

**Seminar of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs and The
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Since the waves of the “Arab Spring” were not a merely an internal or regional issue, but a global one which have shifted the attention of the International Community towards the Arab world to prove one fact; that the Arab World is capable of building a democratic system whereas democracy is not confined only to the West.

After such uprisings the think tanks and research institutions swiftly worked on monitoring, observing and analyzing the events which took place in that region with re-shaping the adopted approach for viewing and analyzing the events.

For that reason, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs has held a meeting to receive a delegation of the finest professors from Middle East Center from Saint Anthony’s College at Oxford University, where also many members of the Egyptian Council were keen to attend with various and different backgrounds and fields, in order to share and express different opinions and views about the Arab awakening and the future prospects of the revolutionary movements that spread throughout the Arab world, and how the West views such events.

The meeting was based upon three main sessions, each session included speakers , from both the Egyptian Council and professors from the Middle East Center, and discussed certain topics concerning the Arab Spring, whereas the first session was entitled “The Arab awakening and it’s prospects: The Egyptian case” while the second session was about “The impact of the Arab Awakening on the Palestinian Israeli Conflict”, the third session came under the title “How Europe regards the Arab awakening and it’s

prospects”, and the last session was a round up for all the ideas and issues which have been discussed throughout the meeting.

The first session: The Arab awakening and it’s prospects: The Egyptian case:

Ambassador "**Mohamed Shaker**" has started the first session by reviewing the most important events that took place in year 2011, starting from the erupt of demonstrations on the 25th of January 2011 in Egypt, following the oust of the former president Hosni Mubarak, ending up to the chain of developments after the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) has held the ruling power of the country. However, the speaker concentrated on the following events like the constitutional amendments; which took place in March 2011 and has been a controversial issue since vast majority of the people accepted it and those who opposed it in face preferred to see new constitution. In addition to this, new laws and regulations have been formulated such as the law for constituting new political parties, the law concerning the presidential elections, which remarkably became much more facilitated that they were during the era of the former regime. Also, as a result of many unprecedented current events, the SCAF decided to run the presidential elections earlier than the date it was supposed to take place and this is the current debatable issue on the Egyptian political scene.

After all, the ambassador concluded out that year 2011 was full of unexpected actions, especially in the Egyptian political realm, which have imposed new challenges for Egypt and revealed new opportunities internally and externally.

The second speaker was Doctor "**Mostafa El Fekki**", who was more detailed in his speech about the Egyptian revolution, stressing on the fact that when Mubarak came to power, he inherited the policies of the former presidents (Gamal Abd El Nassir and Anwar El Sadat), if not, Mubarak followed a slow and stalling strategy in responding to the public protests, adding that the people lost their capability of remaining silent towards corruption and injustice. As a result of such strategy, the whole regime collapsed and Egypt witnessed new phase which he called it “semi-chaos”, through which the SCAF is

ruling the country till he fulfills his pledge of transforming the power into the hands of a new civil president., and the reason behind this chaos is the misrule of the SCAF because the military has been away from the political field for 3 decades. He added also that the SCAF does not support fully the revolution despite the slogans and statements issued by him expressing his commitment to the revolution.

But after a chain of events Egypt has witnessed including Mohamed Mahmoud events, the Government's cabinet events and Port Said, these have resulted in only one crucial conclusion that Egypt is facing a real full chaos and the situation, according to Doctor El Fekki is blooming, vague and complicated, where every party is accusing the other when any bloody events takes place with the irrationality of the revolutionary forces in reaching or taking any decision. After Port Saed events, the calls for holding early presidential elections have increased, and as a result, the SCAF decided to advance the presidential elections to be held in March instead of June as was scheduled. Doctor el Fekki described such decision as irrational and that rushing into the events would not be for the interest of the country.

As for the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), he mentioned that they are leading the country in this transitional period and he expected that the next coming president won't be elected without their consent.

Eventually, he ended his argument by saying that there are many questions which are left unanswered and it is the SCAF's responsibility to reply, and theorists, observers and intellectuals who are watching the current events in Egypt ought to follow the policy of "wait and see".

After Doctor EL Fekki's speech, the floor was left for Ambassador Mohamed Anis Salem whose speech came within the framework of a study titled "The views of the Arab Youth". The key thesis of this study is represented in analyzing the effect of the "demographic" factor on the Arab world and how it could play a key role in making radical changes within any community, in other words, how demographics can be viewed as a force for change. Thus, the thesis suggested two main scenarios regarding the effect of the "demographic" factor; the first implies progress, while the second scenario expects chaos and regression.

He added that this study has been based upon statistical data and various studies which were produced along the past 10 years from different think tanks and research centers which made surveys about how the youth's participation in forming a democratic system. In this context, the Arab youth played a fundamental crucial role in overthrowing the ruling oppressive regimes which have been in power for many decades, focusing on the Egyptian case and their image after the uprisings has been viewed as active players. Therefore, the conclusion that could be derived from this study is that the coming years will witness an active prominent role for the youth in the political realm and the public affairs.

On the other hand, he addressed another issue related to the youth which is the Youth's priorities, saying that there are certain priorities which the youth aim of achieving, especially after the Arab Spring. The first among them is forming a family, getting a job, enjoying all forms of freedom and rights within the country they are living in.

However, such priorities face a range of challenges which makes it hard for them to achieve their priorities. These challenges can be summed up in the following:

- 1- High cost of living.
- 2- High rates of unemployment
- 3- Human rights and issues related to it
- 4- The role of the women in different fields (politically, economically and socially).

On the other hand, the speaker mentioned a fundamental characteristic which characterizes most of the Arab youth which is "**religiosity**". That is to say, religion fills a basic huge space in the Arab youth's life, the matter that influences the issue of "Identity" in terms of starting to talk about the Arabic identity versus Islamic identity, which raises essential and important issues in the Arab World as a whole.

Accordingly, it's not surprising when the observers, experts and theorists witnessed the rise of the Islamists in the Arab Spring countries due to the major impact it have left on the Arab youth's minds about the importance of religion in all aspects of life, in other words, they convinced the youth about the importance of religion in the political life.

As for the proposed solutions to face the above mentioned challenges, the most important solution represented in phrasing a precise obvious vision agreed by different parties and represents the different segments of the society without excluding any segment. Also, the Arab countries shall leave a reasonable space for the youth to participate in forming the policies of their countries.

Then, it was Doctor Walter Armbrust's turn to end up the first session by referring to many crucial points about the Egyptian revolution.

He stated that in times of revolutions; theorists, social scientists, political researchers and scholars who study revolutions distinguish between what is called as "*Revolutionary situation*" and "*Revolutionary outcome*".

- The first one, **the revolutionary situations** is defined as the presence of more than one bloc effectively exercising power and control over the people in the society. By applying on the Egyptian case, there are many political blocs in Egypt that are subject to multiple interpretations, **among them are the following:**
 1. **The Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF)**, which without doubt represents a primarily bloc in the face of achieving the revolutionary demands.
 2. **The parliament:** where the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic forces possess most of the seats in the parliament with having their own agenda and seeking to implement it.
 3. **The revolutionary forces:** ranging from the Liberal-leftist movements to the Economic-secular forces.
- **The second term, Revolutionary outcome** refers to two situation; the first situation is the presence of a comprehensive program of social transformation, while the second situation is the presence of various decisions and actions ranging from rational actions to irrational actions.

In Egypt, it is possible to detect the revolutionary outcome that is embedded in one slogan which is “bread, freedom, social justice” where the contents of this slogan are likely to reflect the demands of the revolution that the Egyptians are calling for, through which, they are of practical nature. He also mentioned that by looking deeper to these demands, many explanations are revealed. For instance, the demand for freedom, where the latter one is represented in Liberalism, meanwhile Liberalism in its Western form is difficult to be adopted and applied in every part of the world, as societies differ from a system to another.

In another aspect, he assured that the only way to get the goals of the revolutions be achieved is to start by democratizing certain institutions then assessing whether the outcome produced meets the revolutionary demands or not.

Hence, there are number of institutions and issues combined that determine the outcome of the revolutions, these institutions are as the following:

- **First: The Media:** regarded to be much worse than it was before the revolution where the media with its various devices is being suppressed more than before by the SCAF. The situation of the Media is a sort of “propaganda” and there is a fierce competition among the mass media to escalate the events which are taking place. This is most obvious in Maspero events, when the national television reported it in an escalating form that stimulated the public towards Christians.

For this reason, it is suggested to purify the Media, although this will take a plenty of time, and the purification process shall include the establishment of media organs owned by the state and to be based upon independence and transparency with effective steps and actions that will result in radical changes within the culture embedded in the Media. In other words, the institutional culture of the public sector must be more courageous and honest and getting rid of the old corrupt institutional culture.

- **Second: The Ministry of Interior and the Judiciary:**

The Ministry of Interior has been the first institution which the public has revolted against it and it was the first institution that has fallen by the revolution, as it was full of corruption and terrorism. There are also many conspiracy theories about who actually controls the Ministry of Interior, but such theories are secondary in comparison to the main issue which is the role of the police in the Egyptian street.

He said that the reforming process of the Ministry would be furiously difficult, demanding a lot of effort and time.

There's also a connection between the Judiciary and the Ministry of Interior, where the former has to be more independent than the law, and the latter shall be subject to rule of law and the Judiciary. One of the indicators of the weak steps in reforming the Ministry of Interior is that the "Emergency law" which has been applied for nearly 30 years, has been banned, although it still remains in force and few progress has been taken in this regard.

- **Third: The Supreme Council of Armed Forces:** considered one of the main impediments in the path to democracy and has been opposing the revolution from the beginning, acting as a bloc against the revolutionary outcome. For that reason, it is essential that SCAF's privileges must be detained in order to pave the way for the achievement of the revolution's desired outcomes.

He turned afterwards to the SCAF relationship with the United States by referring to some statements, by politicians like "Tawfik Okasha" and "Mostafa El Bekri", who claim that the United States backs the revolution, but on the other hand, observers must be aware that the United States supports the SCAF and from American perspective, leaving the SCAF at the tat would be the best possible outcome of the revolution.

- **Fourth: The Economy:** Before the revolution, the focus was on pushing the wheel of production and achieving development and economic growth.

However, this has changed after the revolution in which a flourishing economy is related to “social justice”.

The project of the “new cities” which has been implemented during the former regime has been criticized and failed to achieve such purpose (Social Justice). If this project continues as it used to be, then the revolution would have failed in achieving its purposes, thus, the parliament will have to discuss new ways and methods of enhancing this project so as to solve the housing problem and the increase of slums all over Egypt. Also, it is the parliament’s duty to organize the public spending to be directed to the most needed sectors like education and health.

At last, the first session concentrated upon the Arab awakening and uprisings that erupted in the Arab world, concentrating on the Egyptian revolution which has been regarded as a model for the world to the peaceful transition to democracy.

The Second Session: The impact of the Arab Awakening on the Palestinian Israeli conflict:

The second session has been different than the first one in terms of the applied case, hence the first session applied the Arab Awakening on the Egyptian case, while the second one discussed the impact of the Arab awakening on the Arab Israeli conflict, taking into consideration the implications and consequences of the Arab uprisings on the Palestinian- Israeli conflict.

The first speaker of the second session was professor “**Avi Shlaim**” who thought that the main impact the Arab awakening has left on the Palestinian Israeli and on the peace process was widening the gap between the two parties even further. The underlying reason for this negative impact of the Arab Spring goes back to Israel who has always regarded itself as a part of the West and not part of the region, which contributes to the decline of the peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis. In addition to this, history shows that Israel has never contributed in sharing and spreading democracy.

In his speech, professor Shlaim talked about three main aspects:

- **First: The Israeli aspect:**

Security comes on the top of priorities in the Israeli agenda based on the fact that “stability leads to security”. Therefore, Israel has always a preference to deal with strong dictator monarchs, and this applies on the Egyptian case, when Mubarak came into power, he sent Tel Aviv a message assuring Egypt’s commitment to the Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel (1979) and for over than 30 years, Mubarak has avoided the Israelis’ provoking behavior to the extent that Mubarak can be regarded as the sub-contractor for the American-Israeli interests in the region. Both, the United States and Israel supported Mubarak to the extent that when he stepped down, Israel has offered him political asylum.

In addition to what was previously mentioned, professor Shlaim talked about the Israeli government’s reaction towards the Arab Awakening by presenting Netanyahu’s statements that are related to the Arab Spring. Benjamin Netanyahu has reacted negatively, even aggressively to the Arab Spring revolutions. This contradicts with what he repeated timely again that democratic shift in the Arab world is indispensable to the peace with Israelis. Also, Netanyahu and other Israeli officials regarded the Arab Spring as a Spring hostile to democracy, particularly to the Western democracy, and have described the Arab Spring as Islamic coup and Netanyahu’s negative perception to the Arab Awakening lead him to harden the efforts for the continuation of the peace process in the Middle East

This is derived from the fact that Israel regards itself as an island for democracy in the sea of authoritarian regime. But by looking to Israel's record, it is very hard to point any contribution by it to promote democracy in the Arab world. As a matter of fact, the Palestinians managed to create democracy under the Israeli occupation.

Israel still doesn't want to regard itself as a part of the region but regards itself as part of the Western world.

It's overriding top priority is ensuring it's security and the conventional wisdom says "you need stability in order to have security and dictators are the best resort to promote Israel'

interests, security and stability. So Israel has always preference to deal with Arab strong men, dictators and monarchs. By taking the example of Mubarak, when he first assumed power, the first thing he has done was sending a message to Tel Aviv telling that Egypt will be committed to the international treaties it has signed, including the peace treaty with Israel, and for the past thirty year Mubarak has been a faithful actor to the unloved treaty. That is to say, Mubarak was the "sub-contractor" of the American- Israeli security interests in the region.

When the protests started and the calls for Mubarak to step down began, the Israelis were his most supporters followed by the Saudis. They lobbied the White House and the European partners to offer help and support for Mubarak during the revolution, backed him and hoped he could stay longer in power.

Benjamin Netanyahu also has recommended that the Israeli forces' presence shall be condensed in it's borders with Egypt and this hasn't been declared by Israel before, which is an indicator of Israel's fears and concerns towards the rise of Islamists in Egypt in particular and in the Arab World in general.

In his speech at the Knesset, Netanyahu said that many Western observers still do not know about the Arab Awakening, while he knows what it is about saying that the Arab Spring is anti- democratic, anti-western, anti-Israel and it is an Islamic revolution.

And because of the turmoil and instability in the Arab world, Israel sought to strengthen it's military existence in the Jordan Valley, and this hasn't been declared before, which means giving up any prospect of any dialogue with the Palestinians.

Avigdor Lieberman, the Defense Minister in the present Israeli government, is not a very progressive political thinker, he's concept of democracy is the extension of war by other means. He does see an opportunity for Israel in the surrounding events, and he thought it might be a wise for USA to support Israel militarily by giving another 20 billion dollars to upgrade it's military equipments for the next decades, for more war machines as a defensive mean against the Arabic threat.

"There's no room for democracy in the Arab world, let us be honest, we prefer stability" was said by a retired general.

Israel always expects the worst scenarios. This is connected to what is called "political Islam" where democracy has no room in it as both are incompatible to each other. Netanyahu also assumed that if Islamists came into power in any Arab country, they will soon consolidate their power and establish a hostile regime to Israel, and Israelis draw parallel lines between the Arab Spring and the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979, when the secular regime was hijacked by the Ayatollahs.

This is reflected in the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, because for Israelis, if the Muslim Brotherhood came into power, this would mean the end of democracy and the end of the peace treaty with Israel. But the treaty is not the issue, the treaty will stand, but undoubtedly there's a new force in the Arab world, the youth, who are much more critical and much more intolerable to the Israeli abuses of Palestinians' human rights and attacks on the Palestinian and share their sympathy to the Palestinians.

So, there's a kind of "**Ekhwanophobia**" in Israel today, especially the rise of talk about an Islamic crescent across Iran, Iraq, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood.

- **The Palestinian aspect:**

The Arab awakening in Palestine has taken the form of popular pressure by young people on the Palestinian authority for democracy, for freedom, for human rights, transparency, accountability and reconciliation with Hamas government and to adopt a much tougher stance in the face of the Israeli occupation.

The Palestine papers revealed by al Jazeera, shows the conspiracy against Hamas. They show that for Israel, USA, Qatar, Egyptian authority have conspired to weaken Hamas in its hope for the thrown.

Since 1967, USA has used the "veto" 40 times in the Security Council to defeat resolutions that condemn the Israeli settlement expansions and other actions taken by the Israel.

If the peace process is resumed, it wouldn't be resumed on the old basis of Israeli dictates and the American convenience.

The American role: hasn't changed since Doctor Kissinger. America maintains dominance in the Israeli- Palestinian position but doesn't do anything to bring about actual peace. It's all process and not peace. This peace process is "westerned", it gives Israel a cover it just needs to presume it's aggressive colonial project on the West Bank.

The Arab Awakening presents Israel with great opportunity for making peace with the Palestinians, furthermore, to make a comprehensive peace with it's neighbors according to the Saudi plan of 2002 which offered peace and normalization between Israel and the 22 Arab countries. And the professor Avi added he's opinion that he cannot see light in the end of the tunnel and whether there will be a prospect for Israel to seize such opportunity.

As for the fears that Israel is skeptic about it, was Professor "**Eugene Rogan**" who specialized in such matter and relating it in the following points:

- **One of the real fears that the turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa has provoked amid the European and American diplomatic and political circles has been what the Arab Spring needs for the peace treaties that are signed between some Arab countries and Israel.** This is something occupied among diplomats and politicians, this is due to the fact that Israel's security remains the highest priority for the West in it's policies towards the Middle East, and the Arab awakening has caused the rise of some concerns, and to some degree, there are grounds for these concerns. By going to Egypt or Jordan, it is unlikely to find any political parties that actively support or consent about their country's peace treaty with Israel, and the Arab uprisings didn't take place to defend peace treaties with Israel, instead, Western governments were wise enough for sponsoring these peace treaties as peace pragmatism that binds Egypt with Israel, and Jordan with Israel.

- **The pragmatic nature of the peace between Arab Spring countries and Israel:** And he described the peace between Egypt and Jordan with Israel as pragmatism because this peace works for the national interests of both countries, one because it allows both of them to deepen their security of their frontiers with Israel and second because it is a way to bring the American diplomatic and financial support for Egypt, and also military ones. Third, the peace is in the interest for Egypt and Jordan because two key areas of economic growth rely on it; the first is Tourism where it is not probable that tourists will visit Egypt in case of a conflict with Israel, and the second is Investment. Therefore, these are the reasons the speaker believed in which make the peace between Egypt and Jordan with Israel a pragmatic cold peace, and whether people were with or against these peace treaties, they have to preserve and maintain such peace with Israel for their own benefit, thus, there is no need to worry about the changes that take place in the politics followed by the revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa countries because in any case, this won't lead to any change in the situation with Israel, except for one thing, which is that Israel does something so outrageous that it's Arab partners will no longer associate themselves with it.

Thus, Recent History shows an outrageous acts by Israel that have stimulated the Arab world's public opinion such as Israel's invasion on Gaza strip in 2008 and the war on the war in Gaza-Lebanon 2006, where proportionate use of violence has taken place, huge public crimes and other acts of aggression.

So, the speaker's advice for policy makers in Israel was to restrain the military in all aspects using instead the diplomatic means.

- **The third point, related to the impact of the Arab awakening on the Arab-Israel conflict could be represented in the prevailing issue in the international arena, which is the prospect of Israel in doing something outrageous towards Iran.**

And the question that is raised in this matter, will Israel really strike Iran?

He added that the press in Egypt and Europe has been revolving around this topic and the rising tension between Israel and Iran, and the growing support for a preemptive nuclear strike against Iran. By following the analysis and statements, one can believe that a strike would be probable within the next three months, and one of the reasons that this might be the case has to do with the work of the Iranians to protect their nuclear research by creating deep underground facilities that are much secured against any external attack.

There has been a series of reports that suggest that in case Israel attacked Iran, the latter will retaliate and Israel will manage to contain and the matter won't be escalated to a Third World War, and this is what the Israeli officials have been trying to tell the Israeli Public opinion.

Nonetheless, despite the increasing volume of reports that address an Israeli attack on Iran, there are another reasons to question whether in fact Israel will attack Iran or not.

The first question is, since when did Israel declared it's intensions publicly towards any country? Hence, history shows that Israel never declare it's intensions and this is reflected in the Israeli strike on Iraq's Osiraki facilitator (1981) and on Syria newly established nuclear research facility (2007). In other words, history shows that when Israel is serious it is very quite.

Secondly, the United States and European countries have expressed their opposition to Israel's military choice against Iran, and the EU and USA believe that it is best to serve the various kinds of diplomatic methods as a nuclear attack against Iran would be counterproductive and after all, Europe and the United States still "veto" for a preemptive strike by Israel against Iran.

Thirdly, the International sanctions that have been deployed by the International community on Iran are beginning to yield their desired outcome, particularly after Europe's decision to boycott the Iranian oil exports, which will affect deeply the

Iranian economy, so the question is why the Western powers shall spoil such methods if they are working effectively?

The bottom line of his speech, the idea of striking Iran by Israel has become the mainstream of the worldwide discussion while the United States is trying to avoid a serious military threat by exerting more pressures on the Iranians and that Israel doesn't actually intending to strike Iran.

Generally, there's a huge difference between what is being theorized and what is being implemented on actual grounds, and this is what Ambassador "**Mohamed Asem**" stated, the former ambassador of Egypt in Israel.

- **In his talk, he turned into the following arguments:**

First, the Arab-Israeli conflict has come to the end within the peace agenda due to the "Arab Spring", and if any Arab country nowadays has been asked about its top priorities, there is no place for the Palestinian- Israeli conflict.

On the other hand, the speaker mentioned his inability to describe actually what is happening in the Arab world, whether it is an uprising or upheaval or real revolutions, and how long it would take to shape new systems in this part of the world.

Similar to the above mentioned, Israel share pessimistic views and holds many fears and worries regarding the situation in Egypt and the rise of Islamists or the "Islamophobia" in Egypt, and that Egypt might take the same trend of Iran and Pakistan, and it has many reasons for such worries, among them is the continuously cut of gas by Egypt to Israel and the hostile notions towards the United States's aid and the peace treaty with Israel and any statement concerning Israeli security is quite worrisome.

According to his assessment, what is happening in the region, on the medium range, will add to Israel's security, for Syria is suffering from internal disruption and the Egyptian army is engaged with the internal affairs.

Also, it's unlikely that a military confrontation will take place between Egypt and Israel, unless Egypt is being attacked and has to defend its territory, and taking into consideration that the peace treaty signed between Egypt and Israel does protect Egypt as much as it protects Israel.

He agreed to what Doctor Rogan has said, that what will be the focal point the next year in the Arab world will not be the Arab Spring, rather it will be Iran.

For the last 10 years, Israel has been declaring its will to attack Iran if it produced the atomic bomb, but the speaker challenged that Israel can unilaterally take such action for many reasons among them is it because oil is the basic and fundamental motive for the Western policies towards that part of the world, the Arab world. That is why, it is unwise that the Western powers will repeat the oil crisis of 1973. Also, Israel cannot launch such military nuclear strike against any country including Iran without the approval, support and aid of the United States, where the latter has its own calculations as it is committed to ensure Israel's security but not committed to contribute to the destruction and fall of its own interests and the world economy.

From another aspect, by considering that any action in International Relations must produce a number of consequences which aim to leave deep effect on the long, medium and short range, it was Doctor "**Mostafa Elwi**" who discussed this aspect, adding that the Arab Spring will continue to leave its implications on the Arab world in general and the Arab-Israeli conflict in particular.

He then, distinguished between the short run and long run implications.

- **The short run implications:**

- The signing of the reconciliation agreement between Hamas and Fatah movements sponsored by Egypt. But what drove Hamas to sign such agreement, after refusing it the previous 5 years ago, was the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood

- in Egypt after 25th January revolution whom they enjoy strong ties and relationship with Hamas. Also, what is happening in Syria weakens the stance of Hamas and forces it to sign such agreement.
- The Islamic Political forces in Egypt have declared from time to time their commitment to the peace treaty with Israel, so it is not probable to see any changes in the political attitude towards the peace treaty with Israel.
 - However, Egypt after the revolution will differ in terms of the Israeli harassments and violence to the Palestinians, especially on the Gaza strip and the West Bank. That is to say, Egypt will no longer remain silent towards any outrageous actions taken by Israel, whether with the Palestinians or on it's borders with Egypt.
- **The Long term implications:**
 - There have been talks about the idea of a non-Arab regional coalition in the Middle East region, and this will include the Arab countries alongside with Turkey and Iran. If this happens, it will lead to a great change of the Arab countries policies towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.
 - Doubts have been raised about the success and the continuation of the Arab uprisings and revolutions, and whether it will spread to the other countries.

The Third session: How Europe regards the Arab awakening and its prospects

“How Europe regards the Arab awakening and the prospects of it” was the title of the third and last session in this fruitful seminar in which many ideas and suggestions have been raised and discussed regarding Europe’s reaction to the Arab Spring uprisings and this session can be described as a mirror that reflects the historical events related to the discussed subject, the Arab Spring.

The first speaker of this session was Doctor "**Philip Robins**", who initially talked about the narrative history of Great Britain since the “Glorious revolution” (1688) erupted in

the 18th century and was the only revolution that didn't witness any bloodshed to the recent revolutions in the Arab world, admitting that the United Kingdom didn't witness throughout its history many or bloody upheavals and revolutions.

- **Hence, he talked about four set of remarks, which are:**
 - **First: The historical shadow that casts itself across the European response upon the Arab awakening:**

He recalled the 1988 Algerian revolution that called for liberal constitution with local elections but that process was interrupted by military takeover in 1991.

The European countries during that unrest had to make their own decision, which was French driven, and the outcomes were bloody crackdown, civil wars and the military takeover remained with the help of the European countries. So it is important to look at the European response to the Algerian experience and compare it with what is happening nowadays.

In the context of the Arab Spring, he said that it is very difficult to block the popular will in the Arab region. In the meantime, the European Union is facing a problem of dealing with the growing number of the Islamic movements in most countries of the Arab world after the waves of the Arab Spring.

- **Second: The historic choice the European Union has to make:**

The European Union has to make a historic choice in regard to the Arab awakening, which is either it chooses to emerge as a global normative power or remains inconclusive erratic political dwarf.

Probably, the EU is facing a dilemma for the events that are taking place in the Arab world recently.

- **Third: The practical responses from the European Union to the current events in the Arab World:**

There are 4 responses mentioned by the speaker which are:

a) **The response of visibility:** There have been a large number of visits by officials of the European Union to the Arab world after the uprisings. Catherine Ashton, as described by the speaker as the tsar of the EU's foreign affairs, has visited Egypt and was interested most in meeting the women of Egypt to flourish their role within the new political framework in Egypt.

b) **Declaratory Diplomacy: has been active in two main areas:**

I- **The area of democracy promotion:** represented in deepening democratic norms seen in Brussels agenda and it is not about ballots and polls and voting, but about internalizing the values of democracy by the people and adopting democratic norms in their culture. He added that the European Union is focusing on how it can make a difference through the mobilization of own people and intellectuals to spread democracy. He also said that a talking about deepening a democratic agenda shall be in terms of internalization of norms by 2 generations and not 2 months.

II- **Sustainable economic growth and development:** three practical ways that have proved to be successful by the European Union, they revolve around (3 Ms):

- a- **Money:** funds and financial aid by the European Union to the Arab governments. (1.2 billion Euros).
- b- **Market:** accessing the external European market and vice versa which has been an old method since the colonial era.
- c- **Mobility:** access for scholarships at higher educational institutions across the European Union countries.

- d- **Libya:** there are different views and judgments about the European intervention lately in the Libyan crisis through the NATO, taking into consideration that the initiation of European involvement wasn't by the EU itself, but by initiation by the French President Nicola Sarkouzi, not before the Arab League's recommendation for the interference of the Security Council.

By comparing the Libyan case to the Iraqi case, he stated that the former case has been more successful than the latter as it brought about regime change and the end of the bloodshed.

- **Fourth: The critical issue which will determine and drive the nature regarding the relationship between the European Union and the Arab Spring countries:**

It is important to look in this respect to what is happening in Europe, ranging from high rates of unemployment (Spain has reached 50%) and the continuation of the debt crisis making the economic growth a hard target to achieve. This is all a result of, as described by him, as poor governance of individual states within the European Union and reveals the mismanagement of holding relations with the old regimes of the Arab Spring countries.

In his view, the European Union will continue in its "**Declaratory Diplomacy**", in terms of training, funds available in future, and if the Arab countries expected that the EU in its historical choice will choose to be a global normative power, then these countries alongside with the others will be disappointed.

Referring to the most prevailing debate in the Egyptian political arena and the European Union response to Egypt's Arab Spring, Doctor "Mona Makram" has **talked about this issue in the sense of the following points:**

- **First, she described Egypt as a pivoting country in the region and whatever happens in Egypt shall have serious implications on the whole of the Arab region.**

She also described the situation in Egypt as vague and blooming and she talked about two powers within the framework of her talk, they were the SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood whom she described as "Power brokers".

- **Second; in this context, she talked about many internal issues Egypt is facing where the Europeans are keen to follow:**

- a. **The debates taking place in the Road map of Egypt's new political system:**

After March referendum, she said that the real debate that has divided Egypt revolved around the precedence of writing the constitution first or holding the presidential elections first.

The committee that was appointed by the SCAF first decided to issue a constitutional declaration telling that the presidential elections to be held first and that was the particular trend supposed to be held.

But after the parliamentary elections, when the Muslim Brotherhood won the majority of seats in the parliament alongside with other Islamic forces, the sequence of holding presidential elections first then drafting a new constitution has been debated and then changed. As a matter of fact, the incident of Port Saied has been an incentive for making radical changes in the "Road Map" that was put by the SCAF to move from the transitional period the country is facing.

She mentioned that both the rallying powers, the Muslim Brotherhood and the SCAF share strategic interests in cooperating to design a new blueprint for the new political system of Egypt. And the flash point that could unravel the coalition between the SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood is the process of drafting Egypt's new constitution.

But, the “*transitional map*” proposed by the SCAF, which included parliamentary elections, an advisory council elections then the constitution then the presidential elections, has been changed due to the protests and demands of the Egyptian street and the interests of the Muslim Brotherhood in the parliament.

In the issue of drafting a new constitution, debates have been raised about the members whom the constituent committee shall include.

Also, there are forces and actors in the Egyptian arena who ask for returning to 1971 constitution, while others want to draft a new one arguing that it will take not more than 6 months.

Since the Muslim Brotherhood are holding power, many conciliatory gestures have been taken by them to show to the world and to the internal forces that they are willing to negotiate and deal with the West in order to assure that what is coming will be like the Turkish model, while actually, they are far than it.

In this respect, she concluded out that the SCAF and the Muslim Brotherhood, each have their own blueprint and sequence in shaping Egypt's new political system and that the coming period will witness a fierce competition, whether in the process of drafting a new constitution or the presidential elections. Also, within the framework of drafting a new constitution, debates will rise related to the following issues:

- i-The President's powers.
- ii-The structure of the political system (Parliamentary or presidential)
- iii-The role of the Military.

b. The religion-state relationship:

Al- Azhar is regarded as one of the most prominent Islamic landmarks not only in Egypt, but throughout the world. After the revolution, Al-Azhar has prevailing and active role and stances, such as issuing “Al Azhar statement” which includes the exercise and the respect for freedom and rights, comes at parallel with the “Magnacarta”. This has been the most progressive statements what guarantees enjoying the various forms of rights and freedoms, without referring to the reconfiguration of the balance of power or the division of powers between the Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches of the government.

But the question here whether the Islamists and Al-Azhar accepts a legal framework that gives the military any formalized role in the political process?! The answer is left to what will happen next.

At last, both the military and the brotherhood are having a strategic alliance in shaping the country’s new political process, but concerns are raised regarding a division between these two prevailing powers, and the next battle ground will be Egypt’s new constitution.

As for ambassador Doctor “**Al Sayed Shalaby**”, he focused on Europe’s response towards the Arab Spring in his speech.

First, as it is agreed among diplomatic and intelligent Arab institutions, the Arab countries in the region were surprised by the erupt of the youth uprisings and so did Europe where it’s think tanks and research centers couldn’t predict such events.

Such uprisings came in a time where the prevailing thinking that the Arab people have succumbed to the Arab regimes, hence, the Arab region became exceptional from the global wave of democracy.

Speaking about the European role, the ambassador added that Europe through the last decades has been urging the Arab regimes to adopt democratic

reforms and values. However, they maintained a solid relation with the Arab rulers, believing that this will insure stability and will combat terrorism.

Indeed, Hosni Mubarak was approved by many European countries, like describing him as the “wise man” by the French president, Nicola Sarkouzi.

Following it’s cautious response to the Arab uprisings, Europe came with clear statements of supporting the uprisings and asking the Arab rulers to step down, and he saw the most indicative evident was Europe’s intervention in the Libyan crisis through the NATO and toppling the Gaddafi’s regime.

The consequences of the uprisings on the Arab countries, particularly Egypt, weren’t encouraging on the security and economic dimensions.

Alongside with the calls for political and democratic changes, the economic situation in Egypt has been deteriorating with the increasing demands of large segments of the society, in the time when a number of European officials have visited Egypt and promised to support Egypt. But Europe to some extent, as he saw, hasn’t fulfilled that promise of providing Egypt and Tunisia with 38 billion dollars.

He also stressed that it is the right time, for Europe if it was interested to support Egypt in building a new democratic system and to consolidate economic growth, stability and development.

Apart from the direct financial help by Europe, the latter can assist Egypt indirectly in many ways, like increasing the tourism in Egypt after the improving the security situation, allowing the Egyptian products to have access at the European markets aboard, offering and providing educational internships for students and graduates at European higher education institutions, and other various ways that can contribute to the rise and improvement of the social and economic situations in Egypt rather than implementing and imposing strict and tough restrictions on the Egyptian products abroad.

As for the reason behind Europe’s stalling response to Egypt’s revolution goes back to many factors, the chief among them is waiting to see how the events

would shape Egypt's political future in addition to the debt financial crisis that is sweeping all over Europe since 2011.

In his view, linking the European debt crisis with Europe's policies towards Egypt would be irrational without making any sense, because this would lead to the continuation of the economic and social turmoil and thus, the delay of building democracy in Egypt.

By going back to history, he noted that after the Second World War, many European countries were damaged and destructed and faced many difficulties in their economy, but the solution back then was "The Marshall Plan" by the United States which resembled in providing economic assistance for the European countries, then the Cold War followed the Second World War and another similar solution was prevailed –for the economic assistance to the Eastern European countries- which was the establishment of "the European Bank for Development and Reconstruction", which was a basic tool in the revival of many countries and a factor for their stability and development. Hence, as the speaker believed, the Middle East and North African countries are not less important strategically than Eastern European countries.

By adding to the two previous reasons for the European procrastination in providing assistance to the Arab Spring countries (first, waiting for the Arab Spring countries to stabilize, the European debt crisis), Doctor Kamal Abu Okail added the third reason which represented in the economic blackmailing that is being exercised by the Western powers on the Arab countries. He stressed that some resources said that the United States with it's main ally the European union, have been exerting pressures on the Gulf countries not to aid or give assistance to Egypt as a way to bring it down to accept their policies and agenda in the Middle East.

Related to this, he commented about Europe's reaction towards the Arab uprising in two stances:

The first one, the European Union, like any other international actor, was surprised by these uprisings and admitted the failure of Intelligence agencies to predict the eruption of such events.

The second stance was praising and giving too much attention to Egypt after the revolution and regarding Egypt as a model for a peaceful revolution that demands the democratic rule and power transition peacefully, where before the revolution, he addressed the absence of Egypt's news on the European arena.

He then, raised many important questions related to the current situation in Egypt, the chief among them was whether the third phase of the Arab uprisings and the disturbances are planned by the EU, as the former Prime Minister Tony Blair has once stated in an interview? Also, is Europe leading the Arab uprisings similar to what has happened in Libya when the NATO forces intervened to topple down Gadaffi's regime? Is Russia, as a great European country is involved in what is happening on the Arab scene?

Too many questions are left unanswered that are related to the European reaction and response towards the Arab uprisings.

He ended up his speech by saying that the rise Islamic forces in the Arab countries, whether that has witnessed revolutions and uprisings or hasn't witnessed any kind of unrest, is a very critical issue which is raising concerns and fears among the European countries, which drives the EU and other Western countries to take necessary precautions in dealing with the Arab countries and not to take any final decisions till things and matters are settled in the Arab Spring countries.

As for the last session which was a round up for all the discussions and issues that have been presented during the seminar, the floor was left for Doctor Michael Willis who touched on many important remarks and point regarding the Arab awakening, which was the core of the seminar.

He started his speech by reverting to a big question that was raised by the Middle East center during the past 10 years, which was "Why there is little change in the Middle East? Why the political process is continuing without any changes?"

His conclusion came in his book "Comparative politics: Maghreb case", where he concluded that no changes appeared on the Maghrebian arena.

Dealing with the question of change, from a stake non-moving situation into an enormous change brings all sort of things in the Middle East and North Africa region, as he said, adding that any change must result in a number of opportunities and challenges.

Within the range of talking about the change which has occurred in the Middle East region, he added the following remarks:

- **First: The Public Opinion:** the most fundamental and important change is the fact of having a new player on the scene that observers, theorists, scholars and politicians have never seen before or put it into consideration and that is the Public opinion. (ordinary people). Suddenly, people in the Arab world, despite not reaching an agreement about the future prospects of the political system of their country, but at least they started to have something to say. He said that generally, the Western countries are used to hear usually the leaders' and statesmen's opinions and views, but nowadays, people's voices must be put into consideration, even though if they didn't reach an agreement on a specific issue, but after all, the Public Opinion is regarded, after the Arab Spring, as a vital new player in the political game that must be put into consideration due to its ability in causing radical necessary changes, as it reflects the opinion of the whole range of ordinary people who were not lead by any leader or who were not an organized specific group, but the revolutions that took place in the Arab region were a headless revolutions which managed to topple down long-lasting regimes.

- **Second: The Elections:** The second factor beside the Public Opinion, but characterized by being more structured than the Public Opinion, is the Elections that have taken place in a number of Arab countries. He commented on the result of the elections saying that such result were different from what all scholars and observers have expected, in which, not everyone found the results as palatable. The results of the elections also raised many questions about where the things are heading to in these countries?

- **Third: Political Islam:** related to the previous two factors; the thing that came out of the new expression of Public Opinion in addition to the Elections is the rise of the Political Islam which occurred in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Morocco. By its nature, the speaker raised other arguments in this respect:
 - a- The Political Islam gives expression to the importance of the rising tension between the Youth and the Islamic forces. By looking at the countries that held elections, despite the youth have voted to certain political movements, but far more percentage did stay at home.
 - b- He saw that bringing Islamists to political responsibility would be of something interesting, so that it will allow for the first time for Islamists to be confronted with challenges and responsibility which will be a critical moment in the history of these nations. This is because of the fact that while some forces are in opposition, it is easy for them to criticize and make slightly unrealistic pronouncements, but when they are in the position of responsibility, no matter how a person is qualified, he has to perform accordingly with the public opinion. i.e, the world will witness change for the Islamists who will have to deal with reality when it is the first time for them to assume power and responsibility.
 - c- on the short run, as he has expected, the rise of Islamists will lead to "*Islamophobia*" in Europe and he thought that Islamophobia was product of very poisonous atmosphere from the 11/9 attacks to other widespread terrorist attacks on the European countries.
But he mentioned one of the critical arguments related to the above mentioned "*Islamophobia*" that is the Arab Muslims are much different of come of the Islamic forces and the people in the streets of Tunisia and Egypt, who are very much like the European people with the desire of the same goals and demands.
- **Fourth: the impact of change on the interest:** any change, according to the speaker, must leave an impact and threaten the interests and aims of the country

that is witnessing such change. Therefore, within the context of the Arab Spring, there are internal and external interests that have been threatened.

By applying on Egypt, the threatened interests are:

a-On the internal level: there are no doubts that the interests of the army after the revolution have been threatened and have affected the economic interests negatively, thus he recommended that these sorts of interests will have to be managed in a way that would not cause problems and must not be ignored or left.

b-On the external level: he agreed with Doctor "**Walter Armbrust**", about the involvement of the United States in Egypt, particularly in the transitional period Egypt is going through.

- **Fifth: The change on the outside world:**

Many analysts and experts started to talk about the effect of the Arab Spring on the rest of the world, claiming that Africa and Europe may witness their own springs.

Doctor Michael said that the Arab Spring events have spread from a country to another, where the sense of power and agency of people have revealed, which they haven't felt for so many decade. He added that in Cairo and Tunisia, there was the spirit of change shared among the people which have moved from a country to another.

On the other hand, he told a narrative about a situation that has happened for a Tunisian businessman who was a friend of the speaker. That businessman has travelled to China to attend a seminar, and when he arrived at the Chinese airport, the security were afraid when they found out that he was holding the Tunisian nationality, but despite this, he was happy because he thought that China, as the world's largest economy started to fear from the tiniest country Tunisia, and thanks goes to the revolution.

At last but not least, the speaker has submitted his conclusion from this seminar in distinguishing between two views:

The pessimistic view: originated from the bloody events that have taken place recently in Egypt in particular and the region with the international scene in general. He agreed with what "Avi Shlaim" has said earlier that he can see no light at the end of the tunnel. Also, the economic recession worldwide, affects the United States as well as the European Union.

As for the optimistic view, the speaker thought that such view has its own reasons. One piece of evidence that gives light for optimism is the case of Tunisia. Comparing Tunisia before and after the revolution, he said we would have find basic differences. Also, the transitional period in Tunisia is passing in a peaceful manner like the elections, the constitution and the government. In other words, the "Revolutionary Outcome" discussed by Doctor Walter Armbrust holds many positive indicators.

Finally, the seminar was a momentum of fruitful discussions and opinions regarding the newly observed phenomena, the Arab awakening that may on the long run turns into a Western spring, where many future prospect at the end are left for the coming course of events.