

## The Start of a Global Revolution?

Пише: Andrew Gavin Marshall  
понедељак, 31 јануар 2011 21:56

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(Global Research, January 27, 2011)



**For the first time in human history almost all of humanity is politically activated, politically conscious and politically interactive...** The resulting global political activism is generating a surge in the quest for personal dignity, cultural respect and economic opportunity in a world painfully scarred by memories of centuries-long alien colonial or imperial domination.

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**The worldwide yearning for human dignity is the central challenge inherent in the phenomenon of global political awakening... That awakening is socially massive and politically radicalizing**

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**he nearly universal access to radio, television and increasingly the Internet is creating a community of shared perceptions**

and envy that can be galvanized and channeled by demagogic political or religious passions.

**These energies transcend sovereign borders and pose a challenge both to existing states as well as to the existing global hierarchy, on top of which America still perches**

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**The youth of the Third World are particularly restless and resentful. The demographic revolution they embody is thus a political time-bomb, as well... Their potential revolutionary spearhead is likely to emerge from among the scores of millions of students concentrated in the often intellectually dubious "tertiary level" educational institutions of developing countries**

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Depending on the definition of the tertiary educational level,  
**there are currently worldwide between 80 and 130 million "college" students**

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Typically originating from the socially insecure lower middle class and inflamed by a sense of social outrage,

**these millions of students are revolutionaries-in-waiting, already semi-mobilized in large congregations, connected by the Internet and pre-positioned for a replay on a larger scale of what transpired years earlier in Mexico City or in Tiananmen Square. Their physical energy and emotional frustration is just waiting to be triggered by a cause, or a faith, or a hatred**

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[The] major world powers, new and old, also face a novel reality: while the lethality of their military might is greater than ever, their capacity to impose control over the politically awakened masses of the world is at a historic low. **To put it bluntly: in earlier times, it was easier to control one million people than to physically kill one million people; today, it is infinitely easier to kill one million people than to control one million people**

[1]

- Zbigniew Brzezinski

Former U.S. National Security Advisor, Co-Founder of the Trilateral Commission,  
Member, Board of Trustees, Center for Strategic and International Studies

### North Africa and the Global Political Awakening, Part 1

An uprising in Tunisia led to the overthrow of the country's 23-year long dictatorship of President Ben Ali. A new 'transitional' government was formed, but the protests continued demanding a totally new government without the relics of the previous tyranny. Protests in Algeria have continued for weeks, as rage mounts against rising food prices, corruption and state oppression. Protests in Jordan forced the King to call on the military to surround cities with tanks and set up checkpoints. Tens of thousands of protesters marched on Cairo demanding an end to the 30-year dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak. Thousands of activists, opposition leaders and students rallied in the capitol of Yemen against the corrupt dictatorship of President Saleh, in power since 1978. Saleh has been, with U.S. military assistance, attempting to crush a rebel movement in the north and a massive secessionist movement growing in the south, called the "Southern Movement." Protests in Bolivia against rising food prices forced the populist government of Evo Morales to backtrack on plans to cut subsidies. Chile erupted in protests as demonstrators railed against rising fuel prices. Anti-government demonstrations broke out in Albania, resulting in the deaths of several protesters.

It seems as if the world is entering the beginnings of a new revolutionary era: the era of the 'Global Political Awakening.' While this 'awakening' is materializing in different regions, different nations and under different circumstances, it is being largely influenced by global conditions. The global domination by the major Western powers, principally the United States, over the past 65 years, and more broadly, centuries, is reaching a turning point. The people of the world are restless, resentful, and enraged. Change, it seems, is in the air. As the above quotes from

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Brzezinski indicate, this development on the world scene is the most radical and potentially dangerous threat to global power structures and empire. It is not a threat simply to the nations in which the protests arise or seek change, but perhaps to a greater degree, it is a threat to the imperial Western powers, international institutions, multinational corporations and banks that prop up, arm, support and profit from these oppressive regimes around the world. Thus, America and the West are faced with a monumental strategic challenge: what can be done to stem the Global Political Awakening? Zbigniew Brzezinski is one of the chief architects of American foreign policy, and arguably one of the intellectual pioneers of the system of globalization. Thus, his warnings about the 'Global Political Awakening' are directly in reference to its nature as a *threat* to the prevailing global hierarchy. As such, we must view the 'Awakening' as the greatest hope for humanity. Certainly, there will be many failures, problems, and regressions; but the 'Awakening' has begun, it is underway, and it cannot be so easily co-opted or controlled as many might assume.

The reflex action of the imperial powers is to further arm and support the oppressive regimes, as well as the potential to organize a destabilization through covert operations or open warfare (as is being done in Yemen). The alterantive is to undertake a strategy of "democratization" in which Western NGOs, aid agencies and civil society organizations establish strong contacts and relationships with the domestic civil society in these regions and nations. The objective of this strategy is to organize, fund and help direct the domestic civil society to produce a democratic system made in the image of the West, and thus maintain continuity in the international hierarchy. Essentially, the project of "democratization" implies creating the outward visible constructs of a democratic state (multi-party elections, active civil society, "independent" media, etc) and yet maintain continuity in subservience to the World Bank, IMF, multinational corporations and Western powers.

It appears that both of these strategies are being simultaneously imposed in the Arab world: enforcing and supporting state oppression and building ties with civil society organizations. The problem for the West, however, is that they have not had the ability to yet establish strong and dependent ties with civil society groups in much of the region, as ironically, the oppressive regimes they propped up were and are unsurprisingly resistant to such measures. In this sense, we must not cast aside these protests and uprisings as being instigated by the West, but rather that they emerged organically, and the West is subsequently attempting to co-opt and control the emerging movements.

Part 1 of this essay focuses on the emergence of these protest movements and uprisings, placing it in the context of the Global Political Awakening. Part 2 will examine the West's strategy of "democratic imperialism" as a method of co-opting the 'Awakening' and installing "friendly" governments.

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### The Tunisian Spark

A July 2009 diplomatic cable from America's Embassy in Tunisia reported that, "many Tunisians are frustrated by the lack of political freedom and angered by First Family corruption, high unemployment and regional inequities. Extremism poses a continuing threat," and that, "the risks to the regime's long-term stability are increasing." [\[2\]](#)

On Friday, 14 January 2011, the U.S.-supported 23-year long dictatorship of Tunisian president Ben Ali ended. For several weeks prior to this, the Tunisian people had risen in protest against rising food prices, stoked on by an immense and growing dissatisfaction with the political repression, and prodded by the WikiLeaks cables confirming the popular Tunisian perception of gross corruption on the part of the ruling family. The spark, it seems, was when a 26-year old unemployed youth set himself on fire in protest on December 17.

With the wave of protests sparked by the death of the 26-year old who set himself on fire on December 17, the government of Tunisia responded by cracking down on the protesters. Estimates vary, but roughly 100 people were killed in the clashes. Half of Tunisia's 10 million people are under the age of 25, meaning that they have never known a life in Tunisia outside of living under this one dictator. Since Independence from the French empire in 1956, Tunisia has had only two leaders: Habib Bourguiba and Ben Ali. [\[3\]](#)

The Tunisian people were rising up against a great many things: an oppressive dictatorship which has employed extensive information and internet censorship, rising food prices and inflation, a corrupt ruling family, lack of jobs for the educated youth, and a general sense and experience of exploitation, subjugation and disrespect for human dignity.

Following the ouster of Ben Ali, Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi assumed presidential power and declared a "transitional government." Yet, this just spurred more protests demanding his resignation and the resignation of the entire government. Significantly, the trade union movement had a large mobilizing role in the protests, with a lawyers union being particularly active during the initial protests. [\[4\]](#)

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