

OPINION and ANALYSIS

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**A selection of some of the more challenging and thought-provoking
local and international writings on the Middle East**

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1. **Daniel Gordis** **Decency abhors a vacuum**
It may well be that there is no solution to the conflict in which we are now mired. But that is no reason not to keep trying.
 2. **Christians for Fair Witness on the Middle East Statement on the
'Palestine Papers'**
If these documents are authentic, they offer significant clues to one reason why the process has thus far failed.
 3. **George Friedman** **The Egypt Crisis in a Global Context**
As Washington reviews its policy toward Cairo this weekend, officials should think hard about fostering a Mubarak-led transition rather than one led by protesters.
 4. **Leslie Gelb** **Beware Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood**
It would be delusory to take the MB's democratic protestations at face value. Look at who their friends are – like Hamas.
 5. **Abolhassan Bani-Sadr** **On the anniversary of Khomeini's return,
a warning from the first post-Iranian revolution president**
An open future for the Arab world could mean the flowering of democracy --- or resurgent dictatorship. To keep a new strongman from taking over, certain conditions must be met
 6. **Bits and Pieces** **Clips from various media in the Middle East
and elsewhere**
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Decency abhors a vacuum

Daniel Gordis, Jerusalem Post, January 28, 2011

<http://danielgordis.org/2011/01/28/decency-abhors-a-vacuum/>

The creation of Ehud Barak's Independence faction, with its collateral damage to the already hemorrhaging Labor Party, puts Israel into that rare category of First World countries without a social-democrat-like party of any significance. Yet even Labor's opponents ought not breathe a sigh of relief. Our ossified government, with no opposition to goad it into action, is passively presiding over the demise of much of what we have toiled to build.

True, the blame for the demise of Israel's Left really lies with Yasser Arafat. When he unleashed the second intifada (more aptly called the Palestinian terror war) after Camp David sputtered, he proved once and for all that the Palestinians (at least under Arafat) had no intention of making a "land for peace" deal. The Left lost its plausibility, and barring a radical change on the Palestinian side, its demise became all but inevitable.

Blaming Arafat, however, is now irrelevant. Arafat is dead.

What matters now is what will become of us, and the picture is not pretty. Outside our borders, the noose is clearly tightening. The world is losing patience with the peace process, and with us, and is increasingly inclined to impose a solution. Numerous South American countries have recognized Palestine.

Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev, who could not even visit because of a Foreign Ministry strike which the enmity between Binyamin Netanyahu and Avigdor Lieberman prevented anyone from solving, then announced that Russia would follow suit. For the first time in history, the Palestinian flag was hoisted in Washington, DC. At the UN, a resolution condemning settlements was much discussed, and more than one American Jewish group suggested aloud that the Obama administration not veto it.

Anyone who imagines that (just because there is no fighting on any of our borders at the moment) the status quo is tenable is sorely mistaken. The writing on the proverbial international wall requires no deciphering. Without some serious attempt at making progress - even if Palestinian recalcitrance ultimately renders it wholly unsuccessful - Israel effectively contributes to its own marginalization.

Domestically, too, we are doing ourselves enormous harm. Something ugly and dangerous is bubbling to the surface of society, endangering the very democracy and decency that have rightly been the very source of our pride for decades. There is a move for an investigation of the funding of left-wing groups (rather than a law requiring financial transparency for all nonprofits, which would have made much more sense).

Rabbis urge Jews not to sell or rent property to Arabs, effectively making rabid racism a rabbinically-sanctioned position, and rabbis' wives follow suit, warning parents to distance their children from Arabs. (Just imagine a rabbi in the US saying that same thing about African-Americans!)

Recent polls show that one-third of Jewish Israelis oppose giving equal civil rights to Israeli Arabs, and in the modern religious community the rate is double.

At a moment in which the world (largely hypocritically) seems ever more inclined to decide that the State of Israel is morally corrupt and thus fundamentally illegitimate, elements of our society seem determined to provide them all the evidence that they need. We allow the world to draw the conclusion that we have no interest in moving some semblance of a peace process forward, and internally we allow a revolting ugliness to endanger our democracy, corrupt those of our children who are still decent and poison the world's assessment of us precisely when we are most vulnerable.

Our emasculated political leadership - ossified by the unmanageable coalition it created - is endangering the very survival of the values and hope that have long led the Jewish people to live in - or rally around - this country. That is what makes the diplomatic vacuum that this government has allowed to develop so very dangerous. Yes, it is probably the case that no sensible deal Israel offers will be accepted. After all, why should the Palestinians make any concessions now, with their hand only growing stronger with each passing year?

Yet there are at least two important reasons to keep Israeli initiatives at the forefront of the negotiations, no matter how fruitless they may prove. First, we have evidence aplenty that without them the world is going to impose a settlement on this region that will not be the one we want. Successive American presidents, Democratic and Republican, have been substantially less supportive in their second terms than they were in their first. We've seen the tenor of Barack Obama's first term. Do we really want a second-term Obama working in a setting in which Israel has proposed nothing and seems perfectly comfortable with the status quo?

And no less important, an Israel not working publicly to move the peace process forward is one that says to its young people that the Arabs are our enemies, always will be and that, frankly, we don't care that much. A young generation witness to a government that does not even make a pretense of working toward peace concludes that it will be at war forever. "We will fight," young people conclude, "and when we have children, they, too, will go off to war in a conflict that will never, ever end."

In that suffocating mind-set, instilling commitments to decency, liberalism (in the philosophical, not political, sense) and even democracy becomes almost impossible.

It may well be that there is no solution to the conflict in which we are now mired. But that is no reason not to keep trying. One day, our enemies might just decide that they want a future for their children better than the past they inherited. Even more importantly, however, the failure to try is poisoning us. We are already witness to what happens to a society when it gives up trying. Without some dramatic change in our diplomatic orientation and internal discourse, we are going to prove that one can, indeed, win a never-ending war, and still not survive.

Christians for Fair Witness on the Middle East Statement on the 'Palestine Papers'

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/christians-for-fair-witness-on-the-middle-east-statement-on-the-palestine-papers-114893799.html>

NEW YORK, Jan. 30, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire:

Christians for Fair Witness on the Middle East has carefully reviewed the "Palestine Papers," which Al Jazeera says are Palestinian Authority documents memorializing a decade of Israeli/Palestinian peace talks. If these documents are authentic, they offer significant clues to one reason why the process has thus far failed.

Sr. Ruth Lutt, O.P., Fair Witness National Director, says "What the documents from the post-Annapolis talks reveal is that members of the respective negotiating teams shared pragmatic talk about borders, Jerusalem and refugees. While there was not complete agreement on core issues, there was hope of reaching a compromise. A 'Palestine Paper' dated August 31, 2008, memorializes Israeli Prime Minister Olmert's peace proposal package. But there is no indication that Palestinian President Abbas ever came back with a counteroffer."

The "Palestine Papers" reflect claims about an alleged counter-offer, but no evidence that one was ever relayed to Olmert. A December 14, 2008 memo shows Saeb Erekat telling Israeli negotiator Udi Deckel that the Palestinian counter-offer had been 1.9%. It appears, however, that 1.9% was a number Palestinian negotiators had been discussing with the Israeli negotiators prior to the Olmert offer. And, as Deckel points out, "discussions on territory" between negotiators do not constitute a leader's response to a comprehensive peace offer.

An internal Palestinian document reveals that Abbas never intended to respond to the offer at his September 16, 2008 meeting with Olmert, which he regarded as merely "ceremonial." A memo drafted in preparation for that meeting states:

In order to avoid the blame game, the President [Abbas] today is going with a positive attitude, where he will ask more questions from Olmert on his offer, and he will tell him that the Palestinians will respond later.

There is no record of a subsequent response from Abbas.

Rev. Thomas Prinz, pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Leesburg, Virginia, notes that "Talk amongst negotiators is very different from an actual peace proposal agreed upon by leaders."

Rev. Dr. Peter A. Pettit of Muhlenberg College adds, "If the 'Palestine Papers' are authentic, the post-Annapolis talks were essentially a repeat of Camp David. Palestinians and Israelis seemed not too far apart when the negotiators met -- but when a comprehensive deal was actually put forward the Palestinian leader walked away."

Rev. James Loughran, S.A., Director of the Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute says "Many commentators are blaming Israel for rejecting peace in 2008, but the 'Palestine Papers' provide no basis for such a conclusion. At this point we urge the parties to return to the negotiating table and work out a two-state solution."

The Egypt Crisis in a Global Context

By George Friedman of Stratfor, Jewish World Review, 31 January 2011

http://www.jewishworldreview.com/0111/stratfor013111.php3?printer_friendly

It is not at all clear what will happen in the Egyptian revolution. It is not a surprise that this is happening. Hosni Mubarak has been president for more than a quarter of a century, ever since the assassination of Anwar Sadat. He is old and has been ill. No one expected him to live much longer, and his apparent plan, which was that he would be replaced by his son, Gamal, was not going to happen even though it was a possibility a year ago. There was no one, save his closest business associates, who wanted to see Mubarak's succession plans happen. As his father weakened, Gamal's succession became even less likely. Mubarak's failure to design a credible succession plan guaranteed instability on his death. Since everyone knew that there would be instability on his death, there were obviously those who saw little advantage to acting before he died. Who these people were and what they wanted is the issue.

Let's begin by considering the regime. In 1952, Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser staged a military coup that displaced the Egyptian monarchy, civilian officers in the military, and British influence in Egypt. Nasser created a government based on military power as the major stabilizing and progressive force in Egypt. His revolution was secular and socialist. In short, it was a statist regime dominated by the military. On Nasser's death, Anwar Sadat replaced him. On Sadat's assassination, Hosni Mubarak replaced him. Both of these men came from the

military as Nasser did. However their foreign policy might have differed from Nasser's, the regime remained intact.

The demands for Mubarak's resignation come from many quarters, including from members of the regime — particularly the military — who regard Mubarak's unwillingness to permit them to dictate the succession as endangering the regime. For some of them, the demonstrations represent both a threat and opportunity. Obviously, the demonstrations might get out of hand and destroy the regime. On the other hand, the demonstrations might be enough to force Mubarak to resign, allow a replacement — for example, Omar Suleiman, the head of intelligence who Mubarak recently appointed vice president — and thereby save the regime. This is not to say that they fomented the demonstrations, but some must have seen the demonstrations as an opportunity.

This is particularly the case in the sense that the demonstrators are deeply divided among themselves and thus far do not appear to have been able to generate the type of mass movement that toppled the Shah of Iran's regime in 1979. More important, the demonstrators are clearly united in opposing Mubarak as an individual, and to a large extent united in opposing the regime. Beyond that, there is a deep divide in the opposition.

Western media has read the uprising as a demand for Western-style liberal democracy. Many certainly are demanding that. What is not clear is that this is moving Egypt's peasants, workers and merchant class to rise en masse. Their interests have far more to do with the state of the Egyptian economy than with the principles of liberal democracy. As in Iran in 2009, the democratic revolution, if focused on democrats, cannot triumph unless it generates broader support.

The other element in this uprising is the Muslim Brotherhood. The consensus of most observers is that the Muslim Brotherhood at this point is no longer a radical movement and is too weak to influence the revolution. This may be possible, but it is not obvious. The Muslim Brotherhood has many strands, many of which have been quiet under Mubarak's repression. It is not clear who will emerge if Mubarak falls. It is certainly not clear that they are weaker than the democratic demonstrators. It is a mistake to confuse the Muslim Brotherhood's caution with weakness. Another way to look at them is that they have bided their time and toned down their real views, waiting for the kind of moment provided by Mubarak's succession. I would suspect that the Muslim Brotherhood has more potential influence among the Egyptian masses than the Western-oriented demonstrators or Mohamed ElBaradei, the former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, who is emerging as their leader.

There is, of course, the usual discussion of what U.S. President Barack Obama's view is, or what the Europeans think, or what the Iranians are up to. All of them undoubtedly have thoughts and even plans. In my view, trying to shape the political dynamics of a country like Egypt from Iran or the United States is futile, and believing that what is happening in Egypt is the result of their conspiracies is nonsense. A lot of people care what is happening there, and a lot of people are saying all sorts of things and even spending money on spies and Twitter. Egypt's

regime can be influenced in this way, but a revolution really doesn't depend on what the European Union or Tehran says.

There are four outcomes possible. First, the regime might survive. Mubarak might stabilize the situation, or more likely, another senior military official would replace him after a decent interval. Another possibility under the scenario of the regime's survival is that there may be a coup of the colonels. A second possibility is that the demonstrators might force elections in which ElBaradei or someone like him could be elected and Egypt might overthrow the statist model built by Nasser and proceed on the path of democracy. The third possibility is that the demonstrators force elections, which the Muslim Brotherhood could win and move forward with an Islamist-oriented agenda. The fourth possibility is that Egypt will sink into political chaos. The most likely path to this would be elections that result in political gridlock in which a viable candidate cannot be elected. If I were forced to choose, I would bet on the regime stabilizing itself and Mubarak leaving because of the relative weakness and division of the demonstrators. But that's a guess and not a forecast.

Whatever happens matters a great deal to Egyptians. But only some of these outcomes are significant to the world. Among radical Islamists, the prospect of a radicalized Egypt represents a new lease on life. For Iran, such an outcome would be less pleasing. Iran is now the emerging center of radical Islamism; it would not welcome competition from Egypt, though it may be content with an Islamist Egypt that acts as an Iranian ally (something that would not be easy to ensure).

For the USA, an Islamist Egypt would be a strategic catastrophe. Egypt is the center of gravity in the Arab world. This would not only change the dynamic of the Arab world, it would reverse US strategy since the end of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. Sadat's decision to reverse his alliance with the Soviets and form an alliance with the United States undermined the Soviet position in the Mediterranean and in the Arab world and strengthened the United States immeasurably. The support of Egyptian intelligence after 9/11 was critical in blocking and undermining al Qaeda. Were Egypt to stop that cooperation or become hostile, the U.S. strategy would be severely undermined.

The great loser would be Israel. Israel's national security has rested on its treaty with Egypt, signed by Menachem Begin with much criticism by the Israeli right. The demilitarization of the Sinai Peninsula not only protected Israel's southern front, it meant that the survival of Israel was no longer at stake. Israel fought three wars (1948, 1967 and 1973) where its very existence was at issue. The threat was always from Egypt, and without Egypt in the mix, no coalition of powers could threaten Israel (excluding the now-distant possibility of Iranian nuclear weapons). In all of the wars Israel fought after its treaty with Egypt (the 1982 and 2006 wars in Lebanon) Israeli interests, but not survival, were at stake.

If Egypt were to abrogate the Camp David Accords and over time reconstruct its military into an effective force, the existential threat to Israel that existed before

the treaty was signed would re-emerge. This would not happen quickly, but Israel would have to deal with two realities. The first is that the Israeli military is not nearly large enough or strong enough to occupy and control Egypt. The second is that the development of Egypt's military would impose substantial costs on Israel and limit its room for maneuver.

There is thus a scenario that would potentially strengthen the radical Islamists while putting the United States, Israel, and potentially even Iran at a disadvantage, all for different reasons. That scenario emerges only if two things happen. First, the Muslim Brotherhood must become a dominant political force in Egypt. Second, they must turn out to be more radical than most observers currently believe they are — or they must, with power, evolve into something more radical.

If the advocates for democracy win, and if they elect someone like ElBaradei, it is unlikely that this scenario would take place. The pro-Western democratic faction is primarily concerned with domestic issues, are themselves secular and would not want to return to the wartime state prior to Camp David, because that would simply strengthen the military. If they win power, the geopolitical arrangements would remain unchanged.

Similarly, the geopolitical arrangements would remain in place if the military regime retained power — save for one scenario. If it was decided that the regime's unpopularity could be mitigated by assuming a more anti-Western and anti-Israeli policy — in other words, if the regime decided to play the Islamist card, the situation could evolve as a Muslim Brotherhood government would. Indeed, as hard as it is to imagine, there could be an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood designed to stabilize the regime. Stranger things have happened.

When we look at the political dynamic of Egypt, and try to imagine its connection to the international system, we can see that there are several scenarios under which certain political outcomes would have profound effects on the way the world works. That should not be surprising. When Egypt was a pro-Soviet Nasserite state, the world was a very different place than it had been before Nasser. When Sadat changed his foreign policy the world changed with it. If Sadat's foreign policy changes, the world changes again. Egypt is one of those countries whose internal politics matter to more than its own citizens.

Most of the outcomes I envision leave Egypt pretty much where it is. But not all. The situation is, as they say, in doubt, and the outcome is not trivial.

Beware Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood

Leslie H Gelb, The Daily Beast, 29 January 2011

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/blogs-and-stories/2011-01-29/beware-egypts-muslim-brotherhood/>

Difficult as it may be, let's try for an honest and realistic discussion of Egypt. Of course, the Obama administration, most Americans, most Egyptians, and I myself would prefer a democratic government in Cairo instead of President Mubarak's corrupt and repressive establishment. That's not the issue. The real issue is this: If Mubarak tumbles and if Washington uses its influence - and yes, it does have influence at approximately \$3 billion in annual total aid - to push him out, what kind of government will follow his? Will it be even less democratic and more repressive? And what will be the implications for U.S. security in the region?

So, let's stop prancing around and proclaiming our devotion to peace, "universal rights" and people power. Instead, let's step back and look hard at what we know and don't know about this popular explosion in the bosom of one of America's most vital allies - and what the United States can and can't do about it.

The devil we know is President Mubarak. In the history of Mideast bad guys, he's far from the worst. Remember Saddam Hussein, Ayatollah Khomeini, President Ahmadinejad, President Assad of Syria, and the many and varied leaders of Muslim terrorist groups? No sensible American would excuse Mubarak's corrupt regime - a bureaucracy that would make Kafka blush, a nasty police force, and a repressive political system. Very bad, indeed. On the plus side, he's led Egypt's economy to 6 to 7 percent real growth in past years and has conducted a foreign policy highly supportive of US interests.

Most seriously, he failed to institute gradual political and economic reforms. Consequently, his nation is in flames. US administrations haven't been successful in the past when they tried to push Mubarak in this direction. But it stands to reason that he might now be more amenable to reforms and transitions as long as he is not humiliated.

Now, what about the devils we know less - like the protesters? Of course, there's a slew of journalists, pundits, policy experts and professors who say these aren't devils at all, just "the people": democrats, lawyers, and college-educated and moderate women. No doubt, many of the protesters fit that description. But the dutiful press has interviewed only, say, a few hundred of these good souls. Perhaps many are not so democratic. Perhaps many are Egyptian Tea Partiers who want every Egyptian to have Islamic guns like the Founding Pharaohs. Or perhaps many are just furious and poor and unknowledgeable. My guess is no one really knows a great deal about the protesters.

As for most of the other "devils," they are pretty well known. One leadership candidate, of course, is Mohamed ElBaradei, the former U.N. chief nuclear inspector and a good man. But he has almost no constituency inside Egypt,

where he's spent little time in recent years. The people aren't going to give him power, and he probably wouldn't know what to do with it anyway. But he could be part of a future government in an ideal world.

The other "devil," now being proclaimed as misunderstood Islamic democrats, is the Muslim Brotherhood, and they should give us great pause. Baloney and wishful thinking aside, the MB would be calamitous for US security. What's more, their current defenders don't really argue that point, as much as they seem to dismiss it as not important or something we can live with. The MB supports Hamas and other terrorist groups, makes friendly noises to Iranian dictators and torturers, would be uncertain landlords of the critical Suez Canal, and opposes the Egyptian-Israeli agreement of 1979, widely regarded as the foundation of peace in the Mideast. Above all, the MB would endanger counterterrorism efforts in the region and worldwide. That is a very big deal.

As for the MB's domestic democratic credentials, let me show some restraint here. To begin with, no one really has any sound idea of how they might rule; they haven't gotten close enough to power to fully judge. But they'd be bad for non-orthodox Islamic women.

On the anniversary of Khomeini's return, a warning from the first post-Iranian revolution president

By Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, JWR, 1 February 2011

http://www.jewishworldreview.com/0211/iran_lessons.php3

By removing a despot who was the main obstacle to democracy, the Tunisian revolt has immense importance for the Arab and Islamic world. Above all, it has opened up a future which, due to the iron grip of an authoritarian political system backed by European and Arab governments, had been considered closed.

As we see already from the burgeoning demonstrations in Egypt, it is not lost on others in the region that ousting corrupt autocrats is no longer just an impossible dream. Tunisia's message to others in the region is that despotism is not a lot in life to which they must submit. That message is spreading fast because the Tunisian democratic movement is legitimately homegrown and not tied to a Western sponsor, as was the case with the US invasion of Iraq.

As I well know from personal experience, however, an open future includes not only the possibility of democracy, but the possibility of resurgent dictatorship in one form or another.

In order to achieve democracy and diminish the prospect of a new strongman taking over, certain conditions have to be fulfilled.

First, the movement has to distance itself from the old regime and its elites. Revolutions only happen when the system is thoroughly dismantled and rebuilt. For now, the political and neo-liberal economic structures which supported Ben Ali's dictatorship, although shaken and fragile, are to a large extent still intact. The same elites are still in charge.

From this perspective, it was a mistake for the movement to enter into negotiations to form a coalition government with the old elites. They can be trusted only when they voluntarily resign and allow themselves to be replaced by others elected by the people.

Second, the entire structure of the despotic regime — the executive, judiciary and legislative branches — should be revolutionized. It would be a mistake to limit the objectives of the movement to simply changing personalities.

The lack of experience on the part of ordinary people should not lead the movement to import elites from the former regime into the new government. My experience of the 1979 Iranian revolution taught me that in any department and ministry there are enough patriotic experts who are not tarnished by their association with the former regime and who are willing to play a constructive role in rebuilding the country. The fact that the existing elites have the lion's share of the seats in government indicates that there is a serious shortcoming here. This gap has to be filled as soon as possible; otherwise, the elites of the *ancien* regime will reconstitute their power.

The people in the streets who toppled the regime should not think for a moment that their work is done, and that they can retire to their homes now and leave the rest to political organizations. On the contrary, they must make their presence felt in every corner of the country and at every layer of government, perhaps through the formation of local revolutionary councils.

People should stop looking for leaders to take over, and recognize that everyone can develop leadership skills in practice through taking responsibilities, engaging in debate and working with others in the movement.

In democracies, public space belongs to the people. Whenever they feel there are issues to be addressed, they must return to the streets. If people abandon the political space, it will inevitably be filled with power-oriented political organizations that will ultimately re-impose repressive practices.

Despite their many differences from secular to Islamist, political organizations should develop a common commitment to democratic values and the rights of individuals.

Any violation of these principles by the state, against even a single person or group, should be resisted by all.

The unfortunate lesson of the Iranian revolution was that most political organizations did not commit themselves to democracy. Lacking the unity of a democratic front, one by one they became targets of power-seeking clergy in the form of the Islamic Republic Party, and were pushed aside.

In this first peaceful revolt of the 21st century in an Islamic country, Islamic intellectuals have an important role in identifying, developing, and introducing an Islamic discourse of freedom instead of power so that human dignity and rights are respected and defended for all regardless of religion or gender.

After the Iranian revolution, I protested against the show trials and executions of members of the former regime, arguing that those seeking power begin by violating the rights of those who have committed various crimes, but will ultimately violate the rights of the innocent.

The defense of the rights of all citizens must thus include the members of the old regime who are accused of crime and corruption. If the rights of these people are respected, then one can be sure that the rights of others will as well.

As we have seen (and may see further), those in power will resort to violence in order to impose themselves on society. They do so because they believe that people might compromise freedom in exchange for security, and thus become easy prey for a strong dictator or party.

In order to neutralize the violence of such groups, any new government must resist the temptation to create its own revolutionary guard. If contemporary Iran is any indication, such organizations can all too easily morph into an econo-military mafia that becomes part and parcel of the new elite. The solution is rather to reorganize the existing forces of security so they are subject to civilian democracy and the rule of law.

The experience of Tunisia has shown that a revolution can succeed in overthrowing despotism without relying on a power-oriented Khomeini. When a social movement is spontaneous and horizontal, it has a far greater chance of achieving its goals.

But social revolution is an experiment, the path of which is strewn with obstacles at every turn. As such, it will require persistent struggle over many years, not just for a few weeks.

Now there is no turning back. That struggle will bring true democracy if those who made the revolution persist. If they fall back, strongmen are waiting in the wings to seize power out of the vacuum. Then, as in Iran, the people will have to start all over again to regain their freedom.

Bits and Pieces **elsewhere**

Clips from various media in the Middle East and

Imra.org, 1 Feb 2011: Israel and Germany held a joint Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem to mark the strengthening of cooperation between the two countries. Prior to the meeting, Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon and German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Dirk Niebel met and signed a joint Declaration of Intent aimed at increasing bilateral cooperation to assist developing nations. They discussed the continuation and enhancement of cooperation and assistance to developing

countries, following the agreement signed last year. They reviewed progress in the implementation of projects in Ethiopia and Ghana, and decided on a new joint project - the rehabilitation of Lake Victoria, which is contaminated and enduring severe ecological adversity.

JTA, 1 February 2011: In a rare show of unity with Istanbul's dwindling Jewish community, Turkish government officials attended the country's first official commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

BICOM, 1 February 2011: UK Secretary of State for Defence, Liam Fox told the House of Commons yesterday that he disagreed with retired Mossad Chief Meir Dagan's assessment that Iran would not be able to build a bomb before 2015 and said that Tehran could be capable of reaching nuclear weapon capability as early as next year. Fox added that Western powers should make estimations based on more pessimistic assessments of Iran's capabilities.