

Arab Spring Transforms US-Arab Relations

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Lucy Jay-Kennedy, Senior Media Manager, Tel.: +962 (0)77 673 8542; E-mail: lucy.jaykennedy@weforum.org

- The United States must help the Arab Spring succeed.
- The US does not fear the political participation of Islamist parties in newly democratic Arab countries.
- A free-trade agreement between the United States and countries of the region would benefit all.
- More information about the Meeting here: <http://www.weforum.org/MiddleEast2011>

Dead Sea, Jordan, 23 October 2011 – The United States must help the Arab Spring succeed, said John McCain, Senator from Arizona (Republican), USA, at the World Economic Forum Special Meeting on Economic Growth and Job Creation in the Arab World, taking place on 21-23 October 2011 at the Dead Sea, Jordan.

“ Young Arabs want US leadership and access to US technology and investment, ” McCain pointed out. He also said that the US does not fear the participation of Islamist parties in the political processes of newly democratic countries.

McCain issued a stern warning to Syrian President Assad. “ The Assad regime has spilled too much blood to remain in power. It should not assume that the international community will let it get away with mass murder. ” He also warned Iran not to try to hijack the Arab Spring.

“ Arabs have a lot of affection for the US, but there are many issues between the MENA countries and the US, ” Amre Moussa, former Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Cairo (2001-2011), told participants. Principal among those issues is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the question of UN recognition of a Palestinian state. “ We need a solid, productive, equal relationship with the US, ” Moussa said. He and other panellists endorsed the idea of a free-trade agreement between MENA countries and the US. He also called for a revival plan for Egypt in which the US and the Gulf States would contribute funding.

The relationship between the United States and the Arab world should be based on transparency, predictability and longevity, urged Anwar M. Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

Several of the Arab panellists complained that the US sometimes adopts a double standard in its dealing with the Arab World, pointing to the 2006 Dubai Ports World affair in which US politicians blocked a UAE company from acquiring a UK company that managed several US ports.

Robert D. Hormats, US Undersecretary of State for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs, admitted that current US fiscal problems mean that US financial aid to support the Arab Spring will be limited. He said that the US Government will use new and innovative techniques to assist Arab countries, such as increasing opportunities for US companies to invest in the region and provide support for young Arab entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized businesses.

The Co-Chairs of the Special Meeting are: Mohammed H. Al Mady, Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC), Saudi Arabia; Yasmin Galal, Global Shaper, Cairo Hub, Egypt; Habib Haddad, Chief Executive Officer, Wamda, United Arab Emirates, a Young Global Leader; Muhtar A. Kent, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, The Coca-Cola Company, USA; Maurice Lévy, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Publicis Groupe, France, a Member of the Foundation Board of the World Economic Forum; and Soraya Salti, Senior Vice-President, Middle East and North Africa, INJAZ Al Arab – JA

Worldwide, Jordan, a Social Entrepreneur

Jordanian Radio and Television (JRTV) is the Host Broadcaster of this Meeting.

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World Economic Forum, 91-93 route de la Capite, CH-1223 Cologny/Geneva
Tel. +41 (0)22 869 1212, Fax +41 (0)22 786 2744, <http://www.weforum.org>