

# **Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science**

## **Volume on Failed Middle Eastern States and Countering Violent Extremism**

### **Section I: The Middle East in Turmoil: Drivers of Instability, Pathways of Response**

**Introduction:** this essay will pose key questions in understanding the conditions and drivers that led to the collapse of states and enabled the rise of violent extremist non-state actors. It will also pose central questions in examining the strengths and vulnerabilities of these groups and in exploring policy approaches that would best dry up their enabling environment and gradually weaken and defeat. (Suggested length: 2,000 words. Author: Paul Salem).

#### **Chapter 1: Failed States, Ungoverned Space, and the Road Back to State Sovereignty**

*Summary:* violent extremist ideology and networks were around before ISIS and will be around for many decades to come. It is the collapse of particular states after the Arab uprisings of 2011 and the availability of ungoverned space that allowed these networks to seize significant territory, gain strength and appeal, establish a radical caliphate, and present a redoubled danger to regional and global security.

This chapter will examine the key dynamics in the full or partial collapse of four Arab states—Syria, Yemen, Libya and Iraq--, will explain the links between state collapse, civil war and the enabling of terrorist organizations. Most importantly, it will assess the likely conditions of those four countries during the first year of the next president's first term and suggest policy approaches to wind down or resolve those conflicts, reconstitute state sovereignty, and deny territory to terrorist organizations.

(Suggested Length: 4,000 words. Suggested Author: Marc Lynch, George Washington University. Email: mlynch@gwu.edu)

#### **Chapter 2: States Still Standing: Stalled Transitions, Risks of Collapse, and the Necessity of Pro-Active Reform**

*Summary:* the majority of Arab states have weathered the storms of the past few years and, for better or worse, are still standing. But few predicted the collapse of Syria or Libya, and there are no guarantees that more Arab states, suffering from intense internal contradictions, might not also collapse in the coming years.

This chapter will examine the conditions of the major Arab states that have come through the recent storm. It will examine the strains and risks they are currently under, and how they have adapted or reacted to rising public demands as well as increased security risks. Tunisia is a rare positive story of democratic transition, but the author will examine cases of stalled or reversed transitions such as Egypt and Bahrain, the experiments in political accommodation in some monarchies like Morocco and less so Jordan, and will examine the risks attending some of the large outliers such as Algeria and Saudi Arabia.

The author will endeavor to suggest what the highest priorities for the new president might be in this area, and what policies can and should be pursued to increase real stability in surviving states, reduce the risks of radicalization, and provide a sustainable way forward.

(Length: 4,000. Suggested Author: Tamara Coffman Wittes, Brookings Institution. Email: [twittes@brookings.edu](mailto:twittes@brookings.edu))

### **Chapter 3: Exacerbating Demographic and Resource Trends:**

*Summary:* Underlying the unrest and radicalization of recent years are contradictory trends between growing populations and tightening resource and employment opportunities. A demographic youth bulge of historic proportions burst the precarious piping of the old political and socio-economic structures and will continue to overwhelm the social and institutional orders of the region for some time. Two thirds of the population is under the age of 30 and their search for jobs, identity, and empowerment will fuel the tumult of the region for many years to come. Economies are not creating jobs fast enough to accommodate them; governance structures are not opening up sufficiently to include them; and their search for identity has fueled movements as disparate as pro-democracy civic action, radical nationalism, and messianic dreams of a revival of the Caliphate. This demographic driver has now been compounded by four million refugees, mainly from Syria, that have streamed into Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey.