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Global Power Structures

A WORD FROM THE EDITORS...

Global power structures govern our lives in ways many of us have never thought possible.

Revolutions in Northern Africa can affect the price of our t-shirts, militarisation in China impacts upon the allocation of tax revenues thousands of miles away and the onset of democracy can be the catalyst for war.

You will notice a few changes to the magazine you are used to, and we hope you think favourably of what we have done. As new editors, we felt the magazine needed updating to reflect the professionalism and importance of UF as a broader organisation. As such, the articles contained herein are longer, contain more analytical rigour and are presented in English. We aim to change the feel of the edition from a magazine to that of a Journal, hence the name change.

In this edition, our writers seek to, amongst other things, digest and analyse the drastic changes that are occurring in North Africa, comment on the role China is playing in global power relations and offer a few closing remarks on the nature of democracy.

We hope you enjoy our changes.



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SOCIAL MEDIA AND A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REVOLUTION...AND A LIBYAN DATING SITE

Continued unrest in the Middle East and Northern Africa has, for the first time, shown the true impact of social media on global power structures.

ANDREAS KIDANE

Street protests and labor strikes and self-immolation and million-man marches all combining over an eighteen-day period to end twenty-nine years of presidency and fifty-three years of emergency rule. What's striking about Egypt's revolution is not just that it happened, but that it happened without a unified leadership and without a single catalytic event. No charismatic figurehead, no mourned martyr; no storming of a Bastille, no dumping of tea into a harbor. Instead, Facebook and Twitter and Google. The social media giants motivated the masses, prompted the latent population, and kept the outside world in the loop. And now Mubarak is gone. And now an example has been set for others – including members of a certain Libyan dating site.

LET'S NOT REHASH what was accomplished in Egypt through Facebook and Twitter. The country dominated headlines from late January until the Japanese earthquake/tsunami/nuclear crisis in March, and I think we're all familiar with the details. Here's what needs rehashing: Google's role in it all. Many are quick to give only Facebook and Twitter kudos for social media's

role in the overthrow of Mubarak. Well, Google was there, too. Of course it was; Google is everywhere. Here's how the ubiquitous site plays in:

Google is known as a fairly stable and somewhat wholesome company: a steady stream of new and popular inventions, a casual work environment with great benefits, and a stock that just won't stop lighting up Wall Street. It used to be the only place that the young and well-educated wanted to work in Silicon Valley. Then came Facebook: an equally steady stream of new and popular inventions, an even more casual work environment with even greater benefits (and slightly better pay), and an impending IPO that's bound to make fortunes for those employees with stock options. Now the young and well-educated hoping to make it big in IT seek jobs at Facebook first and Google second. There's been a bit of a brain-drain away from Google and toward Facebook, and, not surprisingly, a feeling of rivalry has emerged between the two companies' staffs.

Away from Silicon Valley and back to Egypt. The Google-Facebook rivalry is what makes the story of Wael Ghonim so interesting. Ghonim, Google Inc.'s marketing exec for the Middle East, made headlines

when he used Facebook to bring together Egyptian protestors. Ghonim created and moderated the “We Are All Khaled Said” Facebook group – Khaled Said being the twenty-seven year-old Alexandria resident and protestor who was beaten to death by police. The death of Said brought together the protestors and, in less than twenty-four hours, the online group had over 100,000 members. Said’s death on January 27th – just two days into the unrest – amplified by Ghonim’s Facebook group, made the Egyptian uprising an international sensation practically overnight.

AFTER WITNESSING the rapidity with which “We Are All Khaled Said” gained members, Ghonim took on a bolder task – organizing protests. It worked well at first: Ghonim would send out time/location information to protestors via Facebook, and crowds would form on cue. It worked so well that he had to enlist the help of other young, tech-savvy Egyptians as moderators. It worked so well that he began to call his organizing “Revolution 2.0.” It worked so well that it earned him eleven days incommunicado in a Cairo jail.

The Egyptian authorities eventually wised up. Mubarak ordered the blocking of Facebook from Egyptian computers, and Revolution 2.0 came to a standstill. But Ghonim works for Google, he’s no fool. “I had a backup plan,” he told the L.A. Times. “I used Google Groups to send mass emails to people in order to tell them ‘here are the locations and please spread it among your friends.’” It worked, and the crowds got even bigger than they had ever been.

While Ghonim was mobilizing the masses using Facebook and Google Groups, thou-

sands of protestors began using Twitter to keep people outside of Egypt informed. Soon Anderson Cooper was broadcasting tweets from the streets of Cairo and Alexandria as if they were actual reportage. Soon Al Jazeera English began a live tweet feed on the bottom of all their programs. But, just as he blocked Facebook, Mubarak eventually blocked Twitter. And just as Google helped circumvent the blocking of Facebook, it helped sidestep the blocking of Twitter. On January 25th Google acquired SayNow, a voice recognition service that turns words into text with impressive accuracy. (January 25th was the day protests began in Cairo. Coincidence?). SayNow provides users with a phone number on which they can leave a voicemail that will be automatically transcribed or recorded in .wav format.

Upon hearing about the blocking of Twitter in Egypt, Google put SayNow to use. The result was Speak2Tweet – a service that uses SayNow to turn calls from Egypt into Twitter tweets. SayNow co-founders Ujjwal Singh and Abdel-Karim Mardini wrote this about the Speak2Tweet service on Google’s official blog:

“We’ve been glued to the news unfolding in Egypt and we’ve been thinking of what we can do to help people on the ground. Over the weekend we came up with the idea of a speak-to-tweet service – a service that would provide the ability for anyone to tweet using just a voice connection. We worked with a small team from Twitter, Google and SayNow to make this idea a reality. It’s now

*“The Egyptian
authorities
eventually wised
up”*

live and anyone can tweet by simply leaving a voicemail on one of the international phone numbers. The service will instantly tweet the message using the hashtag #egypt. No Internet connection is required.”

Speak2Tweet worked. 200,000-plus spoken tweets and hundreds of Google Groups emails later, Mubarak stepped down. Facebook, Twitter, Google, SayNow, Speak2Tweet – it all worked. It’s funny what happens when rivals work together.

A Libyan Dating Site?

YES, A LIBYAN dating site. Well, technically it’s a Libyan “Muslim Marriage and Muslim Matrimonials” site. Mawada.net is popular among Muslims across the globe, and its especially popular among young Libyans. Facebook and Twitter and Google won’t work in Libya like they did in Egypt, for Qaddafi’s secret police are wise to the sites. All that’s left is the seemingly harmless Mawada.net, and it’s being used to duck Qaddafi’s long arm in the simplest of ways.

Omar Shiblyi Mahmoudi goes by the Mawada.net screen-name Where Is Miriam? One look at his profile and you’re easily fooled into thinking he’s a real ladies-man. He’s not. He’s married with children. He is also one of the leaders of the anti-Qaddafi movement. The postings on his page – those from the likes of Mooooonaa (age 27, Libyan, from Benghazi) and Karima62 (age 48, Libyan, from Tripoli) – are not from single Muslim ladies looking for love, but from fellow opposition members.

According to Mahmoudi himself, “I want love” really means, “I want liberty. Let’s meet and protest.” The six Ls in “I LLLLLLove

you!” means that there are six in the group willing to meet. Here’s a great one: “I want to tell you the story of a million pains but I am lost in a labyrinth,” which means, “I don’t know where to meet. Send me directions so we can assemble.” Mahmoudi thought, “50,000 supporters would be enough to take to the streets against the government.” His Mawada.net profile now has 188,700 admirers. That’s almost double what Ghonim’s “We Are All Khaled Said” ever had.

WE HAVE ALL had the good fortune of witnessing a totally new kind of revolution – a truly grassroots, twenty-first century revolution. Mubarak was removed not only by bravery in the streets but also by innovation in technology made possible by a truce between corporate rivals. Qaddafi’s next. What the Libyan uprising lacks in technological support is being made up for by good, old-fashioned ingenuity in the form of romantic mush. Mawada.net and Mooooonaa and Karima62 are now doing for Libya what Facebook and Twitter and Google did for Egypt. Long gone are the days of martyrdom and tea dumping as prerequisites for political revolution. Social media, be it Facebook or Twitter or a Muslim dating site, has changed the way governments are overthrown. •

ASSESSING CHINA'S INCREASING MILITARY POWER – INTENTIONS VS. CAPABILITIES

There is more than meets the eye to China's military prowess. In this article Kaan Korkmaz sums up a highly complex and contentious area of international affairs.

KAAAN KORKMAZ

Are we seeing a more assertive China? Some hold fears that as China is growing economically, it will become more assertive in its projection of various forms of power. This fear is found especially among those neighbouring countries that either have or had border disputes with China in the past, as well as among countries in East Asia tightly allied with the United States. A big China which is richer will also undoubtedly become more dangerous, the argument goes.

HOWEVER, REALITY IS slightly more complicated than that. There has been few attempts at understanding why such beligerence in the military sphere would take place, with the general and often implicit assumption being that it is inevitable. Rather, increased assertiveness is dependent on several factors. This brings us to the everlasting debate concerning the intentions versus capabilities of a state. A state may have the military capabilities, but may at the same time lack the intention to enforce its power upon others. The same logic can be applied in reverse.

Before establishing whether there is an in-

creased assertiveness from the Chinese side or not, one needs to assess what the nature of such assertiveness would be. Especially relevant to the Chinese case, aggressive behaviour is not disconnected from domestic considerations on behalf of the Communist Party of China. Maintaining its legitimacy and power is the primary interest of the CPC, as is practically often the case for any government. Maintaining CPC legitimacy in the public eye is a pressing concern mainly due to the contradictions that arise from not only increased national economic wealth, but also increased consumption and demands for better living standards. Domestic stability and party legitimacy are, as a result of this, considered to be one of the main priorities in terms of national security.

Although there are many nations with formidable military strength in China's vicinity, the United States is not only the major military power in the region – represented by both military bases and its 7th fleet – but it is also rhetorically targeted as the main adversary of China by the Chinese government. In a sense, China has always possessed the military capability needed to fend off other nations – for instance, it has had a formidable nuclear warhead stockpile for decades,

being a problem for both US national and extended deterrence capabilities. What has been witnessed in recent history, however, is an increase in the conventional military capabilities of China. The Chinese ambition to develop and deploy a blue water navy is a cause of major concern for US strategists and analysts. Although the US remains the dominant naval force in the Pacific and the East and South China Seas (and indeed globally), that dominance is increasingly being challenged by the expanding and more assertive Chinese navy. The incident where a Chinese submarine silently and unnoticed surfaced near an American aircraft carrier is just one example among many. Developments of supersonic anti-ship ballistic missiles, or “carrier killers” as they are famously called in mass media, increases the Chinese capability to deny US naval power projection in its “backyard”.

The 2007 anti-satellite (ASAT) tests proved a further addition to the Chinese conventional-military-capabilities toolbox. Combine all of this with yearly two-digit increases in military spending and China’s plans for military modernization, and one could easily argue that yes, indeed, China has become more assertive and does, at least in practice, no longer adhere to the principles laid down by the reformist former CPC leader Deng Xiaoping where patience and caution should describe China’s foreign policy. The rules of the game have effectively changed.

IT IS EASY to draw conclusions from the facts listed above. The capabilities are there, and they are developing at top speed. But what are capabilities without the intention to

use them? As one Chinese analyst put it in an article: somehow, the 500 nuclear weapons in the UK are not considered a problem, while five nuclear weapons in North Korea are regarded as a threat of lethal proportions. As such, we may perceive threats to our national security even if the capabilities are small, or as in some cases – e.g. Iran, continuing with the nuclear weapons parallel – non-existent. The point is that military capability alone does not pose a threat, but in order to be treated as a threat those capabilities have to be perceived as such.

The perception of a “China threat” is lingering and manifests itself occasionally and sometimes implicitly. But what are the perceptions and intentions as expressed by the Chinese themselves? Chinese military assertiveness is to a large degree dependent on how it perceives threats. For example, the development of a blue water navy and China’s first aircraft carrier is deemed a necessity if China

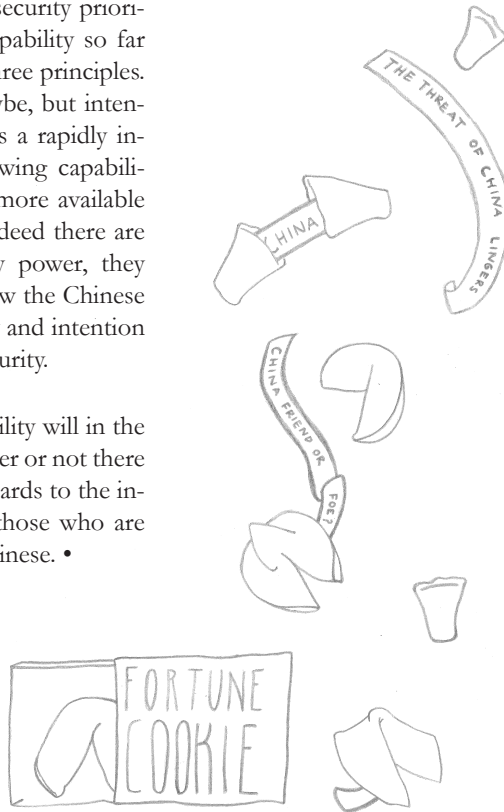
The threat of China lingers

wants to control and secure its own trade and shipping lanes on the seas. Dependency on US goodwill when it comes to protection of sea lanes and trade hubs is not considered sustainable in the long run, especially as China’s demand for energy increases. For years, the CPC has consciously used a rhetoric reiterating that “China’s rise” is peaceful; that China neither does or wishes to seek hegemony or project its military power upon others; and that its intentions are benign and purely defensive. Somehow, this position has not been taken seriously by other powers in the region. Established expectations of China’s behaviour – based in part on interpretations of history, ideological differences and recent incidents – has not allowed observers

to take these claims seriously.

However, China is not in a position to project military power, nor does it want to. Not because it doesn't have the capabilities – because it does, to certain extents. Rather, any military engagement with other countries would endanger China's domestic stability, including its economic well-being. To China, the development of a “moderately prosperous society” cannot be put to risk. Domestic stability, territorial integrity and CPC power are still the primary national security priorities and any projection of capability so far has been to safeguard these three principles. Are the intentions there? Maybe, but intentions remain opaque. There is a rapidly increasing military budget, growing capabilities, and along with that the more available option to use them. But if indeed there are intentions to project military power, they are not disconnected from how the Chinese perceives other power's ability and intention to pose a threat to China's security.

ALL IN ALL, regional stability will in the future be dependent on whether or not there can exist a transparency in regards to the intentions of both China and those who are perceived as threats by the Chinese. •



Calling For A More Insightful Discourse On Global Governance

Challenges to modernity require new, innovative ways of thinking about the relationship between governed and government. Global issues demand global responses.

ANDREAS GYLLENLID

The recent debate on global governance has reached an intensity not seen since the 1940s. Back then the debate was fueled mainly by concerned physical scientists, such as Einstein and Oppenheimer, who felt the need for a powerful, global authority to take charge of the new nuclear weapons. This time, the debate is led by prominent scholars in economics, international relations and political theory, followed by environmentalists and think-tanks who brought the emotionally charged topic of world government to the public agenda.* The discussion is fully alive today and is full of the classic pro- and con-debate, but it also contains an entirely different way of looking at how global governance should develop. A way that, if taken seriously, may generate just enough insight to enable us to solve our complex, global issues.

AS ANY CRITICAL reader would do, let us start by putting things into their proper context. First, we recognize that the discourse on how humanity should organize herself on our planet is an old one. It has intrigued relatively recent thinkers such as Immanuel Kant and David Hume during

the 18th century and, before them, thinkers of ancient Greece (to mention a few examples). Second, let us see what standpoints are popular in today's intense debate, what they share in common and where the main differences lie. Finally, we should step back, assume a bird's view and try to assess the situation and make our judgements about this highly relevant and current discourse.

What seems clear to all is globalization as a phenomena and the problem sets it provides us with. Those speaking for an increased level of global governance assume that supranational entities are strictly required to tackle these issues of global character: international security threats, securing economic and political rights for people, environmental pollution, etc. Still others view global government as a natural step following the increasing economic, informational and logistical integration of nation states -- that a holistic approach through international government is key to meeting the challenges of an integrating world. These two types of arguments are predominant in the public debate today, perhaps because of their simplicity and intuitively compelling nature. Those speaking against, though recognizing the obvious phenomena of globalization, do

not agree on the assumptions and the solutions. They see problems with unions aimed at strict nuclear arms control. These would run the risk of worse conflicts and more instability when countries choose to exit such unions or disobey its regulations. Tyranny through strict hierarchies are other concerns, which both seem likely considering the secession scenario above. Furthermore, it is not clear how an international ruling body would be able to achieve unity and work well for global minorities. A sound, practical and accepted blueprint for global government has yet to surface.

ANOTHER APPROACH could be discursive democracy. Perhaps it's less dramatic and contain less showy features, but it is more appealing once understood. Discourse, or talk and communication, construct meaning and define what is accepted as common sense. It is not an international ruling body that make dictators in the Middle East squirm in their thrones; they were, quite frankly, comfortable enough in our fair, global institutions. What forced dictators off their thrones were people, wmasses of people, unwilling to let them remain in position. It seems clear that it is the increased interconnectedness between people that constructed new standards, values and a

new common sense in these countries that forced democratic progress more effectively than any least common denominator institution or zealous military superpower could ever have done. The work has been achieved through free, public spheres used for intelligent discourse; the same kind of spheres that created concepts like 'market liberalism', 'sustainable development' and 'democracy' to begin with. Only, today, social media and online journals have become the public squares and intellectual cafes of back then and ordinary people, the public speakers. What we call common sense today, guiding and controlling our decision-makers everywhere, was the buzzwords and abstract academic discussions of yesterday.

*The road towards
fairness and justice is
a long and hard one.*

But let us slow down and ask ourselves: What is the purpose of this discourse to begin with? In the end, we are all tiny inhabitants on a heavy lump of matter orbiting in space, completely independently of us. Back in the 18th century, Adam Smith and other thinkers considered nations as a means to supply the necessities and conveniences of human life. What is truly different today? Do the politicians and corporate leaders of today fail to understand what ethics and morals are because several nations are involved? Do they lose the ability to separate the good action from the bad one as soon as they leave their home country? Why, then, would supranational ruling organs, inhabited by the exact same decision-makers that dominate our current systems, change anything either way? Identities and power struggles would remain intact and the European Union is one excellent example of this

“
A sound, practical and accepted blueprint for global government has yet to surface.
”

exact phenomenon.

JUSTICE, DEMOCRACY and sustainability are obviously not about legal frameworks and complex federal systems. Are they instead a matter of relative power and, especially, the mental perceptions guiding the actions of decision-makers? Perhaps it is not, after all, constitutions, institutions and one-world governments, outlined on the finest quality paper by the highest caliber of senior gentlemen, that is the answer to our global challenges. Perhaps it is the discourse, involving people everywhere, that is continually creating the concepts we need for our joint future. That discourse is already doing real work. Now it is up to us maintain, develop and transform it into a robust, new common sense where the respect for universal economic, political and human rights are not only talked about but also acted upon. We define what is right and wrong, through our everyday, political actions and economic transactions. The road towards fairness and justice is a long and hard one, let us not stall our development longer than necessary by losing ourselves in another pile of legal papers that will do nothing for humanity but gather dust while providing decision-makers with another game of strategic play. •

** For examples on the public debate in Sweden, see the article in Dagens Nyheter by Bo Ekman, founder of the think-tank Tällberg Foundation, on February 21, 2010, and the article in Svenska Dagbladet by Anders Wijkman, senior advisor to the think-tank Global Utmaning, and Johan Rockström, director of the Stockholm Environment Institute, on March 21, 2011. For examples on the recent academic debate, search for the works of Dryzek, Cabrera, Deudney, Wendt and others.*

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NEO-CONSERVATISM EXPOSED

Robert Tadjer argues that neoconservatism's conservative base is shaky, and relates his critique to contemporary political problems from around the globe.

ROBERT TADJER

Instead of escaping from history we should take the opportunity to learn. Unfortunately few political science students in Sweden study history as part of their degree. In his classic 2003 speech to the US congress, the right-wing Libertarian Dr. Ron Paul exposed the neoconservative warmongers. The neoconservatives, who have revealed themselves as the antithesis of conservative, are being defeated. They just do not know it yet. Fyodor Dostoyevsky has said: "The cleverest of all, in my opinion, is the man who calls himself a fool at least once a month."

THE FRENCH 18th century thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that humans are innately good. Rousseau had an idealistic view of a uniform human nature. In reality, many wills are in conflict with each other. The constitutional democracy implies decentralised self-limited power, as opposed to the plebiscitary democracy which assumes that people are good and equal.

Edmund Burke, the British Whig politician, was highly suspicious of the abstract and ahistorical. Theory does not match the constantly changing multi-faceted real world.

There is a danger in the black or white, with nothing in between, Aristotelian logic. No philosophical theory can replace human experience.

The Swedish-American academic, educator and author Claes G. Ryn, criticised political doctrines based on abstract principles that only put importance on rational thinking, rather than contemporary ethics. Ryn calls his own *weltanschauung* value-centred historicism. It is essentially the same as Burke's Conservatism.

According to Ryn most neoconservatives are not at all conservative. He calls them neo-Jacobines. The Jacobines of the French revolution wanted to spread their abstract freedom ideals.

Ryn compares it to the neo-conservative agenda to support "democratic revolutions", as now in North Africa and the Middle East.

IT SHOULD BE emphasised that the conservatism of Ryn has nothing to do with the radical conservatism of Alain De Benoist. It goes towards a socio-biological perspective rather than the cultural-spiritual of Ryn.

To the Jacobine, everything is clear. History is not needed when principles of reason, that of

Leo Strauss's teachings, can guide us to make moral decisions. In the Jacobine world, things are absolute. You are either for or against something, with or against us. Categorical assertions are commonly made. Influential neoconservatives such as Norman Podhoretz have a simplified perspective. Only what they believe is right. Other points of view are uninteresting.

Although I consider myself an agnostic, the Christian view of moral superiority as a cardinal sin is useful towards the conceited and conformist Jacobine. He is disinterested in diversity and likes to impose his beliefs. The American neo-Jacobines have a simple view of what is good and evil. What existed before does not matter. America must extend its empire because one model is suitable to everyone.

THE NEO-JACOBINE is similar to the immature and paranoid trigger happy desktop nerd of Internet discussion boards. In the same way, he does not understand the consequences of suffering in war. Real war is not a TV game. The neoconservatives disrespect the historical foundation of America which is against imperialist nation building.

Jacobines and neo-Jacobines would like to remake the world to their liking. It has manifested itself in different ideologies. One of them is Communism. The parents of many neoconservative founders were part of a movement in the 1940 - and 1950s which were made up of militant anti-Stalinist Trotskyists. The movement was formed when Leon Trotsky left the Soviet Union

and condemned Stalin. Later in the 1950s to the 1970s people such as Paul Wolfowitz and

Irving Kristol became part of a liberal, anti-Communist movement. They changed Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution to perpetual war for perpetual peace. The devotees have been Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld.

NEOCONSERVATIVES ARE increasingly talked about in mainstream media. Very few understand the menace. They are destroying the American economy. The neo-conservatives were exposed again after what Blair and Bush tried to accomplish in Iraq. Previous efforts to rule out neoconservatives have been premature. The neoconservatives may have only been sidelined.

Very few understand the menace of neoconservatism

The conservative is a patriot, proud of historical achievements, but he is not self-absorbed.

There is a respect for diversity among these realists. Values are not exported, or at least not imposed, and local considerations are taken into account.

I am not convinced of the uprisings in the Arab world. Freedom is related to certain human attitudes. It does not appear suddenly only because a dictator is kicked out. Neoconservatism has had a great influence on US foreign policy. USA is the sole superpower, and with that comes a responsibility. Many who say they defend democracy have uncritically supported neoconservatism, often times unknowingly.

Neoconservatism is strongly represented in institutions, think tanks, publishing houses and newspapers. Fox News is a well

known one. The thinking is found among Republicans as well as Democrats. They are particularly interested in foreign policy and meddling in the affairs of sovereign nations.

THE NEOCONSERVATIVES are close to the values of the enlightenment with their ideal rational society run by technocratic elites. The collective solutions and willingness to centralise is different from the classic Christian and English culture of America. It is closer to Liberalism, of the hawkish and interventionist kind. The language used by the neoconservatives has more to do with the extreme leftists of USA, which aspire to create a better world. That is why typical Socialists, such as Håkan Juholt, the new party leader of the Swedish Social Democrats, supported the neoconservative war in Afghanistan. In the same way of being stuck in the industrial age, they were out of touch with Afghan reality, and did not grasp that the war has actually turned into an ethnic conflict between Pashtuns and Tajiks.

It is not that conservatives do not believe in universal values. These values are formed in specific historical situations. Ross J.S. Hoffman & Paul Levack, in Burke's Politics - selected writings and speeches, 1967, wrote "Politics, he never tired of repeating, should be adjusted not to human reasoning, but to human nature, of which reason was but a part and by no means the greatest part."

Alexander Dugin, at the Center for Conservative Studies at Moscow State University, has talked about an apparent crisis in the United Nations. Dugin says we must first understand the origin of the United Nations. It is an organisation which was developed in

accordance with the outcome of the Second World War. It favoured two ideological camps which were the victors of the war.

These were the Capitalist and Socialist world. It was the Stalin of USSR, Churchill and Roosevelt. The countries they represented became the main political players. We had the western countries under control of England and the United States. The Eastern European countries were essentially occupied by the USSR. These two blocks divided up their influence of the world. There was also a large third group which was considered independent and had their own development.

To Dugin this is in effect the United Nations. It reflects the structure of a world with two poles.

The neoconservative game is now played in Libya

IN 1991 THIS collapsed and the world became unipolar. An international community which presupposed two superpowers became obsolete. The functions of the UN were blocked.

United States, when it realised this new world order, decided to build a new league of democracies, USA and its allies. The Russians have financed the UN because it is an instrument to prevent US hegemony. It is naive to think USA would allow the UN to represent a multi-polar world. Dugin believes multi-polarity is an ideology. He is not hopeful because USA could create a new group of allied democracies and the ideology of the Yalta-inspired UN is a two-polar world.

The neoconservative game is now played in Libya. Are the neoconservatives seizing the opportunity? The consensus on Libya is shattered. The French president Sarkozy is

essentially a clown of a politician similar to Berlusconi.

THE INTERPRETATION of the UN Security Council resolution 1973 is dubious. Britain stopped trading with Libya only a few weeks ago. It began with Blair. British oil companies were striking long-term deals. The rush to military involvement is suspicious. It is also curious why so much energy is put on Libya. There are protests across the Arab world. Bahrain is a strategic partner of USA, and there is a power struggle between the Saudi Arabians and Iranians. The Saudi monarchy is supported by USA and Britain. The Saudi armed forces have crossed into Yemen and Bahrain several times to crush the opposition.

The recent events in Bahrain, is evidence of the tilt of power towards Iran. The Saudis used the Gulf Cooperation Council to send in troops, simply because most protesters were Shiites and the king is Sunni. The question is whom should the Americans support in the long run. There is actually no evidence Iran has played any part in the uprising of the young Shiite Bahrainis. Having said that, the natural ally of a Shiite Bahraini government would be Iran, and not Saudi Arabia. There is also the issue of a population which will view USA as complicit in the crisis. It is a strategic conflict and religion is merely an excuse.

Turkey, having the second largest military in NATO after USA, was underestimated by Sarkozy. The Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan has warned of a "second Iraq" or "another Afghanistan". Erdogan got his way.

The attacks are now NATO-led. Turkey can soon limit allied operations. Erdogan has argued that Sarkozy has personal interests because of his re-election campaign, and he hoped countries do not look to Libya because of its natural resources. It is better if we are cautious. The winner is the German chancellor Angela Merkel with her Libya policy, deciding not to get involved.

ROBERT BAER, CIA case officer from 1976 to 1997, and more recently an author, has written extensively on Iran. Baer has said that democracy has to come within. Instead of confronting the sponsors of 9/11, the Saudis, Bush went after their enemy, Saddam Hussein. Attacking Iraq was one thing. Plan-

The neo-cons are weakened, but not defeated

ning to occupy it for an eternity was even worse. The insistence on democracy gave the Shia parties the power. These parties report to Tehran. Iran is the key here. They do not have an

interest in having unstable neighbours. The Americans and Iranians have common enemies in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.

In Baer's latest book, *The Devil We Know: Dealing with the New Iranian Superpower*, state that the Iranians do not need a nuclear bomb. According to him USA has not completely lost the ideological war. But even in the entirely Sunni Morocco they perceive Iran as an anti-imperialist power.

Baer says Iran is not the country it was in 1979. It was about to fall apart in 1981. In 1996 Iran won a war against Israel through its proxy the Hezbollah in Lebanon. It is huge in the Arab world. The whole balance between Sunni and Shia has changed according to Baer. USA cannot attack Iran as

a rational policy. It has oil and can blackmail in the gulf. The asymmetrical capability and guerilla warfare makes the country a regional power. The Iranians can take out the oil in the gulf. America would go into depression.

By bringing the Iranians to the table, relations in the Middle East can be normalised. Baer says we need to talk to Tehran. We must get what they want. They want the security of their neighbours. Who are the more rational, Baer asks, the Sunni in Saudi Arabia who attacked USA in 9/11, or the Iranians? The Sunnis are in a clash of civilisation with the west; to the Iranians it is geo-strategy. You do not see Shia putting on suicide vests. To Baer Iran is the most organised society in the region. They are playing chess, while the Sunnis will get on the Internet or listen to a sheik which says you have to kill your enemies.

The neoconservative movement has been discredited. We need to keep a watchful eye on the recent events in the Arab world. The neoconservatives are weakened, but not defeated. •

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SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Careful consideration must be paid to the volatile relationship between China and Japan if one is to understand how best to interact with each nation on the international stage.

ERIK GRUNDE

In September 2010, Japanese authorities seized a Chinese trawler and its crew after the trawler had collided with two Japanese coast guard vessels. This happened outside a group of disputed islands, known as Senkaku Islands in Japan, and Diaoyu Islands in China. The arrest and detainment of the ship's crew and captain was followed by a diplomatic row between the two countries that included a temporary embargo on rare earth minerals from China to Japan, and several exchanges of accusations between the two countries. In several cities in China, anti-Japanese protests broke out.

What on the surface might look like a minor incident over a territory consisting barely of seven square meters of land in the East China Sea is telling of how volatile Sino-Japanese relations are. The issue of the territorial claim to the islands is but one of a number of issues between the two countries that might deteriorate the relationship. How can these be improved, and why should the rest of the world care about the development of Sino-Japanese relations?

Northeast Asia boasts roughly 25 percent of the world's population and is often described, in contrast to Europe, as still characterized by Cold War era politics. Within

this region, the relationship between Japan and China can be argued to hold particular significance. In late 2006, the Japanese and Chinese economies enjoyed the largest bilateral trade volume in history, and the two countries are each other's most important trading partners. Japan provides China with technology and capital which is important for continued Chinese growth, while China presents economic opportunities to Japanese companies in the shape of cheaper labour costs and also a huge export market with great potential, when the Japanese domestic market is declining.

THE RISE OF a new power in the region challenges the status quo and the relative power between the two has been tangibly shifting from Japan to China over the past decade. China has been characterized as an economic powerhouse, and the remarkable economic performance of the country is often referred to as "the rise of China". At the same time, Japan, which was once referred to as the "Japanese Miracle" has experienced economic decline, and this has been accompanied by a shift in the outside world's spotlight from Japan to China. The study of

the relationship between these two countries is related to a very classic phenomenon in international relations theory, the struggle between a mature declining power and a rising one. The future political developments between these two, the region's most powerful states, may have serious political and economical implications for the whole region, and also, by extension, on global politics and economics. Therefore, the actions of each side in Sino-Japanese relations are vital when it comes to analyzing the actions of both governments, even in isolation, and its future direction.

Besides security concerns relating to the "classical" sector of security, i.e. issues like Senkaku/Daiyou involving territorial sovereignty and capacity assessment of the military forces, I showed in a previous paper that the Japanese government has increasingly considered China a threat in other areas as well.

Within the economic sector, Japan's government has reacted politically toward what it believes is unfair competitive advantages promoted by Chinese policy (mainly by the under-valuation of the Chinese currency). In September 2010, Japan's minister of finance stated that the two countries should discuss China's purchases of Japanese bonds in order to examine the intention of the purchases. Concerns also remain in regard to intellectual property and China's opaque legal system, which is believed to hurt the interest of Japanese companies. Within the environmental sector, concerns have also arisen from the Japanese side, not least with regard to the country's own food security (Japan imports roughly 60 percent of its consumed food on a calorie basis, a substantial part

which is from China).

ONE MUST ALSO keep in mind the issue of nationalism, and nationalistic sentiments in both countries. Quite different from the situation in Europe after WW2, the differing views of the past in Japan and China still stir up political tensions between the countries. When then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited Yasukuni Shrine in 2005, a Shinto shrine honoring the war dead located in Tokyo, the visit resulted in massive anti-Japanese protests all over China. In Japan, groups with nationalistic agendas are lobbying for not revising Japanese history books about the country's role in WW2, the most infamous issue under discussion

A new power in the region challenges the status quo

being the events that took place in Nanjing (where these groups insist that the event should be referred to as the "Nanjing incident").

The economic development of the two states can be used as an allegory for the two states in their foreign policy as well. As China grows more assertive in its foreign policy, investing heavily in Africa and strengthening its territorial claims in the East and South China Sea, Japan has had 5 prime ministers since 2005 and have lacked clear direction in its foreign policy, even entering a slight fallout with its foremost ally, the U.S., over military bases on Japanese territory.

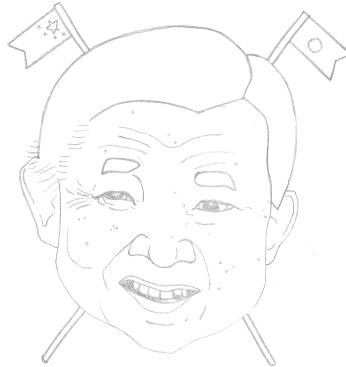
China and Japan are the world's second and third largest economies respectively. Furthermore, concerning military spending in nominal terms, China ranks second in the world, while Japan ranks seventh. In other words, both countries are powerful both in military and economic terms. In a short-term perspective, tensions over issues

such as Diaoyu/Senkaku are unlikely to result in armed conflict between the two, but combined with other factors previously discussed in this article (i.e. economic, environmental and nationalist tensions), there exists a risk in a more long-run outlook. External actors, most importantly the U.S., Russia, the two Koreas, Taiwan and India are also important to analyze in order to fully assess the situation. Furthermore, Japan's ambition to join the Trans-Atlantic Partnership, and proposed increased military exercises with India and the U.S. suggests a counter-strategy towards the rise of China.

PROPOSED BY some experts on the region, the outlook of an "East-Asian Community Sphere", similar in its design to other regional constructs worldwide (think ASEAN, the AU, NAFTA etc.), does not look plausible with these concerns in mind. Even with all the concerns previously mentioned however, there is also reason for optimism. After the recent earthquake that occurred just off the coast of Japan, and the devastating tsunami following it, Japan's relations with China has seen improvement. China has donated a substantial amount of aid and sent a rescue team. Prime Minister Wen Jiabao expressed "deep sympathy", promised further aid and emphasized the Japanese help China received after the Sichuan earthquake in 2008. This event might in that way actually thaw Sino-Japanese relations, and improve the Japanese public's view of China. Japan also has a history of reinventing itself following disasters, whether it will do so with regard to its foreign policy this time remains to be seen.

The development over the following year or so will be vital, and anyone convinced

of the global importance of the relation between the two countries should keep updated. If there are efforts to improve relations, these should be welcomed. However, if issues remain unresolved, the rise of China might increasingly be seen as a threat by Japan and the country's own decline as increasing vulnerability, which further increases the notion of threat. This might in turn force a reaction that could destabilize the entire region, and by extension, the world. Even if the spotlight in the West indeed has shifted from Japan to China in recent years, and maybe rightly so, the importance of the relationship between the two should not be overlooked. •



DOMINO DEMOCRATIZATION

What does the uprising in the Middle-East mean for the stability of democracy in the region? Is there a knock-on effect from one revolution to another? Cecilia Eklund argues that there is.

CECILIA EKLUND

The ongoing unrest observed in the Middle East, is the consequence of a domino effect which seems to have been traced back to December 17, 2010 (in terms of 'pin-pointable' events, rather than general dissatisfaction with the government.) On this day, Muhammad Bouazizi, a fruit-and-vegetable street vendor native of Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, set fire to himself. It was a seeming act of protest toward the government in retaliation to city-officials' repeated acts of humiliating him and continuous insistence on confiscating his ware-cart, and thereby his sole tool of income.

BOUZID DIED 18 days after his self-immolation, his funeral procession was a mass of more than 5000 supporters for his message and protestors against governing oppression. The President of Tunisia, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who has been head of state for almost 24 years answered growing official concern by issuing a statement that violent protestors will be 'firmly' punished by the authorities. The day of the president's announcement one protestor was shot and killed by police in the midst a demonstration against the meteoric unemployment statis-

tics.

Likely spurred on by acts of Tunisian solidarity, Algerian civilians initiate riots also against unemployment and further escalating food prices, this on January 6. Algeria lies on Tunisia's west boarder, Libya on it's right. Like its neighbours, Algeria's president has held office for a longer period of time than the constitution, at time of entering office, allows. Lybia's neighbour Egypt, is too of this pattern.

Probably noted as the least controversial Middle Eastern country, in terms of modern-day conflict, the Jordanian government, on January 11, cut taxes on fuel and food, mostly likely sensing that its fellow Arabic neighbours' brewing protestations might suffuse across and into its own borders. In the days previous, schools and higher education facilities were shut down in Algeria admist the unrest, this along with rising unemployment statistics seems to have influenced the Jordanian government to lighten economic burdens to soften other potential side effects.

On the same day Lebanon points fingers at Saudi Arabia and Syria for their inability to reach a solution toward resolving political unrest in Lebanon that has remained

since the assassination of its prime minister in 2005. On January 12, the very next day Lebanon's government is ousted by Hezbollah; a slap in the face to Washington in its conflict with Iran and its efforts for influence in Syria, for influence in the Middle East. Conterminously, in Tunis, Tunisia, youths have started pelting stones and tear gas across the capital; leading to a curfew fixed by the government, which at the same day announced its the firing of interior minister Rafik Belhag Kacem. Some headway is however made the following day, on which Tunisia's president responds to the violent demonstrations against his unorthodox length of rule, stating that he will not seek to run another term. The president flees to Saudi Arabia the next day.

THREE DAYS after Jordan's pre-emptive lowering of foodstuff and fuel prices, the prices increase and 5000

Jordanians populate the streets across the country in protest. On January 15, interim president Mohamed Ghannouchi, prime minister under Ben Ali, assumes office for a few hours, releasing a statement promising he will relieve the tension by considering a coalition with the current government's opposition, thereby changing the 24-year regime. The presidency of Ghannouchi is however short-lived, as many officials of the same party scramble to obtain higher government posts; further pushing the country away from democracy. Some opposition officials even join the street demonstrators to show their allegiance to this foreign political ideology.

Symbolically, giving further credence to the domino effect of events that we are wit-

ness to in the middle east, where the fuse ignited (no pun intended) in Tunisia with the self-immolation of a street vendor, almost exactly a month later in Egypt on January 18 four men set themselves alight in protest against President Hosni Mubarak's staggering 30 year rule of the nation. Some development is however made in Jordan and Tunisia. The Jordanian government instigate a pay raise for civil servants and organize a state subsidy program and the Tunisian prime minister promises to organize a new election as soon as possible.

ON JANUARY 22, Yemen joins the list of Middle Eastern nations in their fight for democracy, this time directly addressing their president and calling for an end to his 32-year rule, headed by students from within the University of San'a. On January 25, protesters swarm Tahrir Square, probably the most memorable

footage of this chain of events, in downtown Cairo they are met with tear gas, rubber bullets and are beat by the police. In the same week, two revered persons from Egypt and Tunisia, respectively return to their countries of origin. Mohamed Al Bareidi, Egyptian Nobel Prize winner returns at the end of January where he is met with a mixture of opposition officials ready to back up his recommendations for changes in government. At the same time, Rachid Ghanouchi returns from a two-decade long exile to his native Tunisia, he is the leader of the outlawed Tunisian Islamic Party[...]

Concurrent with the peaceful disposition of the nation, Jordan's King announces on February 1 that he has unseated his government in favour of a former army

*The very next day
Lebanon's government
is ousted.*

general who will serve to form a new cabinet. Jordan's protests were not violent, but demonstrations were heard and heeded by the royal court.

The pattern is quite clear. The events which began in Tunisia instigated actions for democratization which has prompted a relay race of demonstrations and protestations with a common aim to realize democracy. •



A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT...

The Stockholm University campus is not like those of other universities. There are no mutual aid societies, no spectacular student shows or traditional festivities. For a multitude of reasons we who study here have chosen to shape our own view of student life according to our own interests and ideas. We do, however, both students and universities, often over-look the possibility to build bridges to a professional future at an early stage.

As a student to lead and shape projects and events, to visit the workplaces and situations in which one day you can see yourself, to visit countries and experience cultures is

a priceless privilege. But most important of all is the chance to meet other students with connecting ambitions in a social setting.

It is this social setting together with a real and tangible connection between what we want to do and what we do that the Stockholm Association of International Affairs. We're an organization that is pushed forwards by for students by students in tight cooperation with institutions and actors in our sphere of interest. Together, advancing our ambitions, we create and broaden debates. In the process we move closer to what we thought when of applying for university studies in the first place: A career of our choosing. So, believe it or not, but there is actually a potent student life in Stockholm and it deserves to be discovered.

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