

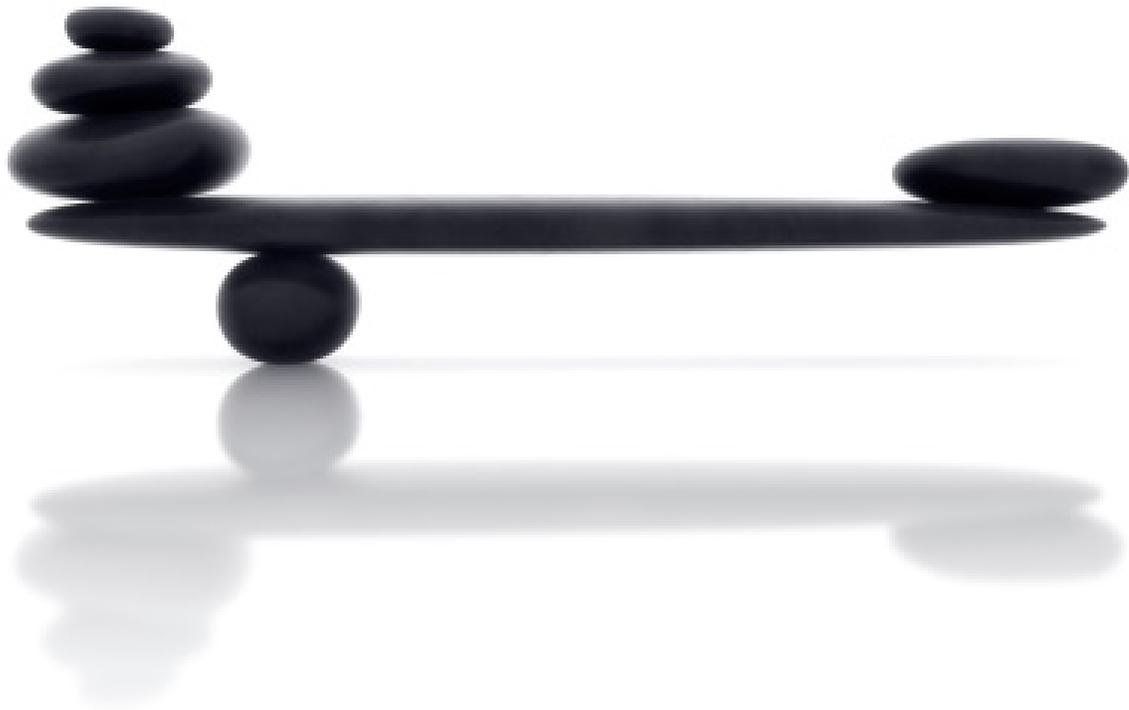
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REBALANCING IN THE ARAB WORLD

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This is a time of great challenges and opportunities. The Chinese language has a wonderful word for crisis, wei-chi. The first character means danger, with the second meaning opportunity. This is the exact position we find ourselves in today, and 2012 will be an even more important year than 2011. While disagreements exist regarding the use of the term the Arab Spring, this is either a spring or a revolution, but rather a process. While important first steps are being taken in the region, they are merely a single step in a long process that may take generations. There are short-term concerns, needs, demands and crises, but these short-term issues will not determine the ultimate fates of these countries. They will go through a long period adjustment.

There are many different ways to look at the process with the easiest of these being through the point of view of constituencies. Egypt is a good example with clear constituencies. The youth, military, media and bureaucrats all exist as constituencies. Bureaucracy in Egypt is a very strong institution which, for good or bad, tends to resist change. One thing that needs to be examined are the constituencies in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Libya. How are they going to adjust? Are they willing to compromise? They must if democracy is to succeed. This is going to be a challenge in these countries and across the Arabian Peninsula. They will have to accommodate the youth, religious groups and military. Without a strong military, no country is secure. There are also sub-segments of each constituency to consider. Within the religious constituency there exist those who are more and less moderate in their viewpoints. In many cases they do not agree with each other. Looking at constituencies makes it easier to analyze where these countries are going, who needs to make the largest adjustment and who needs to be accommodated. The will of the people needs to be taken in account more than ever before in the region.

While we are facing global challenges, they will primarily demand regional solutions. Regional institutions, such as the Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), are taking a strong role in situations that more traditional institutions, such as NATO, used to take the lead. New institutions, such as the Istanbul Process, are forming and becoming increasingly important throughout the region. A whole regional approach needs to be taken to each challenge. There will be no positive solution to regional security without the advent of new institutions and approaches. A new Mediterranean institution is needed that will address the needs of the next generation. The youth expect results and an institution that provides them with hope is needed. A good starting point would be the formation of a new Mediterranean economic institution. I have made a proposal to my government and have named it MedTIDES. The name was chosen because a high tide raises all boats, not just one. This new institution should concentrate on trade, investments and development assistance while avoiding involvement in politics. Development varies from country to country and requires both capital and labor. Capital and labor are going to be essential for the Mediterranean region. The region should come together for an institution like this to raise all boats.

No single country, including those of southern Europe, has the ability to dig itself out of the economic crisis. The idea of a New Silk Road initiative is absolutely vital for Central and South Asia. This would connect Turkey to India and both to China. Today

this area has the least trade of any in the world. The lack of trade in Central and South Asia is amazing and the potential is large. There are calculations that indicate as many as 100 million jobs could be created by this. While this may sound like an enormous number, China alone must produce 20 million jobs every year for their population. The prospects of a 100 million new jobs for the Central Asian states, for Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal is enormous. This will collectively raise all boats. The Silk Road Initiative already has much substance to it, but requires tremendous commitment from each government to break down barriers. Another region that needs to be considered is the Arabian Peninsula. The GCC needs to look at its own economic future, to raise all boats. There is a particular obligation for Yemen, which has both the greatest population and need. Yemen will face the same challenges, regardless of changed political leadership. These primarily economic challenges need to be addressed for the stability of the Peninsula.

The greater Indian Ocean is another important area to consider. It is truly the future for all. Over the past 6,000 years it has been an engine of growth for civilization. Currently, more than 50 percent of world trade travels through this waterway. It is absolutely vital, both today and for the future. In the greater Indian Ocean there exists potential for both conflict and cooperation. It is easy to focus on the negative side of the current situation in the region, but there is also tremendous hope.

In addition to economic security, regional security is vital. The role of outside powers such as the US and EU, which are increasingly more focused on their own problems, will decline. In the case of Afghanistan, the initiatives taken by Turkey have been welcomed by everyone. There needs to be another initiative coming from the region to address the Arab-Israeli issues. The U.S. is facing elections, which will increase its focus on economic issues and decrease concern for international problems. This is why there needs to be a regional initiative to revitalize the peace process. This is the time for countries throughout the region to stand up and declare opposition to war and demand peace and stability. Despite the ability of the US to project power anywhere, anytime, the American people do not want war unless they believe it is 100 percent justifiable and accountable. The American people do not want to spend money needlessly, whether abroad or at home, and this is an absolutely key factor. There also exists a belief that the U.S. overextended itself and got involved in engagements that did not promise to serve the long-term interests of the U.S. While the U.S. will act and act quickly if its interests are threatened, it will become more careful in its engagements and advocate regional solutions. The US was there and strongly supported the leadership of Turkey in regards to the Istanbul process and will be there to support a GCC solution, whether for Yemen or other issues. The countries most involved in the peace process, development and demonstrate a high-level of commitment will receive support from the US. There is an obligation to future generations to develop solutions. This is what both the American people and you of the Arab world want.

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