



Suggested Reading List – December Edition

The Middle East: What Next?

February 22-24, 2013

Suggested Reading for the 26th Annual Camden Conference

Our 26th Annual Camden Conference: *The Middle East: What Next?* will focus on the current status and future prospects of the Arab Awakening across the Middle East and its likely impacts upon U.S. policies and U.S. roles in the region. At this stage, we recommend the following books. They are listed alphabetically by first mentioned author's last name. Confirmed 2013 Camden Conference speakers are designated*.

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Ajami, Fouad. (2012). *The Syrian Rebellion*. Hoover Institution Press.

“Arabs are firm believers in *nasab*, inherited merit passed on from father to son, a nobility of the blood. So what mattered when a rebellion broke out in Syria in 2011 was the insight into the similarities and the differences between Hafez al-Assad and his son Bashar. The father had rigged the succession, with fear completing the trick. Although the people fervently hoped that Bashar would open up the prison that Syria had become under his father, it was not to be.

“Ajami explains how an irresistible force clashed with an immovable object: the regime versus a people who conquered fear to challenge a despot of unspeakable cruelty. Offering a detailed historical perspective, he shows how, for four long decades, the Assad dynasty, the intelligence barons, and the brigade commanders had grown accustomed to a culture of quiescence and silence. But Syrians did not want to be ruled by Bashar's children the way they had been ruled by Bashar and their parents had been by Bashar's father. This book tells how a proud people came to demand something more than a despotic regime of dictatorship and plunder.” From publisher.

Amos, Deborah. (2010). *Eclipse of the Sunnis: Power, Exile, and Upheaval in the Middle East*. Public Affairs.

“Millions of Iraqis, mostly Sunnis, [have] fled the country, creating a refugee crisis that has only recently been acknowledged as such by the U.S. government.... Amos deftly examines the political and cultural consequences of the marginalization of the Sunnis while focusing on individual Iraqis who have fled to such countries as Syria and Lebanon in the wake of a new sectarian and tribal-based order in Iraq.... Amos's breathtaking work implicates not only shortsighted American policy but the age-old schism between Sunni and Shia and the cagey maneuverings of such meddling neighbors as Syria. The weight and complexity of the Iraqi problem is on full display, with shreds of hope pushing through the layers like scrub in the desert.” From *Publishers Weekly*.

Bradley, John. (2010). *After the Arab Spring: How Islamists Hijacked the Middle East*. Palgrave.

“Having boldly predicted the revolution in Egypt in his book *Inside Egypt* and warned of the ‘saving graces’ of Tunisia’s Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali dictatorship before the advent of the Jasmine Revolution in *Behind the Veil of Vice*, Bradley sends out another cry of alarm—this time at the democratic fallout that is benefiting the strident Islamist parties.... Bradley looks at the resurgence of Saudi-sponsored Wahhabism and other forms of tribalism since the revolutions in Yemen, Libya and elsewhere. He also considers the ‘Shia Axis’ and bitter lessons gained from Islamist incursions in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia.” From *Kirkus Review*.

Feldman, Noah. (2008). *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State*. Princeton University Press.

Perhaps no other Western writer has more deeply probed the bitter struggle in the Muslim world between the forces of religion and law and those of violence and lawlessness as Noah Feldman. His scholarship has defined the stakes in the Middle East today. Now, Feldman tells the story behind the increasingly popular call for the establishment of the shari'a--the law of the traditional Islamic state--in the modern Muslim world.

Western powers call it a threat to democracy. Islamist movements are winning elections on it. Terrorists use it to justify their crimes. What, then, is the shari'a? Given the severity of some of its provisions, why is it popular among Muslims? Can the Islamic state succeed--should it? Feldman reveals how the classical Islamic constitution governed through and was legitimated by law.

He also gives us the sweeping history of the traditional Islamic constitution--its noble beginnings, its downfall, and the renewed promise it could hold for Muslims and Westerners alike. From Publisher.

Filiu, Jean-Pierre. (2011). *The Arab Revolution: Ten Lessons from the Democratic Uprising*. Oxford University Press.

“Filiu offers a concise but sweeping account of the revolts that began in Tunis and continue today throughout the Middle East. Stressing the deep historical roots of the events, Filiu organizes the book around ten lessons that illuminate both the uprisings in particular and the region in general. He shows that Arabs have been fighting for their rights for more than a generation.

“He sheds light on the role of youth--whose anger is power, and who embrace the message "tomorrow is yours, if you fight for it"--as well as the important role that social networks played in Tunisia and Egypt. He also reveals that, despite being somewhat overshadowed by the Arab uprising, Palestine remains the central concern throughout the Middle East.” From publisher.

Fromkin, David. (2009). *A Peace to End All Peace, 20th Anniversary Edition: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East (Paper, 636 pages)*, Holt.

Published currently with a new afterword from the author. This critically acclaimed *New York Times* bestselling account of how the modern Middle East came into being after World War I, and why it is in upheaval today is **essential background reading**.

***Gause, F. Gregory. (2009) *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf* . Cambridge University Press.**

"Gregory Gause's book is the first to offer a comprehensive account of the international politics in the Persian Gulf across nearly four decades. The story begins in 1971 when Great Britain ended its protectorate relations with the smaller states of the lower Gulf. It traces developments in the region from the oil 'revolution' of 1973-74 through the Iranian revolution, the Iran-Iraq war and the Gulf war of 1990-91 to the toppling of Saddam Hussein in the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, bringing the story of Gulf regional politics up to 2008. The book highlights transnational identity issues, regime security and the politics of the world oil market, and charts the changing mix of interests and ambitions driving American policy. The author brings his experience as a scholar and commentator on the Gulf to this riveting account of one of the most politically volatile regions on earth." From publisher.

Gerges, Fawaz A.(2012). *Obama and the Middle East: The End of America's Moment?* Palgrave.

A hard-hitting assessment of Obama's current foreign policy and a sweeping look at the future of the Middle East.

The 2011 Arab Spring upended the status quo in the Middle East and poses new challenges for the United States. Here, Fawaz Gerges, one of the world's top Middle East scholars, delivers a full picture of US relations with the region. He reaches back to the post-World War II era to explain the issues that have challenged the Obama administration and examines the president's responses, from his negotiations with Israel and Palestine to his drawdown from Afghanistan and withdrawal from Iraq. Evaluating the president's engagement with the Arab Spring, his decision to order the death of Osama bin Laden, his intervention in Libya, his relations with Iran, and other key policy matters, Gerges highlights what must change in order to improve US outcomes in the region.

Gerges' conclusion is sobering: the United States is near the end of its moment in the Middle East. The cynically realist policy it has employed since World War II—continued by the Obama administration—is at the root of current bitterness and mistrust, and it is time to remake American foreign policy. From publisher.

House, Karen Elliott. (2012). *On Saudi Arabia: Its People, Past, Religion, Fault Lines - and Future*. Knopf.

"From the Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter who has spent the last thirty years writing about Saudi Arabia—as diplomatic correspondent, foreign editor, and then publisher of *The Wall Street Journal*—an important and timely book that explores all facets of life in this shrouded Kingdom: its tribal past, its complicated present, its precarious future." From publisher.

Lesch, David W. (2012). *Syria: The Fall of the House of Assad*. Yale UP.

When Syrian President Bashar al-Assad came to power upon his father's death in 2000, many in- and outside Syria held high hopes that the popular young doctor would bring long-awaited reform, that he would be a new kind of Middle East leader capable of guiding his country toward genuine democracy.

David Lesch was one of those who saw this promise in Assad. A widely respected Middle East scholar and consultant, Lesch came to know the president better than anyone in the West, in part through a remarkable series of meetings with Assad between 2004 and 2009. Yet for Lesch, like millions of others, Assad was destined to disappoint. In this timely book, the author explores Assad's failed leadership, his transformation from bearer of hope to reactionary tyrant, and his regime's violent response to the uprising of his people in the wake of the Arab Spring.

Lesch charts Assad's turn toward repression and the inexorable steps toward the violence of 2011 and 2012. The book recounts the causes of the Syrian uprising, the regime's tactics to remain in power, the responses of other nations to the bloodshed, and the determined efforts of regime opponents. In a thoughtful conclusion, the author suggests scenarios that could unfold in Syria's uncertain future. From publisher.

***Lynch, Marc. (2012). *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East. Public Affairs.* (Note earlier tag-line: *The Arab Uprising: The Wave of Protest That Toppled the Status Quo and the Struggle for a New Middle East.*)**

“George Washington University political scientist Lynch (Voices of the New Arab Public) offers a nuanced, insightful analysis of the Arab insurrections, with ample historical context. Though the book opens with an almost catastrophic dearth of storytelling, Lynch hits his stride as he details Middle Eastern activists’ roles in the uprisings that spread across the region, as well as the fall of three Arab leaders within one year: President Ben Ali of Tunisia, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and Libyan ruler Muammar Gaddafi. Tracing the 2011 protests to the Arab cold war of the 1950s and ’60s, Lynch vigorously warns against the assumption that recent uprisings will yield instant peace.” From *Publishers Weekly*.

Majid, Hooman. (2008) *The Ayatollah Begs to Differ: The Paradox of Modern Iran.* Doubleday. (Anchoir, 2009 offers a new preface).

“Starred Review. In this critical but affectionate portrait of Iranian politics and culture, Majid, the Western-educated grandson of an ayatollah, delves into the very core of Iranian society, closely examining social mores and Farsi phrases to identify the Persian sensibility, which, Majid determines, cherishes privacy, praise and poetry. Nothing is too small or too sweeping for Majid to consider, and although he announces his allegiance to the former president Khatami, he remains scrupulously even-handed in assessing his successor Ahmadinejad, shedding light on the Iranian president's obsession with the Holocaust and penchant for windbreakers and why the two are (surprisingly) intertwined.”

The author's brisk, conversational prose is appealing; his book reads as if he is chatting with a smart friend, while strolling around Tehran, engaged in *ta'arouf* (an exaggerated form of self-deprecation key to understanding Persian society). Although Majid seems to gloss too quickly over realities that don't engage his interest—women's voices are only intermittently included—this failing scarcely mars this remarkable ride through what is often uncharted territory.” From *Publishers Weekly*.

Mayer, Ann Elizabeth. (2012) *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics*, [Paper, 320 pp]. 5th Edition.] Westview.

“*Islam and Human Rights* is a probing examination of how the Islamic tradition has been exploited for political ends by regimes and institutions seeking to legitimize policies inimical to human rights. Ann Elizabeth Mayer, a lawyer, critically appraises Islamic human rights schemes that dilute the human rights afforded by international law, comparing them with the complex Islamic legal heritage and international human rights law. Challenging stereotypes about a supposedly monolithic Islam inherently incompatible with human rights, Mayer dissects the political motives behind the selective deployment of elements of the Islamic tradition by conservative forces seeking to delegitimize demands for democracy and human rights.”

Mayer is an associate professor at Wharton School and has a JD from the University of Penna. Law School, plus a PhD in Middle Eastern History from Univ. of Michigan.

Merlini, Cesare and Roy, Olivier. (2012) *Arab Society in Revolt: The West's Mediterranean Challenge*. With Strobe Talbott Foreword. (Paper, Fifth edition, 250 pp.) Brookings Institution Press.

“The Arab Spring of 2011 will be remembered as a period of great change by the Arab states of North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean. Facing fundamental transitions in governance, these countries are also undergoing profound social, cultural, and religious changes. The European Union and the United States, caught unprepared by the uprisings, now must address the inescapable challenges of these transformations. *Arab Society in Revolt* explains and interprets the societal transformations occurring in the Arab Muslim world, their ramifications for the West, and possible policy options for dealing with this new world.

“Expectations raised in the Arab squares are bound to have political consequences sooner or later. How will the West respond to these new realities, particularly in light of international economic uncertainty, EU ambivalence toward a "cohesive foreign policy," and declining U.S. influence abroad?” From publisher.

Cesare Merlini is a nonresident senior fellow at the Center on the United States and Europe in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings and chairman of the board of trustees with the Italian Institute for International Affairs in Rome. **Olivier Roy** is professor at the European University Institute in Florence, directing the Mediterranean program at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and is a senior researcher at the French National Centre for Scientific Research. He is a former Camden Conference speaker.

Mousavian , Seyed Hossein. (2012). *The Iranian Nuclear Crisis: A Memoir*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

“Mousavian provides a long, but intimate knowledge of Iran's interactions with the EU's International Atomic Energy Agency and global powers. As intense debate continues over the direction of Iran's nuclear program, Mousavian weighs the likely effects of military strikes, covert action, sanctions, and diplomatic engagement, considering their potential to resolve the nuclear crisis.

“He is currently a visiting research scholar at the Woodrow Wilson School's Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University.” Primarily from publisher.

Nasr, Vali. (2009). *Forces of Fortune: The Rise of the New Muslim Middle Class and What It Will Mean for Our World*. Free Press.

“Nasr offers a fresh look at the future of religious extremism in the Middle East, suggesting that the great battle... for the soul of the region will be fought not over religion, but over business and capitalism. He posits that a rising middle class—seen most dramatically in Dubai, but a force across the whole Muslim world—is far more interested in economic success than in fervent religiosity, even as many bring a distinctly Muslim approach to the business they do. He points out that while the Reformation created the modern world, it wasn't that era's intolerant faith that made the transformation but rather trade and commerce, adding that values gain currency when they serve the economic and social interests of people. His in-depth analysis of the failures of various governments to provide for their people, as well as special focus on what is working in Turkey, and what is crippling Pakistan, helps drive his thesis home. Nasr's analysis can't help being somewhat hobbled by the fact that it depends heavily on the shifting sands of history-in-the-making, attention.” From *Publishers Weekly*.

Nydell, Margaret. (2006). *Understanding Arabs: A Guide for Modern Times, 4th Edition*. Intercultural Press.

“The fourth edition of this classic introduction to Arab culture has been completely revised and updated to help readers understand the complex issues playing out on the world stage. *Understanding Arabs*, is a handbook accessible to everyone. The book promotes understanding between modern-day Arabs and Westerners without pushing a political agenda. New chapters include information about Islamic Fundamentalism, anti-Americanism and an updated and expanded chapter on Arabs and Muslims in the West.” From the publisher.

Pollack, Kenneth M. (2004). *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America*, Random House.

“Pollack was formerly director for Gulf affairs at the National Security Council and a military analyst for the CIA, This time around; he concludes his book by saying that although "Iran is on the wrong path and marching down it quickly," invasion by us or others would be a serious mistake. Ultimately, and with many codicils, Pollack decides that the U.S. can live with a nuclear Iran, postulating that through strong multilateral engagement we can effectively deter Iran, if not yet welcome the country into the world community For anyone wanting to understand the stark choices the U.S. faces concerning Iran, and how to respond to them, this is the place to start.” From *Publishers Weekly*.

Pollack, Kenneth M. (2011). *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East*. Brookings Institution Press.

A collection, edited and written by Pollack, of 18 individual authors' comments on each of the Arab countries that are involved or impacted by the “awakening.” “Even the most seasoned Middle East observers were taken aback by the events of early 2011. Protests born of oppression and socioeconomic frustration erupted throughout the streets; public unrest provoked violent police backlash; long-established dictatorships fell. How did this all happen? What might the future look like,

and what are the likely ramifications for the United States and the rest of the world? In *The Arab Awakening*, experts from the Brookings Institution tackle such questions to make sense of this tumultuous region that remains at the heart of U.S. national interests.” From the publisher.

Pollack adds: the awakening “should make it clear that change in the Middle East will continue whether the United States likes it or not. It’s not whether, but when....and how.” And what that means to all of us.

Ramadan, Tariq. (2012). *Islam and the Arab Awakening*. Oxford.

“Few scholars have the knowledge and ability to give readers as great an insight into Muslim society and culture as Tariq Ramadan, and "Islam and the Arab Awakening" is perhaps the most insightful book this far on the current wave of unrest in the Muslim world. Approaching this book I was reminded of the somewhat apocryphal statement attributed to Zhou Enlai when asked about the French Revolution. His response, "It's too soon to tell." That would be a fitting leitmotif for Ramadan, as it is too soon to tell where the Arab Spring or Jasmine Revolution are going, as it is still unfolding and will likely differ depending on the country and the responses to how it unfolds.

Ramadan debunks a number of preconceived notions about the Muslim world, society, and culture, and those insights are desperately needed to better understand what is occurring. There is no monolithic Muslim world, society, and culture; it is as diverse, divided, and diffuse as any other culture. And as one of the foremost scholars, thinkers, and philosophers in the Muslim world Ramadan has unique insights he shares with readers.

Ramadan is the grandson of one of the founders of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and related to other leading lights in the reformist movement.” From Todd Bartholomew. Book was first published in UK 2011.

And, three books by Robin Wright. Ms. Wright will be the opening keynote speaker at our February 2013 annual Conference.

***Wright, Robin. (2012). *Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion Across the Islamic World*. Simon & Schuster.**

This new jihad, which Wright describes in its many manifestations, has various goals. For some Muslims, it’s about reforming the faith. For others, it’s about reforming political systems. For all, it is about achieving basic rights—on their own terms, not Western ones. What is at its heart is the rejection of venomous ideologies, suicide bombs, plane hijackings, hostage-takings, and mass violence. Very basic change is in the works. Some of the changes may last, but not all will. Ms. Wright, a seasoned reporter, public thought leader, and author, will help us sort out the various options and what they mean for us. Publishers Weekly says “...Wright is an expert on the subject and this book is an accessible and riveting account for readers looking to learn more about the post-9/11 Islamic world.”

***Wright, Robin. (2010). *The Iran Primer: Power Politics and U.S. Policy*. United States Institute of Peace.**

“Offers a comprehensive but concise *overview of Iran’s* politics, economics, military, foreign policy, and nuclear program. It reviews U.S-Iran relations under six American presidents and probes five options for dealing with Iran.” From publisher.

***Wright, Robin. (2012). *The Islamists are Coming: Who They Really Are*. United States Institute of Peace.**

“*The Islamists Are Coming: Who They Really Are* is the first book to survey the rise of Islamist groups in the wake of the Arab Spring. A wide range of experts from three continents cover the major countries where Islamist parties are redefining politics and the regional balance of power. “They cover the origins, evolution, positions on key issues and the future in key countries. Robin Wright offers an overview, Olivier Roy explains how Islam and democracy are now interdependent, Annika Folkeson profiles the 50 Islamist parties, and 10 experts identify Islamists in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian territories, Syria, and Tunisia.” From publisher.

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For comments and other books, please contact our booklist editor at smdb@samfelton.com.