

Understanding the Islamic revolutionary movement

Never since the destruction of the Ottoman Sultanate at the end of the First World War has the Muslim East and North Africa region (MENA) witnessed such radical changes in its religious, social, economic, and political map. Arguably born from a rebellion against and denunciation of the powers that be, this movement, which Western powers have been keen to label as the "Arab Spring" has been too often looked at from a neo-colonial perspective, thus restricting both the narrative and understanding of what should better be described as an Awakening or Renaissance movement.

An organic popular movement, 2011-events essentially saw the people rise against Western-backed and Saudi-propped regimes. More than a simple call for democratic change and social justice, 2011 saw not the birth of a new form of Pan-Arabism as some experts have suggested following the fall of former Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak, but instead a broad rejection of Western imperialism.

Free from the constraint of political ideology and religious dogmatism — those elements have come by way of manipulation as a means of oppression as well as justifications for violence — the 2011 movement bears the marks of a renaissance, an awakening, or coming of age of a people following centuries of enslavement.

And though the MENA's revolutionary flame has been all but extinguished, its spirit can still be best observed in Yemen and Bahrain where popular resistance has been most fierce and stubborn in its refusal to bow to aggravated pressure: regional and international.

Since most experts and scholars have so far abided by Western paradigms when studying the events of 2011, the narrative has been biased and flawed, preventing proper grasp of the nature and characteristics of this metamorphosis that will ultimately sweep the "old world" away. Those dualities — traditional society versus civil society, and religious versus secular — that experts have discussed, are again the expression of Western imperialism, especially when secularism and the principles of civil society have been exploited as tools of repression and enslavement by imperialistic regimes.

The only real polarization is between the people of the MENA and Western powers aided by their puppet

regimes such as Saudi Arabia. If Islam has found itself in the eye of the storm it is because its religious principles, which remain strong among Muslims in the MENA, stand defiantly against the globalists' agenda.

Islam, more than the other monotheistic religions, has been declared the enemy of Western society now that secularism and atheism have become the new basis of this globalist dogma unfolding before our eyes. Of course, the role played by Wahhabism in introducing an extremist demonic ideology needs to be factored in as yet another tool of globalism toward the balkanization of the region.

Although experts and scholars alike have refused so far to see in the 2011 events the influence of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, it is becoming evident that some decades later Iran's struggle for political self-determination has found a deep echo in the MENA region. There are undeniable parallels between today's events and the metamorphoses Iran went through when it deposed the Western-imposed and backed Shah to place in its stead a political model of its own choosing that is in tune with its society and religious traditions.

As continuation of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the uprisings of 2011 might yet come to be remembered as the grand emancipation of the Arab people. Somewhere between President Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir's pan-Arab nationalism and Imam Khomeini's Islamic *walayah*, the people of the MENA region are shattering old Western models to try and establish their own based on Islamic values. Bound by the same struggle against despotism and plagued by the same evil — extremism — the people of the region are learning to move together in this new found solidarity, slowly coming to the realization that they do not have to stand alone and are not alone.

Those formerly scattered resistance movements, this arc that was built throughout the decades to oppose Western alignment has gained more ground than any Western powers have cared to admit now that the minority is turning into the majority. From Libya to Syria, and from Iraq to Bahrain, people have sensed that change needs to happen on their terms and no longer to the tune of Western-backed politicians' discourses. And where

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