

**Summer Fellowship, Summer 2012
THE CHALLENGES OF THE MIDDLE EAST
Instructor: Michael Doran
Washington, D.C.**

In the first half of 2011, an unprecedented wave of revolutionary fervor swept through the Arab world, catching everyone—Middle East rulers, Western statesmen, academic analysts, government intelligence officers, you name it—by surprise. The wave was as consequential as it was unexpected. It toppled Arab leaders who previously seemed impervious to opposition, and it discredited many of the basic concepts that had been guiding the policies of the United States government.

This two-week course will survey the upheaval in the Middle East, asking and seeking to answer a few simple questions: What was the Arab Spring? How has it, together with its aftermath, changed American priorities and strategies? What are the key challenges the United States is likely to face in the coming years?

While the Arab Spring is the starting point of our discussion, it is not our sole focus. We are deeply aware that this revolutionary wave struck while the United States was drawing down from Iraq and Afghanistan, locked in a prolonged contest with Iran, and frustrated by the lack of progress in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. These issues will also command our attention. Our emphasis throughout will be on contemporary security dilemmas, but we will situate these within a broad context. Our approach is interdisciplinary—with readings drawn from policy practitioners, historians, journalists, intelligence officers, and political scientists.

Written work: One paper, 2,000 words in length, is required at the end of the course; the due date is yet to be determined. The prompt for the paper is as follows:

“America Primed” by Robert Kaplan & Stephen Kaplan argues that the United States can remain the greatest power on earth for many decades to come, provided it follows a judicious strategy. On the basis of what you have read in this course, do you agree with the Kaplans’ thesis as it pertains to the Middle East? What are the implications of your argument for Israel in particular?

WEEK — 1

Monday, July 23, 2012, 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Introduction

Reading:

1. Ryan Lizza, “The Consequentialist,” *The New Yorker*, May 2, 2011
2. Robert D. Kaplan and Stephen S. Kaplan, “America Primed,” *The National Interest*, February 23, 2011
3. Robert D. Kaplan, “Arab Democracy and the Return of the Mediterranean World,” *The Washington Post*, February 27, 2011
4. Michael Doran, “The Heirs of Nasser,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2011

Discussion Questions:

- What is primacy?
- Is it a vital interest of the United States?
- Should the United States “lead from behind” in the Middle East?

Tuesday, July 24, 2012, 9:00 am to Noon

The Arab Spring: The Middle East from 30, 000 Feet

Reading:

- Kenneth M. Pollack, “America’s Second Chance and the Arab Spring,” *ForeignPolicy.com*, December 5, 2011
- Eva Bellin, “The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective,” *Comparative Politics* (2004)
- Daniel Brumberg, “Islam is Not *the* Solution (or *the* Problem),” *The Washington Quarterly* (2005)
- Bernard Lewis, “The Revolt of Islam,” *The New Yorker*, November 12, 2001
- Eric Davis, “Ten Conceptual Sins in Analyzing Middle East Politics,” http://new-middle-east.blogspot.com/2009_01_01_archive.html

Discussion Questions:

1. Why has the Middle East been resistant to democratic reform?
2. Is democracy a vital interest of the United States?
3. Should American strategy be blind to religion?

Wednesday, July 25, 2012, 9:00 am to Noon

The Challenge of Iran

Reading:

- Dalia Dassa Kaye and Frederic Wehrey, “Containing Iran?: Avoiding a Two-Dimensional Strategy in a Four-Dimensional Region,” *The Washington Quarterly*, July 2009
- James M. Lindsay and Ray Takeyh, “After Iran Gets the Bomb: Containment and Its Complications,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2010
- Eric S. Edelman et al., “The Dangers of a Nuclear Iran: The Limits of Containment,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2011
- Frederick W. Kagan, “Deterrence Misapplied: Challenges in Containing a Nuclear Iran,” Council on Foreign Relations, May 2010
- Kenneth M. Pollack, “Osiraq Redux: A Crisis Simulation of an Israeli Strike on the Iranian Nuclear Program,” Brookings Institution, Middle East Memo No. 15, February 2010

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is Tehran developing a nuclear program?
2. Can it be persuaded to stop without resort to military force?
3. Is stopping the program “a vital US interest”? What does that phrase mean?
4. Should the United States aid an Israeli strike? Prevent it? Be indifferent?

Thursday, July 26, 2012, 9:00 am to Noon

Iraq and Afghanistan

Reading:

- David Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, Iraq, Chapter 3
- McChrystal Report

Discussion Questions:

1. What is counterinsurgency?
2. Is “the Taliban” an organization?
3. Was the Iraq war worthwhile?
4. Is the Afghan war worth continuing?

Friday, July 27, 2012, 9:00 am to Noon

The Israeli-Palestinian Impasse

Reading:

- The Clinton Parameters
- Jeremy Pressman, “Visions in Collision: What Happened at Camp David and Taba,” *International Security*, Fall 2003
- Itamar Rabinovich, *The Lingering Conflict: Israel, the Arabs, and the Middle East, 1948–2011* (2011), chapters 6–7; 9

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict so deep?
2. Can it be solved?
3. Is solving it a US national security priority?
4. Where does it rank with respect to other priorities in the Middle East?

WEEK — 2

Monday, July 30, 2012, 9:00 pm to Noon

The Rise of Turkey

Reading:

- Ömer Taşpınar, “The Three Strategic Visions of Turkey,” Brookings Institution, March 8, 2011
- Ahmet Davutoglu, “Turkey’s Zero Problems Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy*, May 20, 2010
- Tony Badran, “Obama’s Options in Damascus,” *Foreign Affairs.com*, August 16, 2011
- Efraim Inbar, “Israeli-Turkish Tensions and their International Ramifications,” *Orbis*, Winter 2011
- Palmer Report (skim)

Discussion Questions:

1. How compatible are Turkish and American interests in the Middle East?
2. Is Turkey a major partner for the United States in the Gulf? In the Arab-Israeli conflict? In Syria?
3. Should Erdogan’s Islamism concern the United States in any way?
4. What explains the deterioration in Turkish-Israeli relations?

Tuesday, July 31, 2012, 9:00 am to Noon

Egypt and Saudi Arabia

Reading:

- Mirette F. Mabrouk, “Recalibrating A Relationship,” November 2011.
- Raymond Stock, “Egypt’s Revolution Foreseen in Fiction: *Before the Throne* by Naguib Mahfouz,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, May 2011
- “Egypt’s Sinai Question,” *International Crisis Group*, January 30, 2007
- Jonathan Brown, “Salafis and Sufis in Egypt,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 2011
- F. Gregory Gause III, “Saudi Arabia in the New Middle East,” Council on Foreign Relations, December 2011
- Joshua Teitelbaum, “Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and ‘the Day of Rage’ that Wasn’t,” BESA Center Perspectives Paper No. 135, April 4, 2011

Discussion Questions:

1. Is democracy in Egypt achievable?
2. Is it an American priority?
3. Why has the Arab Spring missed the Gulf?
4. Is political reform in Bahrain an American priority?

Wednesday, August 1, 2012, 9:00 am to Noon

Syria and Lebanon

Reading:

- Mona Yacoubian, “Hezbollah After Assad,” *ForeignAffairs.com*, December 1, 2011.
- “Uncharted Waters: Thinking Through Syria’s Dynamics,” The International Crisis Group, November 24, 2011.
- Michael S. Doran and Salman Shaikh, “The Syria Crucible,” *The American Interest*, January/February 2012.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why has Assad managed to hold on so long?
2. Can he hang on indefinitely Is toppling him an American priority?
3. Why has the Obama administration refrained from implementing a regime-change strategy?
4. How might Iran and Hezbollah remain linked in a post-Assad world?

Thursday, August 2, 2012, 9:00 am to Noon

Outside Actors—Partners, Freeloaders, or Challengers?

Reading:

- Rosemary Hollis, “Europe and the Middle East”
- Jeffrey Martini, “China and Russia in the Middle East After the Iraq War,” from Frederic Wehrey et al., *The Iraq Effect: The New Middle East After the Iraq War*, RAND, 2009
- Flyntt Leverett and Jeffrey Bader, “Managing China-U.S. Energy Competition in the Middle East,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 29:1, pp. 187–201

Discussion Questions:

1. Where do US and Russian interests in the Middle East overlap? Where do they conflict?
2. Do China and Russia have identical interests in the region?
3. Should the United States seek to bring China and Russia in as partners, or lock them out?
4. Are American and European interests identical?

Friday, August 3, 2012 9:00 am to Noon

The United States, Israel, and the Middle East in 2032

- No Reading