building and political development ahead of them. These and the

other countries need to reinvent their state-society apparatuses in order to better deliver Smith's logical corollaries of the nation-state.

A closer look at each state proves this point. First, I'll look at three states—Sudan, Iraq, and Yemen—that disintegrated or began the process of disintegration before the series of Arab revolutions took place. This essay will then continue to look at the five-prototypical Arab Awakening states—Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Bahrain—to analyze developments there. Finally, I will direct my attention towards Jordan, a country seemingly protected by the legitimacy of its monarchy, but whose limited revenues and foreign aid dependence open the state up to the political precipitation of the Arab upheavals. An analysis of these nine states will help examine the Arab political situation to decide if the Arab countries may be impervious to democratic development and the survival of the nation-state concept.

THE PRE-ARAB AWAKENING COUNTRIES

Sudan

Sudan did not encounter the warm, temporary reviving breezes of the so-called Arab Spring, and as such the country suffers many of the triggers of Arab Awakening states— authoritarian rule, social separation across religious lines, economic difficulties, and political ineptitude—without any relief or change. In particular, Sudan’s inability to unify its extraterritorial nationals into a single state, secure fraternity and quality into a homogeneous unit, renew the cultural and social fabric to eliminate war crimes and human rights violations, reform and expand its institutions to create international power and parity, and drive economic autarky, all result in the failure to deliver essential logical corollaries of Smith’s nation-state.

First, Sudan lacks central authority, and the state’s inability to unite the nation-state into a homogenous unit resulted in the country’s disintegration into two states: Republic of Sudan and South Sudan. Sunni Muslim North and Christian South Sudan spent all of 2012 with their armies amassed on their border, and while those armies are retreating to set up a buffer zone, distrust between the two states runs deep and there seems little hope for reunion any time soon. Similarly, war crimes in Darfur, South Kordofan, and the borders of Southern Sudan prevent the state from securing fraternity and equality for the citizens and make international parity next to impossible. The Sudanese President, General Omar Al Bashir, is the only head of state indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and genocide, and the nation suffers international isolation as a consequence. Both the geographic and social schisms slicing through Sudan threaten its success as a nation-state.

The disintegration of Sudan into two separate countries also destroyed the Sudanese economy. With the southern succession in July 2011, the Republic of Sudan did not only suffer the loss of its citizens but also its access to the southern oilfields which account for approximately 80% of the untapped oil deposits in Sudan. In order to compensate for the loss of the majority of its revenues, the government cut public spending and issued a wildly unpopular austerity plan that raised taxes on consumer goods, jacked up the price of gas, and cut civil servants from its payroll. This austerity plan proved just how anemic Sudanese economic autarky was and led to mass civil protests against the state’s inability to deliver the minimum economic expectations.

However, political opposition cannot succeed in Sudan the way it enjoyed short-term success in the Arab awakening nations; all opposition was immediately met with extreme brutality undeterred by international cries for the respect of human rights or social contracts. In fact,

President Omar Al Bashir unabashedly threatened his citizens in a 2012 address: “They talk of an Arab Spring. Let me tell them that in Sudan we have a hot summer, a burning hot summer that burns its enemies” (Al Jazeera 2012 “Students Protest”). But President Al Bashir may be wasting his breath, as many Sudanese citizens find political mobilization futile: “Look at what happened in Egypt,” leading Muslim Brotherhood ideologue and political activist Dr. Hassan El Turabi (2012) told *Al Jazeera*. “We don’t want that to happen here, nobody knows who is in charge in Egypt” (“How Sudan’s Bashir Survived”). Here, Dr. El Turabi recognizes the vacuum of institutional strength and central authority that marks the Arab revolutionary states.



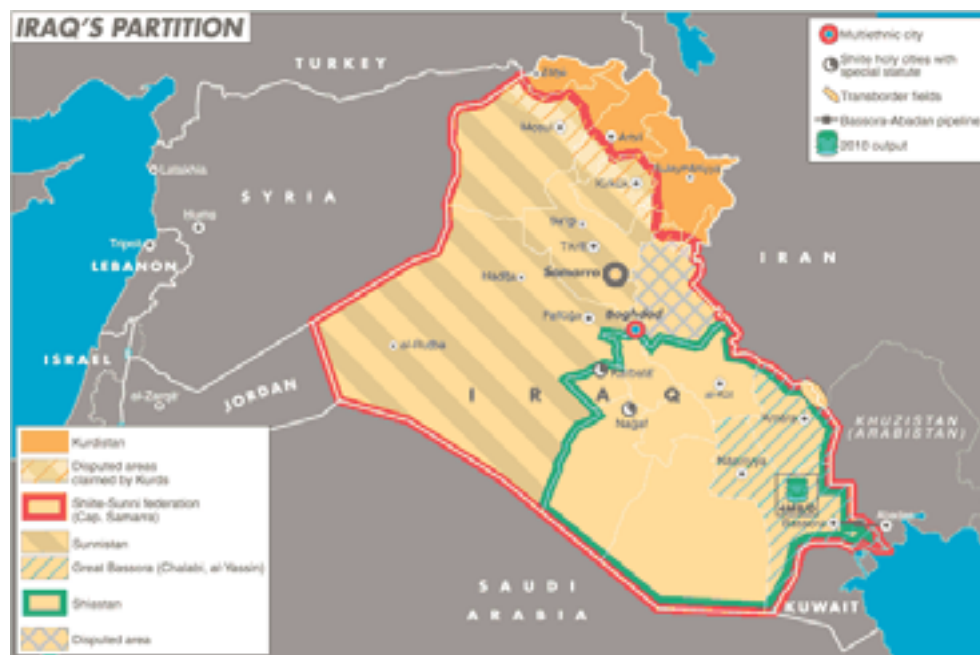
Source: Sudan, Map, from Encyclopædia Britannica Online, accessed March 12, 2013
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/media/61838/>

The Sudanese state lacks the necessary tools for a successful state as well. Like the other countries discussed in this paper, President Al Bashir and his government stay in power due to the ideologies they represent, not the policies they implement. Menelaous Agaloglou (2012) believes this is the exact reason Sudan hasn’t seen an Arab upheaval: “Sudanese government is the anathema of many Western governments, and at least in theory seems firm in its stance on Arabism and Islamism” (“Why Sudan’s Arab Spring is a Fantasy”). In the case of Sudan, the Islamic ideology is preferred to state-building institutions that might reunite the North and the South, reboot the economy, and stabilize the country. The Sudanese state has ceased to exist!

Iraq

What is a more advanced state of disintegration in Sudan seems to be happening on a slower scale in Iraq. Like Sudan, Iraq struggles to unite its two ethnicities—Arab and Kurd—into a single nation-state and secure fraternity and equality among these divisions, thus struggling to complete Smith's logical corollaries and strengthen the nation-state. Iraq remained stagnant during the decades under Saddam Hussein's brutal dictatorship, and the lack of state-building or national unity efforts cemented a country divided by two ethnicities—Arab and Kurd—and the two main Islamic schools of thought—Sunni and Shia. Now, central authority is gradually disintegrating in post-Saddam Iraq as the state continues to corrode into ethnic and sectarian groups.

The North has transformed into a de facto Kurdish sovereign state, acting in order to preserve its complete autonomy and prevent the resurgence of a powerful central government to challenge its control of the North. Similarly, the West and some central regions have become Sunni territories, mobilized by the fear that the Iraqi central government remains beholden to Iran and its sectarian Shia ideologies. As such, the Iraqi government is still perceived as an ideological, sectarian entity—isolating both the Kurds and the Sunnis from the Iraqi national fabric and thus causing the state's disintegration over most of the Iraqi territory.



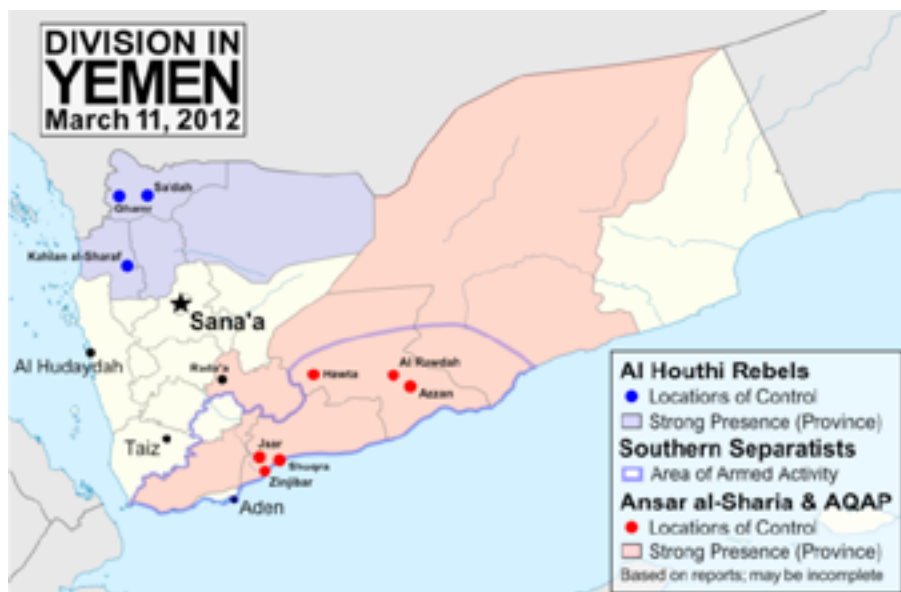
Source: Laura Canali, *Heartland Geopolitical Maps*
<http://temi.repubblica.it/limes-heartland/iraqs-partition/1106>

The inability of the Iraqi government to successfully integrate these disparate parts is largely due to Iran's past presence and promotion of an extreme revolutionary Shia ideology within the Maliki government. Even though the American-established political system concomitant with the US invasion in 2003 is entrenched in ethnicity and sectarian quotas, Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki has established an autocratic government with a single-sect Shia power base. Thus, the post-Saddam Hussein Iraq still perpetuates the competition between Shias and Sunnis and fails to renew the cultural and social fabric in order to eliminate sectarianism and unite the nation under one statist ideology. The collapse of Iraq in its present format is now merely a matter of time.

Yemen

Like the above two countries, the possibility of a sustained central authority is slipping away in Yemen, a development which was exacerbated by the so-called Arab Spring revolutions and the removal of President Ali Abdullah Saleh in February 2012. The political shuffle has not translated into renewed social contracts, however, as the country continues to face a number of seemingly intractable problems, from internal divisions and separatist movements to Al Qaeda's franchise in the Arabian Peninsula and a failing economy. As the country struggles to stabilize its state institutions, the South (Aden) and East (Hadramaut) are both in a de facto trajectory toward independence as Yemen could face another secession nearly 25 years after the country's unification. Yemen offers an extreme example of the inability to unite its extraterritorial nationals into a single nation-state and secure fraternity and equality among its divided citizens. Additionally, the failure to deliver these logical corollaries is intensified by Yemen's inability to create economic growth or fulfill any of the economic necessities mentioned in Professor Smith's model.

Although the modern state united the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) and People's Republic of Yemen (PRY) in 1990, Yemen has been unable to unite into a single nation-state with secured fraternity and equality for all its citizens. The discriminatory Yemeni government has sired both the Houthi rebellion in the North and the secessionist movement in the South. The Houthi rebellion, interpreted by the former Saleh government as the northern Zaidi Shia attempt to overthrow the state in order to implement an Iran-inspired Shia political order, insists it is reacting to the government's aggression in order to defend its community against discrimination (Press TV 2009 "Yemeni Shia"). The southern separatists, incensed by the economic and political marginalization following state unification in 1990 and the civil war in 1994, protest President Saleh and his government for similar reasons. The government is left incapable of unifying the nation-state into a homogenous unit with assured equality.



Source: Evan Centanni, *Political Geography Now* www.polgeonow.com

Social problems in Yemen are exacerbated by its failing monetary system. The poorest country in the Arab world, the deteriorating social and security situation in Yemen has all but collapsed the economy. The ruling elite has also eliminated the rise of the middle class through intentional impoverishment in the hopes of squashing any potential political competitor. Similarly, the government appropriated resources and land from the Southern tribes without providing jobs or economic compensation to them in order to ensure that region's continued marginalization. The prioritizing of state strength over social necessities results in a failing nation-state, incapable of economic growth or national unity.

Despite such inadequacies and corruption, Yemen has yet to fully fail as a state. However, Yemeni political analyst Abdulghani Al Iryani claims that a failed Yemen would not differ much from current day Yemen: "the level of chaos that will result from a power vacuum will not be much worse than what we have today ... we have no state, we have very little state building behind us, much of it is still ahead of us, and that will lead to some degree of instability and chaos but I must stress that it will not be much different from what is being exercised today" (in *Al Jazeera* 2011 'Yemen: "Chaos by Design"'). Wanting of social and cultural unity, a self-sustaining economy, and basic political institutions, Yemen has yet to deliver many of the functions expected from a modern state. Thus, there is a high probability that Yemen will disintegrate into two or even three separate entities in the next decade.

ARAB AWAKENING COUNTRIES

Tunisia

The state from which the first gushes of the so-called Arab Spring leaked has not, unfortunately, found that revolution leads directly to stability. With the collapse of the Ben Ali dictatorship, central authority is just beginning to establish itself due to the landslide victory of the Muslim Brotherhood affiliate Nahda movement members in the October 2011 elections. However, as a so-called moderate Islamist movement, the Nahda leaders must navigate the social climate gingerly to answer the demands of both the secularist and extremist Salafi groupings of Tunisian society. While Tunisia, overwhelmingly Arab and Sunni, has been able to create a cultural individuality through accentuation of ‘national differentia’, or—in other words—has begun to establish a ‘Tunisian identity’ separate from extremist ideology, the lingering tensions between seculars and Salafis prevent the state from fully uniting into a single nation-state with secured fraternity and equality. This struggle to complete these logical corollaries, combined with the lack of economic autarky, makes it difficult for the new Nahda to establish its international power and parity—two more essential corollaries for a strong nation-state.

As the Nahda movement stems directly from the Egyptian Brotherhood organization and has the same ideological roots as the current Morsi government in Cairo, the political party is fighting the stigma against Islamist politics as an extremist, conservative, and oftentimes corrupt form of government. Nahda is attempting to prove its moderate beliefs in its interpretation of Sharia law and its role in the Tunisian constitution; the leader of the party, Rached Ghannouchi, recently ruled that Sharia will not be used as the main source of legislation in the new constitution in order to preserve “the unity of Tunisian society and an understanding of the Constitution as the fruit of broad consensus” (in El-Issawi 2012 p20). Here is perhaps the first concrete example of a modern Arab state making a real effort to unite a single nation-state under an accentuation of national differentia articulated in a constitution.

However, Tunisian secularists are still skeptical of the Nahda party based on its perceived alliance with another Islamic political force in Tunisia—the ultra conservative Islamist Salafis. Secular critics of the Tunisian state—the most vocal of which can be found in the labor unions—condemn the state’s relaxed response to the extremism of the Salafis, dismissing their violence as “a reaction to the oppression” they suffered under Ben Ali (in El-Issawi 2012 p20). Moreover, the Salafis’ continued and uncontested presence in the social structure—maintaining control of over 500 mosques and religious schools (El-Issawi 2012 p21)—leaves them with significant

power. Thus, while Tunisian politics may remain moderate, its social climate teeters towards increased extremism due to the Nahda's theological dependence on its more puritanical Islamist allies. The tension between the secularists and Salafis in Tunisia has often snapped, as clashes between the two forces occasionally erupt during political demonstrations and protests. This proves how important it is for the Tunisian state to unite the divided factions of its country in order to deliver Smith's corollary of secured fraternity and equality into a homogenous unit.

The biggest struggle of the Tunisian state, however, is not unifying the two groups but instead addressing the decline in its economy. Following the Arab Awakening revolution, there has been a decline in foreign investment and tourism as unemployment and poverty spiked. Similarly, strikes and protests have cramped the economic productivity of the nation. This has resulted in an increased dependence on financial aid from the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Without economic autarky and self-sufficiency, the newly strengthened Tunisian state fails to deliver one of its most necessary functions, threatening the legitimacy of the new Nahda "state" and its ability to maintain international parity and prove itself a modern nation-state. In essence, the new Tunisian state faces the social and economic problems outlined above, putting it on a difficult and excruciating path—probably stretching over the next several decades—toward a unified, developed state.

Egypt

By far the largest—and in many ways the most important—nation to now be in the throes of reconfiguration, Egypt is faced with a central authority that is barely able to assert itself over the entire territory. And while the nation does boast hundreds of years of state-building and established nation-state institutions to help stabilize its situation, those institutions are greatly strained under the current unrest in the wake of revolution. While the nation-state does not seem to be imminently threatened with collapse, the Muslim Brotherhood are slowly progressing in their efforts to alter the foundations of the Egyptian Republic, and there will surely be reverberating repercussions both from the rise of Islamism in Egypt and the defiance of the significant Christian Coptic minority and the secularist movements. As it stands, the Egyptian state has yet to articulate its national differentia through a constitution or assertion of cultural individuality, nor has it secured full equality and fraternity among its sects and citizens. The threat of ideological extremism, the marginalization of Christian Copts, and an unbalanced and discriminatory economic system are among the challenges Egypt faces in its delivery of Smith's logical corollaries.

Although the Muslim Brotherhood supporters were not among the initial, most prominent

protestors of the street revolution, a vast majority of them were elected to power after the downfall of President Hosni Mubarak's regime and the interim rule of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. However, the new Egyptian government faces the same troubles as can be found in Tunisia and other ideologically driven states where the compatibility of democracy and Islamic ideology are being seriously tested.

For instance, the 2012 draft of the Egyptian constitution "largely reflects the conservative vision of the Islamists, with articles that rights activists, liberals and Christians fear will lead to restrictions on the rights of women and minorities and civil liberties in general" (Zelin 2013 "Jihadists on the Nile"). This has led some to believe that the Brotherhood was able to channel the power of the Arab Awakening uprising to enhance its own Islamist agenda instead of cultivate an organic, inherent Egyptian institution. Based on the permissive atmosphere for political mobilization following the so-called Arab Spring revolt as well as the Muslim Brotherhood's alliance with other more conservative Salafi groups that have surfaced in the Egyptian cast of political characters, Zelin (2013) notes that Egypt is more vulnerable to Islamic extremism with the Muslim Brotherhood in power. Promoting conservative reforms such as the application of Sharia over secular laws, the reconstruction of the judiciary, and the elimination of the "Christianization" of Egyptian education, both groups are seen as backtracking towards intolerance and increased sectarianism. While the Muslim Brotherhood is admittedly more moderate than the Salafi inclined groups, they must navigate their response to the groups carefully so as to not alienate their Islamic power base and drive them towards the Salafist competition (Zelin 2013 "Jihadists on the Nile").

However, state passivity and weakness have allowed the more extreme religious groups to threaten the security and social fabric of Egypt. For instance, the ultra conservative Salafi ideology isolates the Christian Copts. The Copts have already suffered deep discrimination and hostility under Mubarak's regime, despite the fact they represent about 15% to 20% of the native population, making them Egyptian's largest religious minority. Counter-intuitively, however, the Coptic condition worsened after the Arab Awakening revolution, with increased reports of sectarian violence, religious clashes, and overall tension. If the Egyptian state doesn't take steps to re-imagine the Christian minority into the Egyptian societal framework, the movement could easily mobilize into a major political oppositional force.

The likelihood of a revolutionary revival increases as the economic results of the so-called Arab Spring—poverty, youth unemployment, and overall financial failings—remain unaddressed.

Tourism and investment have declined since the revolution, and the Muslim Brotherhood hasn't introduced any sweeping reform initiatives or economic plans. Similarly, as the Muslim Brotherhood attempts to translate its ideology into a viable, vibrant political institution, it must be sure to avoid making the same autocratic mistakes as its predecessors if it wants to maintain control. This means the state must not only curb extremism while inviting religious diversity, but it must also cultivate an economy that will allow all to prosper. Only then will Egypt become a stable and successful nation-state. Thus, while Egypt has established stronger nation-state institutions to help navigate these rough waters of revolution than the other countries discussed, the Muslim Brotherhood has to modernize its institutions in order to address the strain of the current political discontent.

Libya

With the collapse of the brutal Gaddafi regime and the end of the civil war, Libya has been thrown into chaos. Central authority has been decimated, and the new government is unable to reassert its authority over any significant section of the country. The South remains lawless and without political control, plagued by unaddressed violence, narcotics and weapons trafficking. The Benghazi Regional Council rules the East, an unstable region that recently saw the murder of four American diplomats as another reminder of the precarious security challenges that exist in the anarchic post-revolution climate. The nation is in essence split up into three or even possibly four regions, and the state seems to lack the ability or support for uniting them into a national unit. The Libyan government has not made any visible effort to fulfill Professor Smith's logical corollaries, failing to unite its fighting factions into a single nation-state, contain the armed forces in an attempt to achieve international parity, or engage in any state-building efforts to expand the nation-state and its institutions to create respectable international status.

The shortcomings of the state institution have emerged in no small part because of the over-emphasis on military institutions in the post-conflict state. The interim political force in Libya, the National Transitional Council, reconfigured the armed oppositional forces of the revolution into a de facto government to defeat the Gaddafi forces and allied Arab and Tuareg tribal groupings. However, the interim administration wasn't organized politically or ideologically and was unable to manage the myriad of independent militias that studded the Libyan social tapestry. Competing armed groups remain a significant problem as the country's Warriors Affairs Commission estimates there are roughly 250,00 armed men shunning a weak central government for allegiances to warlords, tribal leaders, and Salafist brigades (Dettmer 2012 "One Year Later").



*Source: Courtesy University of Texas Libraries, US Central Intelligence Agency,
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/libya_pol93.jpg
 (modified to show partitions)*

However, the state depends on armed factions such as these for security. And for Libyan citizens—who hold much more moderate beliefs than these groups—security trumps democratic principles on the ballot form, making it very difficult for the state to disarm and discredit these groups. Even with the exit of the National Transitional Council, the resulting elected officials struggled to consolidate into a functioning state-building force. The first elected Prime Minister, Mustafa Abu Shagur, only lasted 25 days after twice failing to win parliamentary approval for his cabinet nominees. His replacement, Ali Zidan, also struggled to form a cabinet. The delay to assemble advisors, draft a constitution, establish economic plans, or control the militia all point to the central government’s failure to revive its fragmented country after a promising heroic revolution. At present, the survivability of Libya in its present form over the next decade is highly in doubt.

Syria

It hardly needs to be said that Syria is in a state of incredible and dire crisis. In the middle of the most bloody and savage Arab Civil War ever, the conflict has already cost more than 75,000 lives and the ideologically bankrupt Baathist government continues to wage war against its own

citizens. The litany of oppositional forces—including the Kurdish Democratic Union Party, the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, and the extreme Jihadi groups such as al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, and Ghuraba al-Sham—prove the fragmentation of Syrian society even in the face of a tyrannical regime. The Syrian crisis looks to have little resolution save one of two options: a return to state control by way of the continuation of the large-scale slaughter of its people or a splintering of the territory into armed factions.

My prediction - and I am hardly alone - is that the Assad regime will collapse in the not so distant future and with that collapse all remaining major state functions will dissolve. Indeed, the Syrian state is already crumbling beyond repair as it has failed to offer its citizens security, sectarian equality, economic opportunities, or even basic human rights. Professor Smith's logical corollaries have all but been abandoned, with no attempts to expand the nation-state to maintain international power or status and renew its cultural and social fabric or to address the total lack of ability to secure fraternity and equality or unify the warring factions into a single nation.

In the post-conflict power vacuum inevitably left behind, the Muslim Brotherhood Syrian affiliate will most likely win at the ballot box, mirroring the political trajectory and the initial Islamist institutional success in other Arab Awakening states. This new state, however, will have little ability to re-seize the North, where the long-disenfranchised Kurds, representing between 5% to 10% of the native population, have by and large established their own government and begun to install the foundations of state institutions. The post-conflict state will also have an extremely difficult time re-asserting its authority over the Alawite community, who represent between 10% to 15% of the native population, and their villages in the Latakia Alawite hinterland that have already set up local councils to manage their respective security and municipal affairs.



Source: Patrick Henningson www.infowars.com
<http://www.infowars.com/bye-bye-syria-globalist-destruction-of-a-nation-state/>

In short, the Syrian state post-French independence looks to be on the cusp of extinction, and what form it will take as it re-emerges is anyone's guess. If the current state is to reform, or re-emerge as a stronger Syria, the government will have to renew its commitment to the logical corollaries of a successful nation-state and engage in state-building efforts instead of waging war against its people and distinct numerous minorities. Once the Assad regime is overthrown, a new Syria will emerge from the ashes of the Baathist decades of terror, but it is highly doubtful that it will be in its present territorial make up.

Bahrain

While Bahrain is much more stable than the above-mentioned countries and has maintained its central authority amidst the domino effect of the Arab Awakening upheavals, the archipelago is not immune to the revolutionary spirit or its concomitant chaos. The state's sectarian divide largely birthed the so-called Arab Spring uprisings in Bahrain, as the majority Shias fought against the continued rule of the Khalifa Monarchy. Bahrain's struggle, therefore, stems from its inability to deliver all of Professor Smith's logical corollaries—in particular, its difficulty in securing fraternity and equality among its competing sects, in maintaining its international status in the face of a sectarian movement, and in solving its lack of economic autarky due to its dependence on foreign aid.

The Shia-led uprising, based on the Iran-inspired theocratic revolutionary model, attempted to organize a massive uprising against the Bahraini monarchy on grounds that the current government had carried out human rights violations, stagnated the economy, and practiced political authoritarianism and financial mismanagement. However, as with many other sectarian-driven protests in other Arab countries, the revolution was quickly championed by both Sunni and Shia superpowers as a watershed moment in the battle for regional hegemony.

The Bahraini government dismissed the protests as Iranian-backed foreign meddling, while the Gulf Cooperation Council were invited by the Bahraini Monarch into the Kingdom to protect the country's stability and consolidate the Arab Sunni regional order. Conversely, the Iranian and Iraqi governments voiced their strong support for the Bahraini oppositional groups. The actions of zealous sectarian Shia groups beholden to Iranian, Iraqi and Lebanese religious foundations prompted strong regional and international responses to the Bahrain proceedings and interrupted the initial intent of the popular movement—a peaceful transition towards political and economic reform. As such, the uprisings compromised Bahrain's international power and status, as it transformed the country into an integral piece in the regional puzzle of sectarian divides, simultaneously strengthening its relations with some foreign allies, while isolating others.

Unlike the previous countries mentioned in this essay, the Shia revolt in Bahrain, hijacked by an opportunistic revanchist action on the part of the Iranian theocratic leadership, has failed to foment the collapse of the Bahraini monarchy. Bahrain holds the resources to maintain its central authority, largely because of the foreign aid sent from its GCC backers invested in the Sunni regional control. The United States and the European Union also contribute some aid to Bahrain in order to protect their navy base and security architecture in the Gulf. This foreign aid acts as a keystone to the stability of the Bahraini state. Without it, Bahrain would need to be subsumed into a larger state with the necessary revenue to incubate a strong and successful nation-state. Thus, lacking the logical corollary of economic autarky makes Bahrain vulnerable to state failure.



Source: Gulf Political Union – Gause Talks with “Iran Primer,” SUSRIS Blog, 2 May 2013
<http://www.susrisblog.com/2012/05/02/gulf-political-union-gause-talks-with-iran-primer/>

The Bahraini situation speaks to a larger truth about smaller city-states in the region: in order for these countries to survive well into this century, they will need to set up a union or confederation with larger, more established nation-states. While the Bahraini government currently has the resources to exercise and maintain its central authority, the events in other GCC nations have made it evident that a viable plan for a larger union will need to be secured and defended if the smaller Gulf city-states are going to continue to exist and not have the same destiny as so many smaller European states had after the end of the two World Wars in the last century.

POST-ARAB AWAKENING COUNTRY

Jordan

While Jordan presents another example of a country that has survived the so-called Arab Spring, the prospects for continued stability in Jordan are much bleaker than in Bahrain. Up until recently, Jordan has used the undisputed religious legitimacy of the Hashemite Monarchy to sustain its state amidst the collapse of its neighboring countries. King Abdullah has

championed a preemptive reform process in order to quell the revolutionaries that overthrew other governments in the region. As foreign affairs minister Nasser Judah has repeatedly said, “[King Abdullah is] the guarantor of the reform process; he’s the facilitator of dialogue. And at the end of the day, he’s the one who’s leading this reform process” (in Burke 2012 ‘Arab Spring Knocking at Jordan’s Door’). Changes initiated by the Jordanian Monarch and his government include cabinet reshuffling, electoral law reform, and the January 2013 parliamentary elections; all examples of institutional changes made in the attempt to maintain international parity through democratic reform. Despite the institutional changes made in the hopes of delivering Smith’s logical corollaries of renewed cultural and social structure and the concomitant rise in international parity, Jordan still suffers from a lack of economic autarky and unsustainable economy.

While many criticize these efforts as cosmetic, the fear of regional violence and the rise of the Jordanian affiliate of the Muslim Brotherhood have curbed the revolutionary spirit of many Jordanian citizens for the time being. The Monarchy has secured legitimacy as the protector of its borders, especially after it foiled a domestic Al Qaeda plot in October 2012, organized by Jordanian nationals armed by Syria. Afraid that a power vacuum would invite extremists into the secular state, a vast majority of Jordanians are largely skeptical about sacrificing their security for their own reform demands.

However, like Bahrain, Jordan lacks the domestic revenue to sustain its institutions and has become entirely economically dependent on foreign aid. In 2012, the main Gulf Cooperation Council states all pledged to contribute \$1.25 billion each to the country (Cafiero and Wagner 2013 ‘How Serious is the Threat’). These contributions are likely to continue, based on Jordan’s geostrategic importance in the Levant. But Jordan’s lack of economic autarky leaves the state vulnerable to collapse. Without any method of self-sustaining growth, Jordan was forced to cut fuel subsidies in November in order to receive a much-needed loan from the International Monetary Fund. These subsidies led to protests, joining the citizens who have already mobilized around rising utility costs, government corruption, and the limits of reform. These bouts of protests and uprisings prove just how vulnerable the Jordanian state is to collapse, one foreign loan away from a potential massive upheaval. This situation is not sustainable.

CONCLUSION

In short, as one looks at all these states, one sees that while the days of revolt are passed, the days of reckoning lie ahead. As Professor Smith makes clear, a stable nation-state requires numerous elements: mature and socially-conscious political parties, progressive economic institutions, enforceable constitutions, and a large modicum of disinterested bureaucrats whose non-ideological passion is simply the development of a functioning economy and political climate. None of the above states possesses a high enough number of these crucial elements, and none seems able to secure fraternity and equality into a homogenous unit or successfully unify a single, stable nation-state.

The coming of a sovereign Kurdish state is arguably the most dangerous development to impact the stability of two of the Arab world's most important countries, Iraq and Syria, and will have an ever-lasting effect on the Middle East. Turkey and Iran will be sucked into this tectonic shift in regional sovereign boundaries that will forever change their territorial make-up. Kurdistan's viability as a potential future nation state, according to Professor Smith's six corollaries, is extremely plausible and such a likely event could take place within the next decade if the current nation state disintegration seen across the Arab world accelerates.



Source: Courtesy, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection at The University of Texas at Austin,
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/kurdish_lands_92.jpg

While Western media has championed the so-called Arab Spring as the cyber-sparks that ignited reform and democratization in the region, the reality is that neither the revolutionaries nor the state institutions are able to deliver changes to benefit the common Arab citizen. The online activists and social media militants that fought against their corrupt government only represent a small fraction of the Arab citizens affected by these revolutions. The global media over-emphasizes the plugged-in, politico population because they are easily digestible and easily recognizable as driven by Western ideals of autonomy, democracy, and freedom of expression, but the truth is that there are many citizens—the lower class “ghosts at the democratic banquet”—who did not benefit from the changes that came with the Arab Spring (Reiff 2011 “The Reality of the Revolution”). In his article, ‘The Reality of the Revolution,’ David Reiff (2011) questions the socioeconomic reach of the revolutionary wave:

Will these changes from the top down, from which the upper-middle classes—the Bluetooth, tweeting classes, to be blunt—stand to benefit almost immediately, do anything to improve the lot of the Mohamed Bouazizis of the world? Will they find it easier to find a job, feed their families, in short live with dignity?

In other words, Reiff questions whether the changes made in response to the Arab Spring delivered the survival necessities expected from the logical corollaries of the nation-state: a stable economy, a just social order, a united nation-state that works for all of its citizens. The exodus of lower-class locals—such as the increased number of Tunisians immigrating to the Italian island of Lampedusa, as well as Libyans and Syrians leaving for Europe—suggests that many citizens believe they were better served by the entrenched dictatorial institutions than the new, underdeveloped democratic ones.

Based on the experiences of these nine Arab states and others such as Mauritania, the nation-state does not appear to be a viable form in the present day Arab world. The disintegration that the region has already witnessed - and will undoubtedly continue to witness in the upcoming years - will reverberate beyond the Arab map. In addition to the basic revolutionary spirit that has galvanized activists around the globe, western and eastern Africa is particularly vulnerable to the aftershocks of the Arab Awakening revolutions.

Indeed, the gusts of instability have already shaken up countries such as Mali, Somalia, Nigeria, Niger and Chad. After the fall of the Gaddafi regime in Libya, Tuareg rebels flooded north Mali via the lawless uncontrolled territories of northern Niger and southern Algeria to fight for a new homeland in the region they call Azawad; their strong military inspired a coup that uprooted the democratic leadership and has threatened to expand into the southern regions of Mali,

Mauritania, Niger and Chad. Given situations such as these, when considered on top of the chaos plaguing the nine previously discussed Arab states as well as the general situation of malaise and stagnation prevailing across the Arab world, I forecast that the long, hot, wrenching Arab Summer has only just begun.



Source: Courtesy University of Texas Libraries, US Central Intelligence Agency,
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/txu-pclmaps-oclc-792930639-africa-2011.jpg>

EPILOGUE

I am occasionally asked how I came into the study of the viability of nation-states in the Middle East – North Africa (MENA) region via an application of Professor Anthony Smith's six logical corollaries. So I thought I would address that question here, as I believe the answer sheds some light on how this application can best guide both theory and policy vis-a-vis these tenuous countries as well as other states, especially when it involves donor nations attempting to ascertain the best recipients of their funds.

In my work prior to the analytic application of Professor Smith's corollaries to the question of nation-state viability I was involved in the process of making assessments as to where to extend foreign aid. In conducting these assessments, I began to realize the un-sustainability of this exercise in the long term. The recipients of these funds are simply broken systems that cannot survive in their present form over the medium to long term. These political systems are based on decrepit economic bases that through decades of stagnation, underdevelopment and financial mismanagement have guaranteed the eventual collapse of the nation-state concept in most of the Arab world.

It was then, after several long discussions with prominent Washington Post foreign affairs columnist David Ignatius and reading through the nationalist literature for my PhD thesis on the rise of Saudi nationalism and the nation-state at London University's King's College Department of War Studies that I hit on Professor Anthony Smith's corollaries. They seemed to be the determinant conditions I had been looking for. Primarily because they summarized what I had been seeing all along, though I had lacked the practical categories to fully describe it. In short, I sensed that even in the years prior to the so-called Arab Spring that most of the countries in the MENA region were basically non-viable entities.

Then came the turmoil and revolution, which understandably made everyone very excited, yet given what I knew of Professor Smith's corollaries, I could tell that in fact there was trouble ahead, because these developments for the most part did nothing to increase the extent to which the nation-states who experienced revolutions might be able to deliver on the necessary elements that Professor Smith describes as vital for a viable nation. In other words, the Arab Awakening only accelerated many of the troubling developments I saw occurring due to my ability to look at political evolution through the lens of Professor Smith's corollaries.

By gaining this lens, I was able to say more firmly - perhaps not with the statistical surety needed yet, but certainly with a more informed confidence – that most of the regional countries to which

the international community keep giving aid were, according to a very rigorous set of conditions (Smith's corollaries), essentially non-viable entities almost entirely dependent on foreign aid. For that I am grateful to Professor Smith. As are, I must assume, those in finance ministries of the donor countries whose funds may now be applied with a surer sense of the viability of their recipients.

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COVER PHOTO

"A map of the Arab World with flags.svg" Source: Flag-map of the world.svg, Wikimedia Foundation. Accessed March 19, 2013.



Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

Harvard Kennedy School

79 JFK Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

Fax: (617) 495-8963

Email: belfer_center@harvard.edu

Website: <http://belfercenter.org>

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