

**CENTER FOR
STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CSIS)**

**CSIS-BOB SCHIEFFER SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM DIALOGUE:
IMPLICATIONS OF THE UPRISING IN EGYPT**

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**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2011
5:30 P.M.
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

*Transcript by
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.*

(Cross talk.)

H. ANDREW SCHWARTZ: Good evening. I ask everyone to take their seats, please. Good evening and welcome to the Center for Strategic International Studies. My name is Andrew Schwartz and I'm the senior vice president for external relations here.

Welcome to everybody coming out, especially on such short notice. Usually, we put the Schieffer series together a little bit further in advance but this – the dramatic events that we've all been glued to in Egypt over the last several days really made this important session happen. I'm so glad you all could make it out here. And I think this is the first Schieffer series we've done since the Horned Frogs won the Rose Bowl. (Laughter.) So we say "Go Frogs" to all our frozen friends, actually, back in Fort Worth, who are suffering what we normally suffer.

I'd also like to thank United Technologies, our sponsor of this series that's made it possible for us to have these wonderful sessions led by the one and only Bob Schieffer. Bob.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Thank you very much and thanks to all of you for coming. I mean, we do try to stay on top of the news. I remember the last one of these we had, it was right after the North Korean thing erupted and we were the day of when we did our thing on North Korea and their potential nuclear power.

We're going to talk about Egypt today and we really have some great folks. Dr. Abderrahim Foukara is bureau chief for Al Jazeera satellite channel in the D.C. and New York offices. He's a host of "From Washington," a weekly show on American issues and current affairs and how they impact the U.S. relations with the Arab and Muslim world. He came to Al Jazeera eight years ago from the D.C.-based allAfrica.com, one of the world's largest providers of African news analysis. Before that, he was with the BBC and also "The World," a Boston-based coproduction of the BBC.

Nancy Youssef, my friend from McClatchy, was for a long time the bureau chief in Baghdad, I guess, and then in Afghanistan too. Most of her reporting from recent years has been about back in Baghdad and Iraq and Afghanistan. But she is Egyptian – both of her parents are Egyptian. They live here now but she has lots of family in Cairo. So she can tell us exactly what's happening over there from – not from the standpoint of the government or the demonstrators, but folks who live there.

And then Jon Alterman, of course, is director and senior fellow of the Middle East programs here at CSIS, prior to that, a member of the policy planning staff at U.S. Department of State, special assistant to assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, a member of the chief of naval operations executive panel. Before that, of course, he was an academic: He taught at Johns Hopkins at also at George Washington, a scholar at the U.S. Institute of Peace and at the Washington Institute of Near East Policy.

So we got folks here, as we always do, who have a pretty good – pretty good experience on what they've come here to talk about. Let me just start and I want to ask this, this one general question to all three of you and Dr. Foukara, you can – we'll just go around the horn here. Is this a revolt or is it a revolution?

ABDERRAHIM FOUKARA: Oh, boy. (Laughter.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: I'm going through a lot today. (Laughter.)

MR. FOUKARA: I think it's a revolution to the extent that it may succeed. I think if it does succeed and it passes off peacefully and leads to a good outcome for Egypt, for the Arab region and for the relations between the Arab region and the West, particularly the United States, I think it'll be revolutionary in its implications, transforming the region – something that some U.S. administrations have tried to do in that part of the world and sometimes dismally failed.

And it would be revolutionary in the sense that if it happens relatively peacefully – because we've seen some violence over the last 24 hours – if it happens peacefully, it will food for thought, not just for Egyptians but for other Arabs, about how they can transform themselves without necessarily going back to where the Arab world was just two months ago, before Tunisia happened.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Nancy Youssef, you were on the phone with friends, relations all day today. What do they think?

NANCY YOUSSEF: Well, they don't know. Step back a bit. The reason this is such a critical question is what we're really asking is, what's an acceptable outcome to the Egyptians? If the acceptable outcome is Omar Suleiman is – members of the current government, the status quo in terms of the institutions of government and how it's set up, then it's a revolt. It's a revolt against Mubarak and some of the practices of his government. If there's a fundamental change in how things are done in Egypt and, presumably, the Middle East broadly, then this becomes a revolution.

To your question about what people are saying: You know, I'm talking to the people, mostly, who aren't in Tahrir Square right now, who are hunkered down in their homes, who are protecting their neighborhoods in some cases, who are trying to stretch their Egyptian pounds as far as possible because they don't know when they're going to get to the bank next. And they're middle-class Egyptians that I'm talking to and by and large, I hear them saying, look, we don't want Mubarak. We hear it. But this idea of an immediate end of his regime – what next? It's the uncertainty that worries them, you know? It's the devil you know versus the one you don't.

On top of that, they're seeing a – the protests on the street and they don't know who those people are and who they're speaking on behalf of. And so I think, in a way, they feel like their needs, their demands, their needs and wants are being hijacked by these two pulling forces: the Mubarak regime and those who want the revolution. And I think they, in a lot of ways, feel stuck in the middle.

I call every day and I call the various parts of Cairo. And today I called in to Maadi, which – those of you who know Cairo – is very near where all this is happening. And I got the funniest comment I've heard the whole time. My – if you're Egyptian, then you know, you're related to people and you don't know how so I'm going to say my cousin's wife – (laughter) – said, you know, when you guys had your Monica Lewinsky scandal, you had months to investigate the president. How come we have to form a new government tomorrow? (Laughter.) So that was their analogy today.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Jon, who are the – who do you think these people are, just picking up on what has Nancy said?

MR. ALTERMAN: (Inaudible, cross talk) – you know, they don't really know who they are. They're a lot of different people who've never been put together before and when they've tried to come together, it hasn't really worked. The Kafia movement was tried several years ago to create a broad-based coalition – never really succeeded.

So I think what you have is you have a group that is largely agreed on basically a negative proposition, that is, the president must leave. It's hard to agree on a positive proposition: what they want as an alternative. The president and the government have been very careful not to allow people to formulate an alternative. So the alternative is the government or chaos. And one of the words you will see over and over and over when President Mubarak talks is the word "chaos" and he is the alternative to chaos.

Now, as to your question as to whether this is a revolt or a revolution, I think it's interesting to remember that when Egypt had a coup in 1952, led by the army – the army has been in power since – it wasn't initially called a revolution. It was originally a – (in Arabic) – Blessed Movement, and it didn't become – it didn't have the name "revolution" until time had passed and people wanted to define it as such. And I think whatever happens, again, we're in a period where we don't know what it is quite yet.

What it is, is likely to be tremendously significant but it's very early to say that this is a revolution because it's very early to judge the direction of the impact. In fact, rather than turning things over, it may create a consolidation much more of the status quo than anybody had anticipated even a week ago.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Hosni Mubarak gave an interview today and I might as well say who he gave it to: my competitor, Christiane Amanpour. (Laughter.) And he said he's tired of serving. He said, I'm fed up with it. I've been doing this 62 years, which is a pretty good run, when you stop and think about it. (Laughter.) And he said he wants to quit but he says he can't because it would be chaos if he quit.

Do you think, Doctor, that that's what would happen? Is it Mubarak or chaos?

MR. FOUKARA: Well, I mean, just to put it in a philosophical context, it obviously has something to do with power. Power, obviously, does something to human beings. And for me as an Arab living in this country, where, obviously, there's a constitution which reflects the

foresight of the Founding Fathers, it's a very interesting question that you're raising because those guys, when, you know, they wrote the Constitution, they obviously foresaw this. Power is addictive and unless you have a strong enough incentive to leave it, you will not leave it.

There's a joke doing the rounds in the Arab world – some of you Americans may have heard it – which is, one of Mubarak's aides went to him and he said, Mr. President, the people are clamoring for a farewell speech. And he said, Farewell speech? Why? Where are they going? (Laughter.) And I – (laughter) – and I think it just sums up the relationship that mankind, throughout his or her history, has had to power.

Now, this specific case of what he actually said, I find it very interesting that he has gone on the record as saying that after the going got tough. If he'd chosen to say it maybe a week ago, you and I would not be – you probably would not have raised that issue. So I think – he's probably – the last week has probably taken a very strong toll on him. But I still find the statement a little bit disingenuous in the sense that all politicians can be disingenuous.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Jon – (laughter) – you and I – you and I were talking before we came in here. What do you see happening now? Because clearly these counter-demonstrators seem to be – at least, if not all of them, most of them, it would seem, appear to be sent there by the government. Or do we know that? I mean, that's the way it looks from the outside.

MR. ALTERMAN: We don't know. There certainly seem to be ties of some of the demonstrators to the government. Certainly, people would know that the government would approve. Some people seem to work for government businesses. I think that there's also some basic support for the leader among many of these people. Even if they don't have to be told, there's a sense will be viewed with approval by people near them.

But my sense of what's happening – and Nancy and I sort of hit on this together as we were talking yesterday afternoon and our mood started to sink – is that the government seems to be positioning itself so that rather than being the object of the demonstrations, it's the broker between these people who are starting to use violence and the protesters.

So what the government says is, we're not – we're going to hold back the mob and we will make sure that the mob of the protesters doesn't take over either. And we've heard the protests; we've heard the young people – Omar Suleiman, this afternoon, said, thank you for raising these issues and alerting us and we're aware and we'll work with you to resolve the difference between this mob who is using violence against peaceful protesters and the peaceful protesters.

That puts the government holding two out of three of the chairs which is, I think, is precisely where the government wants to be. And then the government will manage this process through Omar Suleiman, through the prime minister, with the support of the president, with the presumed support of the military. And rather than leading to a real opening of the political process, it ends up being a continuation of the political process with, I think, two important reservations.

One is, perhaps the government feels it was too lax allowing the political organization to go on, so you have more controls on communications, on the Internet, on political activity than they had leading up to this and a retreat from the sort of economics that were intended to bring in foreign investors to make a better investment climate in Egypt and a return to the socialist-inspired economics of subsidies and state capitalism.

So in the longer term, what you're going toward is not an Egypt that moves forward into a more open and prosperous economic future, but instead an Egypt that looks much more like Egypt in 1995 than Egypt that people thought we were going toward in 2015.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Do you agree with him?

MS. YOUSSEF: Yeah. I mean, it was interesting – Suleiman, thank you for bringing up the – you didn't know before all this happened? I mean, of course they knew. And frankly, I think it's working because there are very real, practical things that are happening in everyday Egyptians who are hunkered in their homes and looking at protests and don't recognize or don't know who these people are. They're holding back on money that they spend because they don't know when this is going to end. They're not going to work in some cases.

And it is a viable option because in a way, the Egyptian government is outlining what it will do. The protesters are not. Now, that said, I think people are astonished by what the protesters accomplished and they're hopeful about what lies ahead. But there's the immediate problem of not knowing what's next and at least there's the promise of stability.

I was talking today to someone and I said, but what if Suleiman says in September or August, whenever they hold the elections, I won, despite all evidence otherwise? What makes you think he'll leave? And she said, he has to leave, given everything that's happened. Like, there's a belief that there is power now in the masses and in the street so that if the government gets out of control, that they can rein them back in by taking back to the streets. There's a renewed sense of power in the people.

Now, how much of that is real and how much of that is just out fear of living under this for the last 10 days? It's hard to know, particularly from here. But I think those – that's what the government is able to exploit.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, what do you think? We keep hearing from our people there, tomorrow's going to be the big day. What happens tomorrow?

MS. YOUSSEF: Well, remember what happened last Friday. You know, we were talking earlier about the Internet and the impact it has. Now, last Friday, when those protests got together, there was no Internet; it had been shut down. You had people going to mosques, listening to their imams, gathering together and potentially going out in the street in as big numbers as they can to essentially say, if you're one of the protesters, Mubarak, you need to step down by now and what you've offered is not enough. It's not enough for you to say, I'm going to be here until September. We want immediate change.

And the question becomes what kind of pushback they'll get from pro-Mubarak supporters, either those sent out by the government or on their own. And what happens, presumably, when the Mubarak presidency does not end tomorrow? How does that – how does it go from there? What we're really seeing tomorrow is, it's another sort of metric in terms of whether this is the revolt or a revolution: whether people are saying we have confidence that things can move towards some reform or the reform cannot happen until Hosni Mubarak is no longer the president of Egypt.

MR. SCHIEFFER: How has the – as someone looking at this from a foreign perspective, how has the United States handled this? And I think we all know what the stakes are here and what is at stake. But how do you judge the way the administration has handled it?

MR. FOUKARA: Well, the first thing I would like to say is that if your audience has come to this session feeling happy and optimistic, my purview is to depress them. (Laughter.)

MR. ALTERMAN: As an academic or as representative of Al Jazeera?

MR. FOUKARA: You get a double whammy. (Laughter.) Let me just backpedal a little bit and go back to Tunisia. The impression that has stuck to most people's minds about the reaction of the United States to what happened in Tunisia was that it came too late, for whatever reason.

We obviously had Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visiting the Gulf just a few days before the former president of Tunisia fled and she did address, in some stark terms, the situation in the Middle East. She was addressing the leaders and telling them about the youth and the conditions of their daily existence and that they had to take some drastic measures to improve that. But she also said, talking about the riots going on in Tunisia, the riots, the uprising, the revolution – whichever way you want to call it – she said, we do not take sides.

And obviously, seen from D.C., you can understand why she said that. But seen from the region, a lot of people took it as a slap in the face because two years ago, when the youth in Iran were going through their turmoil, the government of the United States was much more forceful in endorsing what they were doing. If you go back with memory to the collapse of the former Soviet bloc, again, the position of the United States government – it was much clearer and to the point: This is what we want to happen.

That didn't seem to happen, in the eyes of people in the Arab world, in Tunisia and certainly, because of the complexity and the consequence of Egypt, which is obviously much bigger than Tunisia, a lot of people perceive the United States to have been very tentative in the way that it has handled the Egyptian potato in terms of, yes, we support the protesters' rights.

But at the same time, I think what a lot of people in the Arab world were clamoring for – and again, if you see it from Washington, you understand why the Obama administration is not putting it in those terms – but what the people in the region were clamoring for is a clear-cut we want Mubarak to go before it's too late.

Now, the way I see it is that it obviously has repercussions for the future role and influence of the United States in that region. And I don't want to go too long. I just want to say that whatever the outcome is, I don't think there's a good outcome – 100 percent for the United States in the region. I'm not even sure at this particular point in time that there is a good outcome for Egyptians and for the wider Arab world.

Let's watch tomorrow. If it passes off relatively peacefully, then that would obviously reduce the risks down the road. But if it – if it goes down as a bloody event where the baltaji, as these elements who have been attacking the protestors over the last 24 hours or more dangerously, by the army that suddenly decides to actually kill civilians, I think you're talking about something much more – much, much more unscalable.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Nancy, why has there no particular person emerged? I mean we've seen several people come – but right now, there's no way to sort of handicap who, if they did have an election, who the people would be. Is there anyone that has a lot of popular support?

MS. YOUSSEF: Well, Mubarak designed it that way. He crushed opposition. He pitted them against one another and he did it within his own government and within his army. He ensured that there wasn't a threat to his regime for a natural successor other than his son as a means to protect power.

And so that's why you're seeing, when we talk about what next, he can frame the debate, in some ways, as a choice between civility and chaos because it's such a – it's such a vast scale of unknowns going forward.

The most notable place that you would think a leader would come from would be from the army, as every leader of Egypt since its independence has come from the army. But if you're a general in the army, you were promoted because you either tacitly or explicitly supported the Mubarak regime.

And so you know, historically, I find myself thinking, is there a colonel in that army – that mid-ranking soldier between those conscript, rank-and-file soldiers and the generals who can maybe rise up. We've never heard that name yet and I have to believe that he's put a quash on that, but Gamal Abdel Nasser, of course, Egypt's first president was a colonel. So I find myself thinking maybe that's where that person will come from.

You'll hear a lot of people talking about Mohamed ElBaradei as a possible leader, at least at the minimum, a transition leader. I think he's more popular outside of Egypt than he is within. He's seen as an outsider and a secularist more so than most people would want. And I haven't found anyone – any middle-class Egyptian who sees him as sort of the vision – the embodiment of a revolutionary figure.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, Jon, do you think it is possible to have an orderly transition that we're talking about here? I mean do you think Mubarak has to go for that to happen and if he does go, can an orderly transition take place?

MR. ALTERMAN: I hate to make prognostications where somebody's actually going to read the transcript but I'm going to do it. (Laughter.) And I'm not sure he's going to go. I've spoken to people – people I have tremendous respect for who say there's no way he can stay and I've come to the conclusion that I think there may be a way he can stay and what we'll have is a transition that will be precisely the transition that perhaps even more orderly a transition than had Mubarak died suddenly in office without these events. People are playing for keeps.

The military is focused on maintaining the strong role as both an actor and an guarantor of the political system. And I think people are looking at the next six to nine months as how do we have an orderly transition which sustains the status quo, makes it indeed, more sustainable than it has been.

And the other part of this that we haven't talked about is all the other Arab leaders would be absolutely delighted if Hosni Mubarak pulls this out because the implications of Hosni Mubarak's failure in this are tremendous because then you not only have Tunisia, which is not strategically important to most countries in the neighborhood to Egypt, which is strategically important to everybody.

And then suddenly, you start having people being terrified of a domino effect. If Hosni Mubarak is able to co-op this movement, control the movement, emerge with Omar Suleiman and General Shafik as the paternal figures guarding and protecting the nation and the national interest, then I think we are right back to a much more comfortable status quo for every single Arab government in the Middle East.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So how does he stay if you think it is possible for him to stay? I mean –

MR. ALTERMAN: Well, I think the goal is to emerge as the arbiter between these street thugs who are throwing Molotov cocktails and rocks and everything else and the protestors and he says, okay, we have a process. We've heard you. We're going to mediate this. We're going to have this committee meeting and that committee's meeting. We're talking about this provision of the constitution.

You know, you have to talk about the constitution because it's going to be legal and orderly and you just sort of – you drive – you drive it into process and the process is, of course, controlled by a parliament which was essentially handpicked by the ruling party and former generals who have precisely an interest in maintaining the current system for a long time to come.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Would you – do you agree with that?

MR. FOUKARA: To a certain – a certain extent. Let me just – quickly tangentially say something about Tunisia. Jon reminded me of it. Tunisia is strategically unimportant as Jon said, but remember some extremely big things – and I'm doing a quick history flashback here – some extremely big things in the history of the region came out of Tunisia.

You're Egyptian, so you would know this. If you go to Egypt and you say al-Muizz li Din Allah, for example, a lot of people are proud of al-Muizz as a leader from the 10th century who is such an icon of Egyptian history. He is from a dynasty that actually started off in Tunisia and had its eyes on expanding its influence throughout the regions. So they decided to actually transfer to Cairo and that's how Cairo came into being and was built. And this region is very history-focused, if not history-obsessed. So that's one thing.

The second thing I would say is that I feel that even if he were to leave and I'm of your mind as well – I don't think that he's ready to leave anytime soon, although when Saddam Hussein was introduced by your colleague, Dan Rather, before the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and he asked him the same thing, he said would you consider leaving Iraq?

And what did Saddam say? He said, why should I leave Iraq? I'm Iraqi and I expect to die in Iraq. Hosni Mubarak said the same thing in his speech yesterday. The only difference is that for Saddam, the ultimatum to leave Iraq at that time was coming from the Americans. For Hosni Mubarak this time, it's actually coming from Egyptians.

Now, let's assume that all that is by the by and that he left. I do not necessarily see the departure of Hosni Mubarak from Egypt as the end of the story by any stretch of the imagination. Again, Tunisia is a good case in point because we saw the president flee.

But to this day, some of the remnants of the old regime continue to hold onto power and their argument, which is maybe a good argument, depending on who you talk to is that we are still holding the country together and without us, the country would disintegrate in all sorts of ways, some of them internal, some others external.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, I mean is it kind of the sense of the panel here – and I find this all very interesting – that perhaps the best thing that could happen is if somehow or another Mubarak could kind of quiet down this protest and he's now announced he's going to leave and then sort of stay in office until elections could be held? I mean –

MR. ALTERMAN: I don't think that's the crucial point. I think the crucial point is, is are you going to be genuine about changing the nature of a system which has been a remarkably closed system?

MR. SCHIEFFER: I mean I guess, Jon, what I'm getting at is, is there a better chance to do that if he stays than if he leaves?

MR. ALTERMAN: I think the system is bigger than Hosni Mubarak. You know, Hosni Mubarak leads the system as the figurehead and he's the focal point. But I think the system is much deeper. It's much broader and it's much harder to penetrate. I don't – I mean in some ways, it's like a country with a king versus a president.

And sometimes, it's easier when you have a king because a king isn't contested and a king can sometimes bend the rules, be a sort of crooked referee in order to keep everybody

playing on the same playing field. To that extent, maybe on a marginal side, if Hosni Mubarak were genuinely interested in playing that role, he could play it.

I don't think he is interested in playing that role. I think he's interested in the durability of the existing system and I don't think the durability of the system matters whether Hosni Mubarak is there or not except for the fact that if there were a widespread perception that the mob had run Hosni Mubarak out of office, that the remaining elements of the system would feel besieged and would be less charitable.

That's not to say it's good that Hosni Mubarak is there. But I think that the way it keeps being phrased, as Nancy eloquently said, it's always between the – Hosni Mubarak and chaos. There's no alternative to Hosni Mubarak but chaos. The most dangerous job in Egypt was to be the second most powerful person in the country. All right?

So that's sort of where we are. And there's no bench. This is a country – there is no bench. There aren't charismatic leaders; there aren't ministers who are widely perceived to have done a good job. There's nobody with popular backing except for the president because he's had this huge warning track around himself and people who got close to the warning track had to find other jobs.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Nancy, what choices does the Egyptian military face now in the coming months? I mean what could be difficult? What could get easier?

MS. YOUSSEF: You know, in a way, they're in an unenviable position because it's interesting. You can actually make a lot of comparisons to their military as to ours in the sense of their responsibility, how they see their responsibility. I think first and foremost, there is a unifying threat in the Egyptian military, which is they see themselves as the defenders of the Egyptian state.

And at this point – and they answer to their leader. Their leader right now is Hosni Mubarak and so they are carrying out orders from him. And the order right now is to not shoot on demonstrators. It's not their job to shoot on demonstrators and I think they understand that if they did, it would lead to instability in the state.

Therefore, the only time that I think they need to cross that line is if the state itself collapses – if the system as we now know it somehow collapses and it becomes their job to intervene. But at the same time, for everyday Egyptians, it's quite frustrating to many of them to see the violence breaking out.

I personally felt this yesterday as you're watching this violence break out yesterday and the military not get involved. You see the tanks on the street and you see the firebombs breaking out and whatnot. And here is the Egyptian army doing its job defending the institutions of the Egyptian state – the Egyptian Museum, its artifacts, its history. It's defending the institutions and watching these violent protests carry out.

And so they're walking a very, very thin line and they're doing it because that's the job of a military and it's the job of our military as much as it is of their military. It's not their job to be an arm of Mubarak, but an extension of the state and they've really won the respect of the – they already had it, of course, before all this, but they've really won it throughout.

I always think of it this way: The police are an extension of Mubarak, but the army's the extension of Egypt. And so that's why you see the frustration in the people with the police. Funny enough, when the police came out today, there were people say, you know, you cowards, where were you because they'd run away for a few days. But the Egyptian army stayed. So I think they're walking that line quite remarkably and consistently since this began.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I'm going to just ask all three of you and I can just start with you, Nancy. Talk about the effect that this or the impact that this could have on the rest of the region. I mean we know about what happened in Jordan and we know there's trouble in Yemen. What are the – what are the real danger points and kind of where do you see this going across the region?

MS. YOUSSEF: You know, it affects all of the region and you know – you know, Tunisia really broke down that barricade of fear of the government because it was so astonishing and happened so quickly and the dominoes started to fall. And if you think of this as a big vat of oil, that was the spark, the match that kind of got thrown in.

And in Syria, I think it'll be a little bit more difficult because they are certainly not as open relative to the other states. I think the Assad regime would come down quickly on protestors. We'll see this "day of rage" is now scheduled, I believe, for February 12th.

In Yemen, I think they're a little bit more split about what they want. It's not as clear-cut or has been made to be in Egypt. There are some people who just want President Saleh that he and his son are not going to run in 2013, which they've done. There are some who say he needs to step down right away and there are still others who say economic reform would be acceptable. So it's a little bit more split.

In Jordan, because it's a monarchy, there's that division, right, between the Hashemite Kingdom and the government. We haven't heard people say they want the end of the Hashemite Kingdom, but they wouldn't have the option to say that anyway because you're not allowed to criticize the government in Jordan. And so we saw King Abdullah try to get ahead of it by firing a very unpopular prime minister.

And so each country's touched by this but the inner machinations of them are all different. And so I think you'll start to see countries that haven't been directly hit by this try to outmaneuver and get ahead of the protests to salvage the system as they know it and as they're benefitting from it. And other countries are now trying to adjust to what their populations are asking for.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I want to hear the other two panelists give their views on that. But while they're doing that, those of you that want to ask some questions be thinking of the questions you want to ask. But let's hear it.

MR. FOUKARA: I think it's nobody's secret that the countries of the region, some countries are less stable than others. Yemen springs to mind as one of the least stable countries in the region. I do not, however, believe that the domino effect is inevitable. But the condition is speed – the speed of change in Egypt may avert the risk of the domino effect.

And I think several of these leaderships in these countries are beginning to ripen up for change and I think if the change happens in Egypt in a way that safeguards the interests and aspirations of the Egyptian people who have been clamoring for it this past week and at the same time, safeguard the – Egypt's – some of Egypt's international commitments, whether with regard to Israel or others, I think the government in Egypt would have – would be under less pressure to introduce some of the genuine internal changes that the people of Egypt want.

If that happens in a relatively short period of time, I think other governments in the region may have an opportunity to do some of the adjustments that their own people are clamoring for, although some of those adjustments could actually be quite bitter as a pill. But I do not believe that the domino effect is necessarily inevitable.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Jon?

MR. ALTERMAN: On a couple of things you said. First, I think the speed is remarkable. I mean the fact is, we've never seen a popular revolution in the history of the Arab world. We may have seen two happen in January, depending on how this comes out. The fact that you can have something happen so quickly – it's a combination of the Al Jazeera effect and the Twitter effect, that is, television and instant messaging, computers, social networking, I think working together in a profoundly interconnected way that changes things.

I am less optimistic that this leads us to really positive reform. We all saw the courage that Congress showed dealing with our budget problems by extending tax cuts and all those sorts of things. I think the fact is that governments under threat are not going to want to swallow bitter pills. They're going to want to solve, they're going to want to restore subsidies, especially at a time when global commodity prices are rising.

I worry that the effect is going to be more government control of communication and more government subsidies. And as I say, rather than moving forward to the kind of Middle East we thought we were moving toward, I wonder if we're going to be moving back to 1994, 1995, not really in the positive direction at all.

MR. SCHIEFFER: You know, the one country out there we haven't talked about is Israel, which is obviously watching as – I think it was underlined to me just how serious Israel views this when Prime Minister Netanyahu asked the ministers in his government not to comment and it's been a long time since I've heard an Israeli prime minister –

MR. ALTERMAN: It's been a long time since his ministers listened to him.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Since they've listened – (laughter) – or one who would think he can actually tell them not to be quiet – or to be quiet. But they have been. How serious is this for Israel? And then we'll go to questions.

MR. ALTERMAN: Israel's terrified. I mean Israel's terrified of a Muslim Brotherhood-led Egypt. Israel is terrified of any sort of leadership change because the fact is that Israel has become quite comfortable with Hosni Mubarak. They're uncomfortable with more populist politics in Egypt because the Israeli-Egyptian agreement is deeply unpopular in Egypt.

Israel feels that they have all the understandings they need with the current system in Egypt and any change to that system is deeply –

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask you this. If Mubarak does go, do you think the Camp David Accords, the thing that's been enforced there for 30 years now, is that out the window? Or can it survive?

MR. ALTERMAN: I think the Israelis have better understandings with Omar Suleiman than they do with Hosni Mubarak and they have excellent understandings with Hosni Mubarak. Omar Suleiman has been doing an incredible amount of lifting with the Israelis on Hamas, on Gaza and a whole range of issues. They're very comfortable with Omar Suleiman.

When you start talking about bringing in other players and broader politics in Egypt, that's when the Israelis get extremely concerned because that leads you away from the kinds of very pragmatic understandings that the current government of Egypt has reached.

MR. FOUKARA: I think that as long as the army remains the backbone of power, which – as Nancy said a little while ago, which is the very likely outcome anyway, although I would argue that, for many Egyptians, fortunately the army is the instrument of the state but unfortunately it's also the instrument of the regime. But that's a different question.

But whether it's an instrument – whether you look at it as an instrument of the state or of the regime, I think any government that takes over in the future in Egypt would not want to open that front with Israel by abrogating the Camp David Accord, the peace treaty with Israel. For one thing, the army would not go for it. So I think on that front, I'm not so – I'm not sure that the Egyptians would go down that route.

Where I do think they would make a change – the new government in Egypt would make a change – is in the relationship between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Egyptians have obviously been mediating between the two. Remember that Egypt has always carried the mantle of Arab nationalism and the Palestinian issue continues to be a very strong nationalistic rallying cry for the Arabs.

So the government in Egypt will want to reassume that mantle because in eyes of many Arabs, it actually stopped wearing it. So it will want to assume it and it will be very important

for its legitimacy throughout the Arab world to actually change course in how it mediates between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

In other words, Israel – I don't think, at least as far as I can see now – it would not necessarily have to worry about the peace treaty. But the issue of settlement – I think yes, that would be an issue.

MR. ALTERMAN: And Gaza's security.

MR. FOUKARA: Yes. Yeah. The Palestinian issue in all its flanks.

MS. YOUSSEF: Just one quick thing. I often hear comparisons between this and what happened in Iran. And remember, Egypt needs a relationship with the Western world – Iran didn't; Iran had oil. Egypt needs the Western world for the Suez Canal, for tourism, for U.S. aid, for cotton exportation. That's Egypt's economy. It depends on a relationship with the Western world.

And so it doesn't have the option, economically, to anger the Western world. And so it's going to have to balance sort of carrying that title of representative of Arab nationalism while sustaining itself economically.

MR. SCHIEFFER: That's a very good point. All right, I promised we'd go – this gentleman here. And could you go to the mic because it's on C-SPAN?

Q: Thank you. Is this on?

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yes.

Q: Yeah. My name is Joe Dukert and I'm an energy analyst and a senior associate with CSIS. I don't know where, physically, President Mubarak is. Obviously, Christiane Amanpour does. (Laughter.) But I can't understand why the protesters have not used the classic protest tactic of surrounding him, wherever he is. Could you comment?

MR. SCHIEFFER: Who wants to take that?

MS. YOUSSEF: I'll start. I was actually wondering that myself. I thought he was in Sharm el-Sheik but then Christiane Amanpour said that she interviewed him at a presidential palace. I don't know if that – because he was spending more time at Sharm el-Sheik.

Now, Sharm el-Sheik is advantageous to him because most Egyptians can't get there. They can't afford it. And actually, Sharm is closed off to Egyptians other than those who work there. And so that would be the most protected place he could be. The presidential palace, though, is also a protected area so it's not as easy to sort of storm the palace, if you will.

The other thing is that they – as Jon talked about earlier, it's an information war as well and the cameras and the attention is focused on Tahrir Square. It has been cast as the

battleground in terms of who's representing the voice of Egypt. And so I think all those factors are in play. I don't know anyone who's identified precisely where he is. The first I heard was Christiane Amanpour say a presidential palace. I took that to be Cairo but I couldn't tell you for sure.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Yes.

Q: Thank you very much. I've enjoyed the presentations. I hear, of course, the sort of conservative – by the way, my name is Paolo von Schirach, Schirach Report – the sort of skeptical approach regarding the possibility of this indeed becoming a revolution as opposed to a revolt. And you and Dr. Alterman indicate that it may actually go back some to the extent that President Mubarak can position himself as the broker between the revolutionaries and the counter-revolutionaries, if you wish.

If you could, perhaps, elaborate a little more on the role of the United States, which was touched upon earlier on? President Obama has said, for whatever it's worth, the transition has to start now. And watching yesterday the State Department briefing, the State Department indicated that there has to be a process; it has to be inclusive; it has to be participatory; it has to be transparent and we're going to watch it and so far, it has not progressed to the level that we would like to see.

Now, are these just generic exhortations sort of to satisfy world opinion in a generic sense? Or is there something behind this idea of "the transition has to start now or else"? Or if it doesn't start now in a satisfactory manner, what is a satisfactory manner?

And – last point – obviously the United States provides Egypt with enormous amount of resources. I believe Egypt was the second largest recipient of military and civilian aid. I personally visited USAID Cairo, which is a city in the outskirts of the city. So is there any leverage? Or is this essentially something that the United States is watching, hoping for the best? And again, what does "transition has to start now" mean in a practical sense? Thank you.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Jon, why don't you?

MR. ALTERMAN: The Egyptians would argue that it's starting. Right? I mean, Omar Suleiman gave a speech and he talked about all the committees they're going to form, what all the timelines are.

And I think one of the instructive things is to look at the Egyptian response to the Bush freedom agenda, which was to have a big conference in Alexandria and talk about how the American freedom agenda is in fact an authentically Egyptian agenda and they were going to write it and you saw how many times the Alexandria conference continued to meet and how many times the committees hit everything else.

I mean, the fact is that what the Egyptians will seek to do is institutionalize precisely what the Americans are talking about and then run those institutions. And one of the problems we have from U.S. government side is you can assign people from the embassy to try to work

with people and follow what the committees are doing and everything else. But for people in the United States, this is an avocation – this is one of many things they do for people in the White House. It's one of many things they do; they have other things going on.

And for the Egyptians, this is for the whole ball of wax. This is it – this is the game. This determines what the next 50 years look like. And when that's the stakes – and the Americans are trying to do a whole range of things – I think it's very hard for the Americans to have a lot of influence over the shape of the process.

That being said, I think there is no question the shape of the U.S.-Egyptian relationship going forward will change as a consequence of this. It has gone along for 30 years and I think, quite frankly, it's been running on fumes, that we have a relationship which – because it's been so much aid for so long, that there's been a mutual resentment between both sides and each side feels taken for granted by the other.

And what this is doing is it's forcing both sides to think about what they want the U.S.-Egyptian relationship to be. I don't think that's all unhealthy. But part of that will mean that Egypt will not be as central to U.S. thinking as it's been. And how central it is partly depends on how the Egyptians behave during this process. But we are certainly witnessing a change in this relationship.

It's a relationship which President Mubarak inherited from Anwar Sadat when he became president in 1981. It's a relationship which President Mubarak has not reinvigorated. He sought not to reinvigorate it: He sought to keep it the same way and sustain it. And because of what is happening, this is a relationship that will be redefined, refocused over the next several years. And the way that happens will be very much in the shadow of what happens in terms of the demonstrations, in terms of the demands, in terms of the succession to President Mubarak.

MR. FOUKARA: Just want to quickly say two things, if I may. I mean, the way I see it is that President Mubarak has two different clocks when he hears Obama – President Obama – talking about “we want change now.”

One clock is pointing to yesterday which is – as Jon said, he's thinking, I've already introduced some of those changes that you asked me to do. The other one is pointing at tomorrow because he still feels that he has cards he can still play. And if he's going to climb down, the climb-down is going to be incremental and it isn't over until it's over, whatever shape or form that over finally takes.

Just one quick thing I want to say about the aid: I think the aid in the eyes of the Americans is one thing. The aid in the eyes of the Egyptians is a different thing. In other words, aid has been part of the solution but also part of the problem. Yes, the United States has invested a lot of money in military-to-military cooperation with Egypt. But the way Egyptians see it – remember, Egypt: It's 5,000 years of history; 80 million – 80 million – people; crucial to anything that happens not just in the region but in the rest of the world in terms of security and stability. How much does it get? Less than \$2 billion a year.

I'm not saying that the expectation is that the United States should match up what it gives to Israel because we know that's just not going to happen. But a lot of Egyptians see it as – more as an affront to some sort of human – as an affront to their dignity where the regime has actually put them. It has put this country where it's actually seeking almsgiving from the Americans, when in fact it's a major power that should be sustaining itself rather than asking other for money.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Question, here.

Q: Bill Deboggi (ph) with Maxim International (ph). Bob, I was wondering, when Jon quickly said "Tunisia is nonstrategic," of Hannibal and the Carthaginians and what the Romans thought of that area about 2,000 years ago. My concern now is we've spoken of Jordan, we've spoken of Israel. We haven't mentioned Lebanon.

But to my understanding, the U.S. has suffered a great defeat, as has Israel, in the recent developments in Lebanon. Could you speak to that and how that sort of touches all the larger bases we've been discussing?

MR. SCHIEFFER: Good point.

MR. ALTERMAN: To pick up on Abderrahim's point, the fact is that how this plays out in all these different countries is very, very different. I think how it plays out in a country like Jordan, which is divided between East Bank Jordanians who serve in the army, who serve in the government, who feel that Jordan is their only home, to Palestinian Jordanians: West Bank Jordanians who the East Bankers say are not really genuine Jordanians – we just were nice and we gave them citizenship.

And I'm afraid that were you to have uprisings in Jordan, it would quickly turn into a civil war. It would be Jordanians fighting Jordanians instead of a united front appealing to the government. So that's the Jordan.

In Yemen, you have different interest groups and I think that Yemeni politics have largely been about interest groups making demands on the central government. That's a different dynamic.

In Lebanon, you have 18 different sects who are all officially recognized, who all have their own politics. I think the way it works in Lebanon is –

Q: I was talking about the strength of Hezbollah, which – dominant force. It's more than 18 – it's one. It's Iran and it's Syria.

MR. ALTERMAN: But Hezbollah can have influence in politics because they've made a deal with the Druze; they've made a deal with a faction of the Christians. I mean, the fact is that I think with all of these countries, the manifestations are different.

I think what we've seen, as Abderrahim was saying, that the speed of this, the unpredictability, makes everybody less comfortable because of a sense that people thought they knew the game. And the sense that maybe they don't know the game, that Tunisia can collapse essentially in a – I mean, it rose to a presidential level and within a week, the president was on a plane out of the country.

I am not ashamed to say that on Thursday of that week, I said, people are talking about Ben Ali leaving – I mean, what's the rush? I don't get it – why are people jumping to a conclusion? And the next day, he's on a plane out of the country.

The unpredictability, I think, helped shape it. But the manifestation in each country is both unpredictable but also shaped by the specific conditions in that country which are very different from country to country.

MR. SCHIEFFER: There's one final question here and – because our time is running out – but let me ask each of you and I'll start with you, Doctor. What is a successful outcome here? (Laughter.) And will we know it when we see it?

MR. FOUKARA: Pass. (Laughter.) Can I come back on Saturday, at least? (Laughter.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: Tomorrow is a big day, right?

MR. FOUKARA: Yes. It's a big day. And I think a big part of the answer to the question hinges on what happens tomorrow. I mean, what one – the ideal scenario is that it would pass off peacefully. The expectation, after what we've seen in the last 24 hours, is that it's not going to happen. It's not going to pass off peacefully. We may see some more clashes among Egyptians.

But the other two scenarios that I see is that either the army intervenes and puts down the revolution, uprising – whatever you want to call it – bloodily. And I think that would launch Egypt down the long and painful pathway of chaos for a long time and the region with it.

Or – and I want to quickly go back to what Jon said earlier – the army does manage to control the situation in one way or another but the temptation for it to take Egypt back not to just two months but many, many, many years – that temptation will be on.

I think my sense is that the Arab world will not go back to where it was two months ago. And that's not a judgment of value. I'm not saying the Arab – the prospects are very good. Good or bad, there's no going back to where the Arab world was two months ago.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Nancy, just some closing thoughts, here.

MS. YOUSSEF: I'm feeling ambitious so I'm going to try to tackle that first question and I come from it as a – from a personal perspective. The successful outcome, to me, is an Egypt where you don't have well-educated men, smart men, graduating college in their twenties and staring at a lifetime of hopelessness. You've had a whole generation do that. I think one of

the reasons you're seeing these men come up and take to the streets is they've seen their fathers do it and they don't want to do the same. It's what – the prospect of that is what brought my father here; it's what I see in so many of my relatives going forward. So I don't know what the outcome is strategically or politically but my hope, and the best outcome for me, is that – is that Egypt that offers those youths something other than a lifetime of hopelessness.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Jon?

MR. ALTERMAN: I agree with Nancy. I think the good outcome is one that leads to a genuine incorporation of more people into a political process that improves outcomes, that gives people a sense that they're vested in this society and creates a more resilient country. And my fear is that the country may be on the brink of heading in the opposite direction, and I hope with all my heart that it's not true.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Do you believe that tomorrow is the – is the crucial day?

MR. ALTERMAN: I think tomorrow could be crucial if it were extremely violent; it could be crucial if it were extremely massive and disciplined, it could be crucial. My own guess is we won't really know how this is going for another two months; that there is going to be some sort of ongoing process and, at some point, people will say, is this process at all genuine or is it a complete fraud? And it'll be hard to recapture the momentum of the days but I think there's bitterness – the worst outcome clearly is that you have a sustained period of conflict that leads to polarization and radicalization. I think that's what leads us to extremely negative outcomes, either a very hardline, secular, military-led government or a hardline, religious-led government. I think that's certainly one of the things the government – the U.S. government has been saying all along we're trying to avoid.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, on behalf of TCU and the Schieffer School of Journalism and CSIS, thank you all – (applause).

(END)