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I would like to start by thanking the Qatari Foreign Ministry and IFRI for organising such a forum. I was asked to speak a little bit about the Arab Spring, why it happened, and what lessons we learned from that. The Arab Spring was a populist, spontaneous movement that was not organised. It was against existing conditions in an attempt to change the negative circumstances of people back then. People went to the streets, and we saw the immolation of Tarek Mohamed Bouazizi from Tunisia on 17 December 2010, which was the start of the protest. In Sidi Bouzid, he burnt himself in protest at the authorities turning down his small cart, where he used to sell products. This led to the first igniting of the Arab protests, which moved to other countries in 2011.

On 25 January, we saw people taking to the streets in Cairo. The reasons behind this was that authorities are being viewed as obsolete due to their inheritance of the republican system, the lack of development, and lack of welfare. There was the increase in inflation, a drop in salaries and widespread unemployment, and the spread of bribes, corruption and nepotism. There was the lack of fair opportunities and a feeling that half-solutions were being proposed to the problems in those countries.

Today, six years later, we could say that this Arab Spring was only able to achieve a few of its objectives. At the same time, difficult conditions have emerged in Arab countries, and they led to immense challenges that threaten Arab nations and regional security and stability. They pose a direct threat to the stability in many Arab countries, as well as the territorial and political integrity of those countries.

The question is not who does what and when. Governments and others should look into the reasons behind the Arab Spring revolutions and come up with measures in response. They have to look into the needs of the youth and their mentality, how they can deal with them, influence them and benefit from them. They could turn them into positive powers, governments and research centres, together with civil society organisations. They should also examine the impact of regional situations on the youth. They have to face the challenges that the Arab region faces, be it regionally, internally or internationally. All this has an impact on the stability of Arab countries.

New media and social media should also be identified in order to determine its impact on the youth. Media, universities, schools and intellectual people should try to spread the correct ideology and should map out the future. There should also be a pact of honour among societies. This should be done following extensive and thorough studies and research. Arab countries should also look into the phenomenon of terrorism and how to dry up its finances. This is a phenomenon that targets all countries, without any exceptions.

It is also important to look at the Arab economy in order to generate more growth and provide job opportunities, decent ones for university graduates and the youth. There must be honesty in the Arab world in order to determine how to deal with Islamic movements. This is to identify them and to make the difference between political activism and the Dawa activism of those movements.

All of the above begs the question of how we can achieve the objectives that the Arab Spring failed to achieve. The answer does not lie in how to reap the benefits, but rather how to overcome the challenges that were caused by the Arab Spring and how to achieve basic security and stability in the Arab world.

The objectives of the Arab Spring cannot be achieved in the current situation, which threatens the existence of the Arab world. We have to deal seriously with the dangerous challenges that the Arab world is living with before starting

on structural reforms. We must hold all those who are corrupt accountable, as the Arab Spring tried to do. The Arab Spring was used by some element to insert a religious dimension in order to achieve their objectives, and then to use the feelings of people from different religious parties for personal interests. This has led to an aggravation of terrorism and the spread of armed militias, threatening the existence of countries and increasing the role of non-state players or parties.

There was external interference in the Arab world that violated the territorial integrity of those countries, in an attempt to impose certain policies in some countries. This was under the pretext of protecting stability or protecting minorities. There were other slogans that would justify aggression against Arab countries. This violated the privacy of Arab citizens. The interference put its hands on the Arab wealth, in addition to stealing the archaeological and civilisation legacy of Arab countries, hence violating the privacy of Arab countries. ESCWA, for instance, mentioned that the protests during the Arab Spring incurred losses amounting to USD 614 million since the beginning of the Arab Spring. The losses in infrastructure were EUR 461 billion and the stock exchange markets lost USD 35 billion. People's affiliations in the Arab world and their identity have also been manipulated, killing citizenship and the national affiliation of citizens.

Finally, we also cannot overlook US politics and its fluctuations, which are affecting our region. The Russian intervention in Syria is also affecting Arab countries, at a time when the United Nations and the European Union are not playing their role. The current trend should focus on maintaining the existence of the Arab world and maintaining its stability. This is before looking at development and reforms and the achievement of the Arab Spring objectives. What this means is to avoid further fragmentation and falling further into a spiral of wars and economic and social disruption. We have to maintain the Arab nation for the sake of everyone.

Jim HOAGLAND, Contributing Editor, *The Washington Post*

Thank you for that very broad based analysis. Just to make sure that I understand two points, essentially you see both the spread of social media in the Arab world and the Arab Spring itself as a net negative for the Arab world. Is that right?

Abdulaziz Othman bin SAGER, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, Saudi Arabia

I am saying Arab social media was a tool that was used during the Arab Spring but, I do not look at the Arab Spring as a total negative. I think for the various reasons associated with the Arab Spring, today I am sure that people are evaluating the situation from a cost benefit perspective. I am not saying that Saddam, Gaddafi, or Assad were a better choice, but I think that the whole process of the Arab Spring today, when people weigh the benefits and losses and how much it cost in infrastructure and how much it cost the region, one has to look at it from this angle. I was suggesting yesterday that we need better Arab unity, working together, we need to address many of those issues in terms of democracy, youth, job issues, we need to look at media and the role of the external actors in the region.