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Arab authoritarianism and US foreign policy

A Thesis

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Submitted by:

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Submitted to:

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Abstract

This qualitative research aims to examine the nature and reasons for America support for Arab authoritarian regimes in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and to provide further details by examining the inferiority of liberal cultures and superiority of realist approach and continuation/discontinuation of this existing approach after/during the Arab Spring by case studies. In order to have a systematic analysis, alternative theoretical models, including a revised national interest model, the neoclassical realist US grand strategy model (Dueck, 2008), the international conditions analysis by Petras (2011), and US domestic politics model will be examined. Currently, the issue under study suffers from little systematic theoretical analysis, with no attempts to draw insights from theoretical models.

Research background and questions

The United States, as one of the liberal democracies, always seems to incorporate the democratic rhetoric into its foreign policymaking process (Pollack, 2009). For example, after 9/11 attacks, the '*participation-moderation*' theory seemed to have appeared in the Bush administration, saying that the cause of Islamic extremism was attributable to the lack of political participation in authoritarian Arab regimes, and that in order to reduce threats to the US and tackle the problem of terrorism, the US would attempt to promote democratization of those regimes an important agenda, as shown by Bush's intervention in Iraq 2003 (Dalacoura, 2010 & Schwedler, 2006; Bermeo, 1997).

However, throughout the years, US Middle East policies have also been characterized by America's support to friendly authoritarian Arab regimes such as Mubarak in Egypt, Saudi monarchy regime, and Saleh in Yemen by providing massive amount of military aid, arms sales annually and various forms of political support (Byman et al., 2011; Yom, 2008). For example, while US officials paid lip services to democracy and political reforms, US also

provided a sum of \$13.3 billion to these regimes during 2002-2005 as well as aid and arm package in 2007 (Yom, 2008; USAID, 2006). In addition, negative conditionality was rarely used to demand reforms, meaning that there would not be withdrawal of economic aid and military assistance in case of non-compliance, with the only recent exception being the military aid to Egypt (Yom, 2008; Marcus, 2013; Martinez, 2013). It was until the very last minute that America gave up the Mubarak regime in 2011 and Saleh regime in 2011/2012 mainly due to overriding changes in international conditions and certain US domestic politics (Petras, 2011; Brownlee, 2012a).

There must be some compelling reasons for the US to pursue such contradictory policies between democracy promotion and supports to friendly autocracies and the eventual abandonment of Mubarak and Saleh regime. Currently, the vast majority of literature articles adopt the realist national interests approach to explain this issue. As argued by Dueck (2008), America, in general, has a neoclassical realist grand strategy model of foreign policy with both liberal cultures and realist elements, but realism always predominates due to many reasons while liberal ideologies only have secondary roles (Dueck, 2008). Strategic adjustment (changes) occurs primarily due to changes in international conditions/pressure. It may be thus possible that the analysis of grand strategy could be applied to this issue. Thus, the research questions are to find out, firstly, the nature of US foreign policy towards friendly Arab regimes and reasons for US realist inclination in the case of chosen countries (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, Bahrain); and secondly, if there are any critical conditions/factors leading to the marginal roles of US liberal strategic cultures in the shaping of US policy in the Arab context and thirdly, the reasons for prolonged support to authoritarian regimes and the eventual discontinuation of the support after/during the Arab Spring. The following hypotheses are proposed.

Hypotheses

1. US foreign policy towards friendly Arab authoritarian regimes are shaped by both liberal strategic cultures and realism.
2. In US foreign policy towards friendly Arab autocracies, realist has triumphed liberal strategic cultures for a long time due to a number of factors. Liberal strategic cultures plays minor roles and functions only under certain special circumstances.
3. There are certain mechanisms leading to continuation of existing US policies towards friendly Arab autocrats after/during the Arab Spring, subject to different international conditions/pressures/threats.
4. Pro-American Arab regimes could also be abandoned by the US unwillingly due to overwhelming international/US domestic politics associated with the liberal strategic cultures after/during the Arab Spring

Research significance

In the first place, a qualitative research makes contribution to the study of Middle East and North Africa (MENA) democratization. Among MENA Arab regimes, the vast majority of them are of strong neopatrimonial nature, one of which surviving mechanisms hinges on rentierism, referring to the distribution of economic rents and other political benefits to maintain the loyalty of important social constituencies, so as to consolidate the neopatrimonial authoritarian rule (Hinnebusch, 2006; Dodge, 2012). However, petroleum is not omnipresent in large quantities in every state, for example, Egypt and Yemen, and thus the level of external supports become a very important source of rents to support the patrimonial rule (Hinnebusch, 2006). In particular, as suggested by Bellin (2012), international support could enhance the regimes' *'coercive capacity: the physical wherewithal to muster men and material necessary to repress'*. Thus, a comprehensive understanding of the role of external supports would enable us to develop insights into the obstacles to political change in the mobilizing stage, the transition stage and the consolidating stage of Arab

democratization This understanding is especially important for the current Arabs uprising against autocratic governments, which may lead to large-scale political and economic instabilities ranging from riots to civil wars (Byman et al., 2011).

Secondly, the research on external supports to the regimes may also shed some light on the understanding and prevention of Islamic terrorism, as the robustness of these pro-American authoritarian regimes may breed terrorism in the long term (Byman et al., 2011). In particular, there is a wide range of social, economic and political grievances within these societies, and all these grievances may well lead to formations of anti-status-quo terrorists groups, as a way to voice grievances and demand for higher living standards (Byman et al., 2011). Most importantly, America's soft power in Arab societies could be tarnished by being seen as supporters for dictators (Byman et al., 2011). Therefore, a thorough understanding of US support for Arab authoritarian regimes may enable us to understand one of the most important causes of Islamic terrorism.

Admittedly, there is no lack of articles dealing with these issues on the basis of national-interest approach. However, there has been little systematic/comprehensive research on the nature of US policy towards Arab autocrats with respect to some general theories/models. There has also been little research on the continuation or withdrawal of American supports to authoritarian regimes after/during the Arab Spring. As suggested by McGowan & Shapiro (1973), the absence of a general theory of foreign policy hinders the systematic and consistent understanding of the relationships in foreign policy behaviour so that one has to make uneducated guesses on foreign policy matters which are susceptible to biases/ oversimplification. Furthermore, the existing national-interest approach is also defective because of lack of *in-depth* analysis of US national interests in MENA, examination of current international threats and the opportunity costs of regime collapse. In addition, theories on international and US domestic politics may also provide some insights into the

eventual cessation of supports to Mubarak and Saleh, all of which are largely absent in the current research articles. This research would thus try to address the above concerns by the use of some theoretical models.

Methodologies

This research is of qualitative nature and journal articles, books, internet information and news articles would be major sources of information, implication and literature review, all of which are readily accessible on the internet and in different university libraries, so as to find out the reasons and nature of US foreign policy in the issue of supporting autocratic pro-American regimes. As suggested by Ragin & Amoroso (2010), qualitative research mostly focuses on the examination of '*in-depth knowledge*' and '*elaboration and refinement of images and concepts*', and thus all these could be used to reinterpret the nature of this issue and consolidate our knowledge of the national-interest perspective and advance our understanding to the reasons for continued/discontinued adoption of the existing approach. As for comparative methods, they are not applicable here since the goal of this research is not to '*unravel the different causal conditions connected to different outcomes*' and in other words, Comparison between the similarities and differences across a number of different case studies would not be employed to '*explain the diversity within a particular set of cases*' (Ragin & Amoroso, 2010). Moreover, this research would not be a quantitative one since on one hand, it is very difficult to operationalize the independent variables (the reasons for supporting pro-American dictatorships, the reasons for prolonged adoption of existing policies) and the dependent variable (the phenomenon of US aids to Arab dictatorships) and on the other hand, this research is not to '*show the co-variation between two or more variables across many cases*' (Ragin & Amoroso, 2010). Once again, the goals of this research are to identify the nature and explain the reasons for such a peculiar US foreign

policy of prolonged supports to Arab dictatorships and the abandonment of some dictatorships in the end and the case studies of the four Arab regimes are only for illustration purposes

The research questions and hypothesis would be investigated by a number of theoretical frameworks. Instead of the purely national interest analysis approach, the use of theoretical models enables us to understand the issue more systematically from a sound theoretical base with wider range of perspective. Busha & Harter (1980) once argued that, *'sound theoretical knowledge about the problem area from which the research task originated is necessary to the conduct of meaningful inquiry, no matter what the subject of the research would be'*. In this research, the neoclassical realist US grand strategy model by (Dueck (2008) in addition to the revised national interest analysis would be used to examine the nature and ideologies of supporting Arab dictatorships. In addition, the neoclassical realist US grand strategy model by Dueck (2008), and the international conditions analysis by Petras (2011), US domestic politics analysis would be used to account for the prolonged continuity of the existing approach of supporting Arab autocracies.

Furthermore, there are also cases studies. For example, in line with the following reasons, four pro-American authoritarian regimes are chosen as case studies (Mubarak Egyptian regime, Al-Saud Saudi regime, and Saleh Yemeni regime, Al-Khalifa Bahraini regime). For example, they have to be pro-American Arab regimes, as manifested by the massive annual US military and monetary support to the regimes, in particular of the security apparatus and the US ensuing supports after/during the Arab Spring. Secondly, they have to be of great national interests to America, be they political or economic. Thirdly, they all have to be authoritarian regimes, with the classification of 'not free' from Freedom House reports and indeed, all four regimes (Mubarak, Al-Saud, Al-Khalifa and Saleh) are all of the same status. (Freedom House, 2013 & 2011). Fourthly, there should be some cases of successful regime survival and regime collapse respectively to show the changes in US foreign policy in

the face of varying levels of international/US domestic politics and the presence/absence of alternatives, since US supports is one of the most important factors of regime breakdown/survival, as suggested by McKoy& Miller (2012).

Literature review and critical analysis

National-interest analysis

Currently, the vast majority of literature examines the issue with a national-interest analysis, arguing that US practises realist policies towards supporting the autocratic regimes because of their contribution to US regional interests .Since the national interest approach is not just formed by one single article, the paragraphs below are the summarized contents of some of the existing literature articles in the case of Mubarak Egypt, A;-Saud Saudi Arabia, Al-Khalifa Bahrain and Saleh Yemen.

In the case of Egypt, the value of Egypt to Washington has gained salience ever since the conclusion of Egypt-Israel peace treaty in 1979, making Egypt one of the two Arab countries to have diplomatic relations with Israel and removing the possibility of another Arab-Israel conflict, and the treaty also made Egypt a tool to fight against the USSR and the Shiite Iran (Brownlee, 2012a). Furthermore, Egypt has also enabled the deployment of US forces in the Persian Gulf by allowing the passage of Egyptian airspace and the use of military facilities and installations such as the Cairo West Air Base and the Suez Canal for refuelling and prepositioning purposes and Egypt also made contribution to counterterrorism purposes by housing a large number of CIA personnel and providing intelligence support and assistance in the ‘extraordinary rendition program’ against Islamic militants , so that US law does not have to be followed (Brownlee, 2012a :Meet the Press, 2005). Thus, the Mubarak regime was one of ‘*the most US-aided autocracies*’ after the cold war jumping from \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion aids from FY2005 to FY2007 and in FY2009, the delivery of small arms

and ammunition to Egypt was worth \$744,000 (Brownlee, 2012a:Arabawy, 2006: US Gov, 2006). After the ouster of Morsi, America continues to fund the Egyptian authorities for counter-terrorism, military training and stressed that the halt in the delivery of military equipment would not be permanent (Martinez, 2013).

For Saudi Arabia, one of the most important values to the US is the large amount of oil reserve (Yom, 2008). Saudi Arabia is the second-largest oil producer, accounting for around 11.3 % of US crude oil imports and 80% of the world's reserve production and it also became an important substitute to Libyan oil during the civil war (Rumsey, 2012: Ratner, 2011). Furthermore, the Sunni Saudi Arabia is important to counter the rise of Shiite Iranian regime, which is an antagonist of America (Mabon, 2012). In particular, the Al-Saud regime sought to do so by suppressing and isolating the Shiite Saudi Arabs in the eastern provinces and by supporting the Sunni Al-Khalifa Bahraini monarchy against Shiite influence (Mabon, 2012). In addition, Saudi Arabia may also be regarded as a partner in counter-terrorism, although it is alleged that the regime may have sponsored terrorism instead (Blanchard, 2010: Prados & Blanchard, 2007). After the 911, the flow of funds have been subject to greater control in Saudi Arabia and a 'joint task force' between the US and Saudi about terrorism investigation has also been set up and Saudi NGOs associated with terrorism were also ban (Blanchard, 2010). Thus, America, throughout the years, has had a large amount of arms sales to Saudi Arabia, which is worth \$17.9 billion from 1998 to 2005 (Prados & Blanchard, 2007).In 2006, the Bush administration also approved the 9 billion arms sales to Saudi Arabia, including 24 Black Hawk Helicopters, 724 light armoured vehicles, 58 M1A1 Abrams tanks, 2300 long-range radio systems (Prados & Blanchard, 2007: Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2006).

Bahrain, albeit with Shiite majority, the Sunni monarchy could be mainly used as a stronghold to contain the rise of the revisionist Shiite Iran in conjunction with Saudi

cooperation, which is in America's interests (Katzman, 2005). With its close proximity to Iran, US military presence there could be used to deter Iran's aggressive actions and ensure regional stability (Katzman, 2005). In particular, Bahrain houses the US Navy headquarter of the Fifth fleet in a 500-acres base with 5000 US naval personnel, some minesweepers, a Carrier Battle Group, an Amphibious Assault Group, which could '*interdict movement of terrorists, arms or WMD-related technology*' (Katzman, 2005). Thus, Bahrain has long been receiving US together with GCC military aids and arms sales such as the sales of nine Blackhawk helicopters in 2007 (\$252 million) and the sale of 30 Army Tactical missile Systems in 2000, so as to keep the safe passage through Strait of Homuz and keep Iran's influence checked, given the majority Shiite population and became a 'major non-NATO ally' after the 911 (Kahl & Lynch, 2013).

For Yemen, it is also a partner for counter-terrorism in the regions of Red Sea and Arabian Peninsula (Prados & Sharp, 2007). With its relatively undeveloped economy, ineffective law enforcement and tribal divisions, Yemen has long been plagued by terrorism, especially in an eastern Yemeni province where it is the 'ancestral homeland of Osama bin Laden' with many sympathizers for al-Qaeda (Prados & Sharp, 2007). Although Yemen was accused of lack of cooperation after the USS Cole bombing, ever since the 911 attack, the Yemeni President Saleh had been cooperating with America in the fight against the Al-Qaeda and US special forces and CIA agents were permitted to operate on Yemeni soil to identify and eliminate the large-size Al-Qaeda segments in Yemen and in particular, a missile strike planned by America was carried out against an automobile carrying suspected terrorists in Yemen, killing the planner of the USS Cole bombing (Prados & Sharp, 2007; Sharp, 2010). America thus has also been providing an increasing amount of economic and military aids to Yemen, jumping from an average of 25 million in 2007 to 52.5 million in 2010 during the Obama administration (Prados & Sharp, 2007; Sharp, 2010).

National-Interest analysis: Asset mobility approach

Lastly, the asset mobility model by Brownlee (2012a) may also shed some lights of the US policy after/during the Arab Spring. This concerns the political economy analysis of the prospect for US bolstered regime change (Bellin, 2004; Brownlee, 2002 & 2012a; Snyder, 1992). In essence, it is argued that the possession of ‘immobile assets’ would be make elite ‘fear of expropriation’ (Boix, 2003). In particular, if US interests associated with particular friendly regimes/ rulers are *‘fixed and immobile’* and if there are foreseeable anti-American extremists takeover after the collapse of authoritarian regime, *‘the redistributive pressure’* from anti-American forces in those countries would be very high and Washington would be very unwilling to give up the regimes for fear of US assets tied to those autocracies such as *‘intelligence support, military cooperation, diplomatic collaboration’* being expropriated by anti-American popular regimes in the transition period (Brownlee, 2012a).

National-Interest Analysis: International conditions analysis

As suggested by Petras (2011), whether US would withdraw or continue to support authoritarian regimes after/during the Arab Spring depends on factors such as the regime capability to cope with domestic unrests, the military loyalty to the regime, and *‘the availability of a pliable replacement’*. If all these factors turn to be unfavourable to the regime survival and better alternatives exist, US would not to ‘stick with’ the authoritarian regimes for fear of radicalizing the opposition and generating anti-Americanism, leading to revolutions and civil wars (Petras, 2011). Examples of miscalculations include the 1959 Cuban Revolution, when America firmly supported the authoritarian Batista regime and failed ‘to present a viable pro-US alternative coalition’; and the case of Nicaraguan Somoza regime supported by President Carter, leading to strong anti-American forces deposing the pro-American dictator and expropriating US assets (Petras, 2011).

The Foreign policy model: US Grand strategy

In the past, grand strategy refers to ‘*a calculated relationship of ends and means, in the face of one or more potential opponents*’ or even ‘*with the possibility of use of force internationally*’ (Luttwak , 2001 as cited in Dueck, 2008). As a branch of foreign policy, there is a high degree of overlaps between foreign policy and grand strategy, so theories of grand strategy may shed some light on the foreign policy behaviours (Dueck, 2008). In addition to win wars, grand strategy includes other pursuits such as non-military goals and objectives of political, economic or ideological nature during peacetime and wartime (Dueck, 2008). To put it into details, things such as national interests/goals, threats to national interests, national resources and ways used to counter these threats would be identified and prioritized and as a ‘*conceptual road map*’, grand strategy also identifies resources to promote national interests and gives ‘*a set of policy prescriptions*’ (Art, 1991: Dueck, 2008). Even though grand strategy may not be designed or followed all the time, governments ‘act as if they do’ because offrequent trade-offs among defence spending, alliance diplomacy and military intervention and contradiction between ends and means, so ‘*strategic decisions*’ should always be made to balance military and political means and ends amidst the chance of armed conflict (Dueck, 2008). Thus, grand strategy exists always (Dueck, 2008).

The US grand strategy is never in a static mode and there are ‘*strategic adjustments*’ (changes), defined by the significant expansion, contraction of overall strategic capabilities and commitments (Trubowitz et al, 1999). As suggested by Dueck (2008), it could be manifested by the changes in factors such as alliance commitments, size of military deployments, changes in foreign aids, the engagement and/or disengagements from diplomatic activities, with possible variations in these categories at times and in particular, a ‘*first-order change*’ occurs when there is significant change in strategic commitments,

followed by less fundamental '*second-order change*' and some 'minor tinkering' which always occur in most of the cases.

As suggested by Dueck (2008), the decision-making processes for the US grand strategy/foreign policy are subject to influences of BOTH elements of power (realism) and liberal strategic cultures. Both are considered for the explanation of strategic adjustment (Dueck, 2008). For the realist thinking, it emphasize the crucial role of international condition and argues that all states act similarly to , most importantly, maximize their relative gains in national interests in terms of political, military and economic powers to survive and seek to minimize potential threats in the zero-sum game anarchic international system filled with perpetual violence, uncertainties (Dueck, 2008). Liberal ideals (democratic peace, economic interdependence, institutions) are practically unfeasible because of the anarchic situation (Dueck, 2008). States would often cheat and break institutional rules/international laws/norms to have more relative gains under the Hobbesian anarchic condition (Dueck, 2008). Democracy and capitalist economic development may not necessarily moderate extremists' behaviours and produce peaceful foreign policy outcomes in the face of high threats to security interests and high uncertainties and fears (Doyle, 1997; Gilpin, 1986: Dueck, 2008). For the liberal strategic culture, America is always characterized by its strong rhetoric in liberal ideals, democratic-peace theory, and economic interdependence theory (Dueck, 2008). It says that democracy and neoliberal capitalism would bring peace by pacifying the zero-sum game of interest pursuit by using institutional rule, international law, and increasingly economic interconnectedness across borders (Dueck, 2008). Civil political participation would also lead to moderation of radical politics (Dueck, 2008). The absence of democracy and capitalism would lead to instabilities/conflicts and poverty (Dueck, 2008). Most importantly, capitalistic development, democracy and peace would also mutually

reinforce each other, as illustrated by the Kantian peace triangle, all of which are in America's interests (Doyle, 1997; Dueck, 2008; Mingst & Arreguín-Toft, 2010).

A understanding of US strategic adjustment lies in the *neoclassical realism* school (Dueck, 2008). While it argues that realism is still the '*single most important*' determining factor in strategic adjustment of grand strategy, it also includes US liberal strategic cultures elements (Dueck, 2008). The reasons for the predominance of realist thoughts over liberal political cultures are that in spite of liberal cultures' merits in explaining occasional foreign policy behaviour deviations from realist thinking, there are several limitations of liberal cultures to be the dominant explanatory factor: firstly, US liberal strategic cultures are always unchangeable and fixed, and thus the changes in policies and commitment of grand strategy cannot be explained very powerfully by American political cultures, and secondly, the liberal approach doubts the values of military actions, security-seeking behaviour, all of which are not compatible with the current international conditions (Dueck, 2008). On the contrary, given the lack of effective global governance mechanism, America is pretty much left with an anarchic, highly uncertain situation and has no choice but to put national interests at the top of US foreign policy agenda for survival and dominance while international interests and liberal ideals are secondary interests (Dueck, 2008). Thus, realist theory is the principal reflection of state foreign policy behaviour (Dueck, 2008). Most importantly, realism may even further gain salience in the grand strategy in the case of highly threatening international conditions with very high external threats, since national interests are at stake and there are urgent needs to fight and keep national interests intact for survival and the strategies needed are of high realist nature (Dueck, 2008).

In particular, in line with the classical realist thinking, neoclassical realism believes that strategic adjustments (changes) in grand strategy/foreign policy occur primarily due to significant external threats to the existing approach/national interests and/or overriding

changes in the international conditions/pressures(Dueck, 2008). The higher the external threat/state capabilities, the more realist policies the state would adopt and vice versa for the reverse (Doyle, 1997:Gilpin, 1986: Christensen, 1996:Dueck, 2008). However, neoclassical realists are also sensitive to US domestic-level factors of political cultural tradition, which could affect the policy outcomes (Dueck, 2008). Liberal cultures could fulfil the filtering role by further delimiting the range of possible policy options amidst occasional indeterminacy in international conditions since policymakers have to select policy options that fit the liberal strategic cultures, at least on paper, to gain US domestic supports (Dueck, 2008).

Policymakers themselves may actually been socialized to match the America's liberal political cultures (Sterling-Folker ,1997:Dueck, 2008: Kupchan, 1994).

US Domestic politics analysis

As a liberal democracy, US foreign policy is also affected by many US domestic politicssuch as pressures from the Congress/senior security advisors, lobbying activities, and mass media, which serve as the intervening variables to constraint the US foreign policy'srealist, national interest-based decision-making during foreign policy crisis (Jentleson, 2010:Devlen & Ozdamar, 2009).

Congressional/senior security advisors' unity in opinions

In the case of senior security advisors' pressure, it is important in the sense that US presidents are used to having a strong reliance on senior foreign policy advisers such as the national security advisers, the secretary of state, and the secretary of defense (Jentleson, 2010). As for congressional pressure, the US Congress, in particular the Senate iscrucial because it is responsible for foreign policy oversight, budget, ratification of treaties, and declaration of war (Jentleson, 2010). As suggested by Jentleson (1990), the effects ofpressures on the eventual foreign policy decisions during crisis would be greatest in the

case of unity among congressional/senior security advisors. This can change the president's belief and a particular foreign policy issue and thereby the final policy outcome (Jentleson, 1990). The effects of congressional/senior security advisors pressure would be weakest in the absence of unity among congressional opposition (Jentleson, 1990). For example, in the case of US supports to the Shah of Iran during the 1979 Revolution, the 'dissenting disunity' among 'senior foreign policy advisors' (between the National Security Advisor and the Secretary of State) failed to change Carter's mind to abandon the Shah in the wake of the revolution (Jentleson, 1990). As for the case of the Philippines, President Regan withdrew supports to Marcos eventually because of the assassination of Aquino (Jentleson, 1990). There had been a great dissent among the US Ambassador to the Philippines, the Secretary of State Shultz, the Joint Chief of Staff Admiral Crowe, and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Jentleson, 1990). There had even been a dissent in between the Democrat congressional leader and Republican congressional leader, and in particular, many Democrats (Jentleson, 1990). For example, Rep Stephen Solarz, Chairman of the House Foreign affairs subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, proposed 'deep cuts' in military aids to Marcos government in 1984 and 1985 and many Republicans such as 'Senator Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Dave Durenberger, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, were also "highly critical of Marcos"' and there was a bipartisan action to condemn the corrupted Filipino election on February 7 as well as the Solarz subcommittee's decision to cut military aid to Marcos with an unanimous vote in the House (Jentleson, 1990).

The strength of lobbying activities

As for lobbying activities, they are defined as '*a group of persons who work or conduct a campaign to influence members of a legislature to vote according to the group's special interest*' (Dictionary.com, 2009). In the foreign policy context, there are two types of

lobby groups. The first type is ethnic lobby groups which are formed by Americans of similar ethnic and religious identity to their interests in America and to fight for the benefits of their ancestral homeland (Jentleson, 2010). The second type is foreign lobbying groups which are groups of foreign governments-paid American public relations firms, law firms, senators, congressmen, and lobbyists to lobby for their interests by influencing legislators/US foreign policies to favour the foreign governments (Jentleson, 2010). The criteria of success include contributing campaign finances, their organization structure, the ease of access to foreign policy-makers, ability to guarantee of lawmakers' employment (for example: whether the lobbyists could mobilize voters to vote for congressmen/senators favourable to them) (Gregg, 2002; Dekker, 2010; Smith, 2000).

Mass media and American public opinion during foreign policy crisis

As for the effects of mass media and U.S. public opinion on foreign policies crisis, they work in a two-way street, that is, they could compel the foreign policy-makers to revise decisions by negative images/reports or by generating dissenting American public (Naveh, 2002).

For the media effects on foreign policy, mass media often report 'new and surprising, important, violent and negative' during a foreign policy crisis (Naveh, 2002; Hastedt, 2006). There is therefore a prevalence of negative, violent, emotional images and news reports that generate the so-called CNN effect, which forces policymakers to revise the existing foreign policies in response to 'the perceived reality constructed by the press' and the resulting US public opinion (Naveh, 2002; Hastedt, 2006). In particular, the media exerts its influence firstly through agenda setting and priming, which diverts the attention of the policymakers and public to the media-focused foreign policy issues (Naveh, 2002). With more information associated with particular issues due to agenda-setting, people's judgement of the

success or failures of their leader's management of the issues could also be shaped (priming) (Naveh, 2002: Hastedt, 2006: Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In addition, framing is also an issue here by which the media reports provide an interpretive frame guiding the public and policymakers to think and value the issues (Naveh, 2002). The mass media also generates forceful public opinion pressure on the media-focused issues and public opinion forces the leaders to confront the issues and to be accountable to the public opinion in a liberal democracy (Naveh, 2002: Hastedt, 2006: Baum & Potter, 2008).

However, with a clear government's media management (MM) policies formed by PR professionals, the effect of media coverage on foreign policy changes may be limited by the government's spin such as government-initiated coverage, censorship, restrictions on media's movement or their access to information and data, so as to build 'positive-supportive coverage and cover political activities' and the mass media would tend to be in line with the administration's agenda setting and framing and even incorporated the official positions as the basis of their media reports, known as the 'indexing hypothesis' (Naveh, 2002: Smith & Hadfield & Dunne, 2008). Thus, the US mass media could only exert effects on US foreign policy in the absence of a clear government's media management policies directing 'a clear frame of reference' to the media and the US media would report foreign policy events 'from the human side' (Hastedt, 2006)..

*Critical analysis of the realist national-interest framework and the US grand strategy
neoclassical realist model, asset mobility approach, international conditions analysis and US
Domestic politics analysis*

Clearly, the vast majority of literature adopts a national interest analysis to show the reasons for US to support autocracies. They use the realist framework, which emphasizes that states, in an anarchic international system, pursue the maximization of states' self-interests to

respond to the constraints upon them (Mingst & Arreguín-Toft, 2010; Rumsey, 2012). To sum up, it is said that US has adopted realist policies because of the overriding importance of national interests (Yom, 2008).

However, there are several areas for improvement. Firstly, the above national interest analysis is only a series of descriptions/examples of the mutual contributions between these Arab autocracies and US such as the US military and political aids and regimes' efforts in things like counterterrorism, balance of power, oil supply. An additional integration of knowledge is needed to understand the US national interest in the region, the nature, continuation/discontinuation of US foreign policy in MENA, in-depth examination of US national interests in MENA, and the expected negative consequences of authoritarian regime collapse are either not clearly pointed out nor sufficiently examined in the national interest analysis of existing literature. It is inadequate to develop a complete understanding of the real policy rationale without a clear clarification of the nature of US foreign policy in MENA, delineation of US national interests in the Arab world, and the corresponding international threats in MENA before analysing the significance and values of each of these regimes to America.

Furthermore, there is no systematic account for why America during the Bush administration initiated a series of democracy promotion programs such as Middle East Partnerships Initiative (MEPI) and the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA) if America really pursues a purely realist approach in the Arab world. Most importantly, the national-interests analysis is not examined against US grand strategy so that the nature of US foreign policy and the reasons for realist primacy over liberalism are unclear. Furthermore, the reasons for such consistent supports to/ eventual abandonment of most Arab autocracies over time are not examined, apart from the sole analysis of overriding national interests. Let us examine the neoclassical realist US grand strategy model.

The implications drawn from the neoclassical realist US grand strategy model and the US domestic politics analysis could provide a good general framework to examine the research objectives and questions and hypotheses. For examples, it can be used to outline the importance of international conditions and US domestic politics responsible for the continuation/discontinuation of US foreign policy towards friendly Arab autocracies in the wake of Arab Spring and how to measure if there is a change (strategic adjustment) (Dueck, 2008). However, this neoclassical realist model of foreign policy does not give details as to the what exact changes in the international conditions/threats and what exact US domestic liberal political elements would affect the US decision to abandon or continue to support friendly Arab regime in the wake of revolutions in 2011. Instead, the international conditions analysis by Petras (2011) mentioned factors such as regime capability to cope with protests, military loyalty, and the existence of possible alternatives as reasons affecting US foreign policy decisions. However, the international conditions analysis by Petras (2011) is defective for the following reasons. Firstly, there is no any analysis of the factors pointed out by Petras (2011). Secondly, it ignores the role of US domestic liberal politics as intervening variables, as pointed out by the neoclassical realist US grand strategy model by Dueck (2008).

For the asset mobility model by Brownlee (2012a), although it is similar to the international conditions analysis by Petras (2011), it further gives an analysis of the reason why US would keep certain the Arab autocracies for so long with reference to the concepts of '*asset mobility*' and '*redistributive pressure*' in the wake of the Arab Spring in 2011. However, this model is currently confined to the cases of Ben Ali Tunisian regime and Mubarak Egyptian regime, and most importantly, even though the concepts of '*asset mobility*' and '*redistributive pressure*' sound logical, the results of asset mobility analysis are flawed since it was reported that US did abandon Mubarak in Egypt and Saleh in Yemen, though in an unwilling way and it could only explain the prolonged unwillingness of US to give up the

regimes but fails to explain why US would eventually abandon them (Guzansky & Striem, 2013). This research would thus propose to investigate whether there are any viable alternative leaders to the existing rules but not about the alternatives to existing regimes *per se*.

Chapter II: the proposed structure, the nature, reasons of US foreign policy of realist favouritism and the inferiority of liberal approach in the Arab context with case studies

Proposed structure

Given all the pros and cons of the above approaches, no single approach could dominate in the analysis of US foreign policy in this issue. Instead, this research proposes a new integrated approach with elements of both revised national interest analysis, the grand strategy approach, the asset mobility approach, the international condition analysis, and the US domestic politics analysis. In the 1st part of the research analysis, the research begins with the neoclassical realist US grand strategy model by Dueck (2008) to examine the nature of US foreign policy towards the Arab world that is characterized by both liberal and realist approaches. It would also examine the secondary role of liberal culture approach and the primacy of the realist approach. It would be followed by a revised national interest analysis to understand the US national interests in MENA and the basic rationales of US favouritism towards autocracies, the current international threats to US interests in MENA, and the opportunity costs of US favouritism towards friendly Arab autocracies.

In the 2nd part of the research analysis, with reference to the concept of ‘strategic adjustment’ (changes) in foreign policies by Dueck (2008) , there will be an examination of the degree of changes in US foreign policy towards the four case studies after the Arab uprisings in 2011. Furthermore, the international conditions analysis by Petras (2011) , together with the elements from the asset mobility analysis by Brownlee (2012a) and in the US domestic politics analysis, would altogether explain the continuity/discontinuity of

existing US policies after/during the Arab Spring 2011 in the case of the four selected case studies (Mubarak Egypt, Saleh Yemen, Al-Saud Saudi Arabia, Al-Khalifa Bahrain).

The existence of US foreign policy grand strategy in the Arab context

As mentioned above, US grand strategy would exist when there are trade-offs among different means and ends in the face of potential armed conflicts and in the neoclassical realist sense, there are both realist and liberal strategic cultural elements in the general US grand strategy and every foreign policymaking decisions must fit in to both elements, but realism always predominates over liberalism because of the anarchic international system, high international threats and the fixed nature of US liberal cultures (Dueck, 2008).

In the case of the Arab world, a neoclassical realist US grand strategy with both elements of realism and liberal cultures therefore probably exists on the grounds that there are always exceedingly high potential armed conflicts such as the issue of Islamic terrorism/counterterrorism, Palestine-Israel conflicts, and sectarian armed conflicts between Shiite and Sunni (like the mutual hostilities between Saudi Arabia and Iran) as well as great power rivalries, all of which threaten US national interests in MENA to a very high extent and it is understandable that US is thus forced to strike a right balance between different aims and objectives from time to time. For example, America was forced to abandon the Mubarak regime during the Jasmine Revolution because of the Egyptian military and America sometimes also has to restrain Israeli actions a bit for fear of the widespread Arab discontents such as the fact that during the 1st Gulf War, US had to persuade Israel intensively not to retaliate in case of Iraq's missile attacks (Petras, 2011; Hadar, 2006; Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007; Stephens, 2006). All these have led to the adoption of grand strategy as a general framework to US foreign policymaking in MENA and the Arab world.

Presence of liberal approach

With reference to the neoclassicalrealist US grand strategy model explained by Dueck (2008), it is logical to deduce that the US grand strategy in MENA is likely to conform to the national liberal strategic culture to a certain extent and the moderating effects of the democratic peace theory and economic development and the Kantian peace triangle would thus probably be the focuses. The grand strategy model by Dueck (2008) would imply that ,in the Arab context, the liberal elements in the US foreign policy would point to the strong authoritarian nature as the cause of a series of problems like poverty, Islamic terrorism and anti-Americanism as well as widespread regional instabilities such as sectarian conflicts and great power rivalry. Instead, the rule of law, institutional rules, political legitimacy and accountability associated with democracy would transform the zero-sum game interest pursuits to a positive-sum game among Sunnis , Shiites , US , Russia and the opportunities since political participation would also moderate Islamic militant groups, giving rise to peaceful Islamic regimes, and the extensive trade within the MENA region would also increase the incentive for peace. To sum up, with the mutually reinforcing notion of the Kantian peace triangle, liberal elements would probably play a role, albeit to a lesser extent, in the US foreign policy towards MENA aiming to resolve these long-standing conflicts by means of the rhetoric of US democracy promotion especially during the junior Bush administration and the long-standing, development aids offered to pro-American Arab authoritarian regimes for social and economic development, albeit also in a sense of aiding autocracies.

For example, after the 9/11, in December 2002, the Secretary of State Colin Powell during the Bush administration announced the development program named 'Middle East Partnership Initiatives' (MEPI) with a total sum of \$565 million (US Department of State, 2002). With reference to deficits in political freedom, women's empowerment and knowledge outlined by the UN Development Program (UNDP) Arab Human Development

report in 2002, the Bush administration constructed four pillars of the MEPI project (economic, political, educational and women rights with a lots of ‘regional-wide and country-specific projects’ and another program has also been set up called ‘Broader Middle East and North Africa’ (BMENA) Partnership Initiative , which is something about democracy promotion and socio-political reforms initiatives facilitated mainly the US government (US Department of State, 2002: UNDP, 2002: Dalacoura, 2005: Wittes & Yerkes, 2006: Yom , 2008). Since 1960, economic and military aids amounting to \$60 billion have been sent to Egypt and \$1.3 million was allocated for democratic governance (DG) assistance in Bahrain from 1990 to 2004 , and \$334.3 million in 14 years for Egypt, \$0.4 million in 1 year for Saudi Arabia, \$6.6 million in 8 years for Yemen (Pérez-Liñán & Seligson & Tate, 2008: USAID, 2006: Yom , 2008). In addition, President Obama also made a speech in Cairo in 2009, saying that ‘*no system of government can or should be imposed upon one nation by any other and governments that reflect the will of the people*’ (NYTimes.com, 2009). Neoconservatives such as President Bush also invaded and occupied Iraq in the name of overthrowing the Saddam dictator and promoting democratic nation-building, in the hope of spreading regional-wide stability as a result of democratization (Dalacoura, 2005: NYTimes.com, 2009: Dodge, 2009).

Realist primacy and liberal inferiority and reasons

However, liberal strategic cultures, albeit with certain roles in the grand strategy, are always of less importance than realist approaches as illustrated by the neoclassical realist US grand strategy model by Dueck (2008) which is also applicable to the context of US foreign policy towards the Arab world. While US did promote democracy in MENA, there are a number of shortcomings of these aids and programs, not to mention the possibility of the use of democracy promotion rhetoric to gain domestic US supports, US unwavering supports to those friendly regimes throughout the years such as arms sales and military aids as mentioned in the introduction and the literature review, making these democracy promotion efforts

insincere and the primacy of realism over liberal cultures. Thus, when realist goals compete with liberal ideals, the former always gains salience over the latter.

Firstly, MEPI and BMENA are much or less the same thing as other ongoing projects by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which has posed no '*major impetus for reform*' throughout the years (Durac & Cavatorta, 2009; Dalacoura, 2005). Secondly, there is a serious lack of funding in BMENA and MEPI, of which initial funding was merely \$29 million, and in four fiscal years time, the total funding was only \$293 million, standing in stark contrast to other military aids to Arab autocracies accounting for billions and billions dollars and the funding worth \$293 million within 4 FYs had to even be shared between MEPI and BMENA, making the money available a very small amount (Durac & Cavatorta, 2009; Dalacoura, 2005). Most importantly, 70% of funding were associated with programs improving the Arab government machineries and officials, while Arab NGOs only received 15% of them, leading to only 'controlled liberalization' (Durac & Cavatorta, 2009; Dalacoura, 2005; US Department of State, 2005). In addition, US only abandoned the Mubarak and Saleh regime until the very last moment in the name of stability and '*orderly transition*' and the US-Tunisia relations during the Ben Ali era was more about military-intelligence cooperation than democratization with little influence from the MEPI, showing that America is not every sincere about full-fledged democratization in the Arab world (Durac & Cavatorta, 2009; US Department of State, 2013; Petras, 2011).

As deduced from the neoclassical realist US grand strategy model by Dueck (2008), the reasons behind this scenario in the Arab World context could be due to the highly anarchic/threatening international conditions in MENA, making each US national interest domain in MENA under great threats (illustrated by the revised national interest analysis), the incompatibility between the fixed nature of US liberal cultures and the dynamics in the MENA threatening situations.

The highly anarchic, threatening Hobbesian international conditions in MENA

Contrary to the neoliberal institutionalism, the Arab world is best characterized by the extreme Hobbesian anarchic nature compared to other regions in the world with virtually no any presence of effective multilateral institutions nor any effective governance by international law. Because of little intra-regional trade and the absence of any viable democratic regimes, there are little pacifying effects. Instead, there is even an array of illiberal Islamic groups in Arab autocracies, if not all, which are able to cause massive regional-wide instabilities, posing morerisks to the US national interests than any other regions in the world. It is thus conceivable that America pursues a largely realist strategy of aiding Arab autocracies to gain benefits.

In terms of the lack of effective institutional rules, the Arab League is largely ineffective in the case of conflict resolutions (Gartner, 2011: Pinfari, 2009). As mentioned by Khasawneh (2008), *'the history of the last six decades since the founding of the league in 1945 is deluged with examples of the Arab league's inefficiency and incapacity to resolve any of the major issues facing the region'*. The mediation efforts by the Arab league in the Palestinians and Jordanians are often marred by the 'Black September' incident and the repeated failures of the September 1970, 1976 Arab-Israeli ceasefire, the October agreement (Gartner, 2011: Raab, 2008). Thus, no any guarantee can be made that America's pursuit of political, economic and military interests would be protected and each antagonistic competing power in MENA is highly unlikely to achieve a positive-sum game in the end, not to mention the virtual absence of enforcement power of international law in this region and each player (Russia or even China, undemocratic Shiite and Sunni regional powers, especially Islamists groups who do not usually abide by the liberal international order), in practical, is free to cheat so as to have more relative gains than others and seek to challenge the US hegemonic position. For example, Russia and China objected to the UN Security Council's resolution to

further escalate pressures against the Assad regime after the chemical attack in 2013 (Malkin, 2013) .

In terms of the lack of pacifying effects from economic interdependence, firstly, the benefits of economic interdependence may not be enough to offset the incentives to pursue actual political and military power, as manifested by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Syria's occupation of Lebanon, Arab-Iran hostilities. All these imply that economic relations may not bring peace in line with the liberal thoughts. Secondly and most importantly, there has not been extensive intraregional trade. For example, the Arab(GCC countries)-Iran trade has remained very small throughout the years since there are deep-rooted hostilities between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and similar oil-export economic structures between GCC countries and Iran ,both tend to import non-oil products from developed countries (Habibi, 2010). Trade among Arab countries has been very low, albeit with slight increase in 2000 and 2005, constituting only 10% and being '*only marginally higher than that in 1960*'(Malik & Awadallah, 2013). In the case of Maghreb-Gulf-Levantine intra-Arab trade and the proposed regional free-trade area such Arab Maghreb Union, the Greater Free Trade Agreement, they do not really bare fruits (Malik & Awadallah, 2013). Therefore, the low level of economic interdependence among Arabs and between Arabs and Iran may also decrease the incentives for peace and cooperation since if they attack each other, it could even serve the interests of the victorious sides.

For the lack of pacifying effects from democracies, there are very few consolidated liberal MENA democracies, with the exception of Israel (free) and Tunisia(partly free) while almost all other Arab regimes experienced significant Arab Spring protests, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Bahrain, are classified as 'not-free'(Freedom House, 2013 & 2011).Furthermore, illiberal regime is also an issue since although popularly elected, these newly-elected regimes, because of their status in the transition stage, would be similar to

populist regimes being highly radical and anti-American/Israel and hence, should America give way to democratization in the cases of friendly Arab autocracies, chances are that those democracies may open door to Islamic extremism while the lofty goals of democratic-peace theory ,participation-moderation thesis, economic interdependence theory would fail to bear fruit, ending up with perpetual violence and instabilities with anti-American religious radicals would rising to power through popular elections and all these would threaten US national interests illustrated the Hamas takeover of Gaza in 2006 presidential election, when the popularly-elected Hamas administration launched missile attacks against Israel and Fatah to create a Taliban-like state with strict Sharia law, restricting civil liberties and women's rights(Freemuse.org , 2006: Byman et al., 2011).

Furthermore, because of the highly anarchic situation in MENA, there are neither any international institutions nor international law able to stop the Israel-Hamas armed conflicts, except with the peace-broker efforts by the Mubarak regime. Hence, once again, it shed some lights on the value of keeping friendly Arab autocracies. It explains why America tends to proactively/forcefully protect its interests by the realist use of friendly Arab autocracies and liberal approaches, in turn, become a less important issue.

With insights drawing from the neoclassical realist US grand strategy model by Dueck (2008), it is fair to deduce that under such fearful and uncertain circumstances, America, albeit a pride champion of American exceptionalism and liberal democracy, has no reasons to pursue liberal ideals before safeguarding its survival. Instead, America is likely to defensively or even offensively pursue the realist zero-sum rational game of relative gains in powers (military, political and economic national interests) to satisfy the overwhelming security concerns and cooperation is thus almost impossible.

The liberal opposition to the use of forceful tactics also makes it in conflict with the MENA international conditions. As suggested by Dueck (2008), the liberal tradition strongly doubts the effectiveness, values of national security policies, grand strategy. Most importantly, liberal cultures strongly oppose the use of realist elements such as ‘*secret diplomacy, standing armies, security precaution, intelligence services, and covert operations, balance of power, military alliance*’ in foreign policy. However, all these realist forceful elements are strongly required in the ultra-anarchic conditions in MENA, in order to advance interests and to effectively guard America against external dangers resulting from perpetual uncertainties/conflicts in the region. For examples, it is an absurd fancy, without the realist means of aiding autocracies, to achieve the following goals such as counterterrorism, protecting Israel, ensuring stable supply of oil, countering Iran’s influence as illustrated in the revised national interest analysis section.

The incompatibility between the fixed nature of US liberal cultures and the fast-changing dynamic situation in MENA

US liberal cultures, because of its fixed nature, are quite incompatible with the dynamic challenges posed by different Arab regimes. As suggested in the US grand strategy model by Dueck (2008), due to its historical background as the first democracy in the world, American political system is enshrined with long-standing liberal political cultures such as a checks and balance system, the separation of power. Thus, liberal agendas such as democracy promotion are also so deep-rooted in American foreign policy without any possibilities of adaptive changes, limiting the role and explanatory power of liberal cultures in the US grand strategy of foreign policy (Dueck, 2008).

The same token is applicable to the case of US foreign policy towards friendly Arab authoritarian regimes. Different approaches/certain variations in grand strategy should be used to deal with the issue effectively since the political dynamics associated with different

regimes are different and are subject to the fast-changing dynamics of different issues/causes/actors in MENA such as Sunni-Shiite sectarian conflict, Islamic terrorism, great power rivalries, conflicts related to authoritarianism, poor governance and living standards (civil wars, Arab Spring), or even the prolonged Israel-Palestinian conflict, all of which could suddenly emerge onto the surface at different time/different places such as the sudden self-immolation of Tunisian vendor leading to the Jasmine revolution and the sudden assertive actions of both Hamas and Israel, leading to armed conflict .

However, if American policymakers *only* stick to the ‘one size fits all’ liberal approach of democracy promotion and economic interdependence all the time, chances are that US could not react with fast-changing challenges effectively and timely to gain and safeguard national interests since the liberal approach could not be easily adjusted. In particular, economic interdependence and democratization, even if they could really work, it would take time to develop before they could result in the lofty goals of pacifying international relations. However, they are not in the same pace with the dynamic changes in MENA political and social situations and realism thus still dominates in the US grand strategy towards Arab regimes. It is thus not surprising that the liberal approach fails to explain the realist way of supporting Arab autocracies.

A revised national interest analysis

More specifically, there are many exceptionally dangerous threats specifically threatening each domain of US overriding national interests in MENA, further forcing US to adopt a more realist way. In the Arab world, US national interests, instead of liberal ideals, mostly lie in power (counterterrorism, regional balance of power), peace (Arab-Israel peace), and economic prosperity (stable supply of oil). As for democracy as a national interest, they are not discussed separately here but to be discussed as an opportunity cost of regime

collapse to America due to democratization because the principal aim of this research is to uncover the rationales behind US prolonged supports to Arab dictators, and why US democracy promotion agenda is overwhelmed by other realist national interests concerns as mentioned above.

Unlike the national-interest analysis in the existing literature, this part of the research would propose a fresh angle/framework of national interest analysis by examining the basic US national interests in MENA first, so that one could have some basic theoretical knowledge of what America pursues in MENA, then followed by an intensive study of the corresponding current threats to these national interests, and then the analysis of possible authoritarian regimes' contribution to US regional interests and lastly the expected negative consequences of friendly Arab regime collapse so that one would understand, specifically, how each regime fits into the US regional interests and the opportunity costs of America's high willingness to pursue those interests by aiding autocracies at the expense of idealism. Although this section would mainly use second-hand information from a variety of journal articles, with detailed analyses regarding US regional interests, current threats and the opportunity costs of regime collapse, the explanatory power of national interest analysis would be greatly enhanced. Only by so doing could we have a systematic, step-wise and detailed understanding on the US rational cost-benefit calculations in terms of aiding Arab autocracies from the realist self-interest view. If not, one could only have mere information about the interactions between these Arab regimes and US government (regime contribution in general and examples of US aids to those regimes).

Power as a national interest: counterterrorism and regional balance of power

From the perspective of realism, power plays the single most important role in US foreign policy on the grounds that in an anarchic international system, relative

gains/dominance in power capabilities could serve the interests of security concerns such as self-defence, national independence and territorial integrity, national glory (Jentleson, 2010). In particular, power, often expressed in military, political and economic forms, could have the capabilities of influencing over other states such as forcing other states to abide by the America's will, self-interest and deterrence/pre-emptive power, all of which would guard America against foreign attacks or even facilitate the achievements of other agendas like peace and economic prosperity (Jentleson, 2010; Huntington, 1993).

In the MENA context, there are two national interests related to the pursuit of power, which are security-related issues such as counterterrorism and regional balance of power. The 9/11 attack has posed a series of threats to America national interests such as huge costs in human lives of almost 3000 deaths and over 6000 injured, significant economic losses, extensive psychological scars, racial disharmony over the issue of Muslim Americans, pandemic health crisis by the Anthrax attacks, all of which impacts were comparable to the Pearl Harbour attack, threatening almost every sphere of America security interests (Walt, 2002). Therefore, counterterrorism has been a vitally important factor in America's regional power issue in a bid to eliminate terrorism by all possible means. Should America be able to defeat Islamic terrorism by powerful proactive responses and robust actions, America could not only resolve the national security issue, minimize external shocks to American economy and enhance social morale and cohesion, but America could also have a showcase of her military and political strength, pre-empting the threats posed by other hostile countries to America.

Nowadays, America's regional balance of power issue could be linked to the geostrategic concerns about the rise of a revisionist Shiite Islamized Iran, making the prevention of the expanding Iran's sphere of influence one of the US regional agendas. Apart from Iran's anti-Israel/Western Islamic fundamentalism, there are also other issues

threatening US interests such as Iran's possible acquisition of nuclear weapons, Iran's supports to the Assad regime, state-sponsored terrorism and hostilities towards other pro-American Sunni neighbours (Barzegar, 2010). If America could successfully keep the power of rising Iran in check and maintain a stable regional balance of power, doing so would remedy the problems of the nuclear threats against America, safeguard Israel's survival, prevent security dilemma in MENA, and thereby ensure the stable supply of oil and most importantly, doing so would curb the spread of Islamic extremists, jihadists and maintain US hegemonic role at least in the region and the political quagmire in Syria may also be remedied, all of which are of paramount importance to US.

Besides direct military crackdowns on terrorists, America could build up an international coalition on counterterrorism by seeking cooperation from other friendly Arab autocracies because of their home-field advantages in terms of intelligence gathering since information could be easily collected by local law enforcement, informal community relations and military presence in the terrorism-stricken areas (Walt, 2002; Byman, 2007). For examples, the Mubarak, Saleh, Al-Saud regimes could live up to this role as shown by Egypt's great ability in capturing terrorists related to the 1993 World Trade Center Bombing by detaining and torturing them in Egypt and Mubarak had also imprisoned many Muslim Brotherhood members along with many extraordinary renditions of suspected terrorists and Saleh and the Al-Saud monarchy have also assisted in fighting the Al-Qaeda stronghold in the Arabian peninsula (Prados & Blanchard, 2007; Sharp, 2010; Brownlee, 2012a).

The same also applies to the balance of power theory. When there is one revisionist state seeking dominance, other states would join together to balance it, so that the revisionist state would be less likely to initiate conflicts in the face of symmetrical power and the status quo of the stable international system could be restored (Mingst & Arreguín-Toft, 2010). Thus, the balance of power effects by Sunni Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are of particular

importance to US regional interests because of their Sunni monarchies, close physical proximity to Iran/the fifth naval fleet in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, apart from suppressing Shiite Arabs in the eastern province, has also provided lots of financial/military supports to Bahrain to counter Iran's influence such as the construction of the King Fahd Causeway in the name of the GCC (Mabon, 2012).

Though the Mubarak and Saleh regimes have been ousted, the expected consequences before their ousters are worthwhile to be examined , so as to shed some light on the opportunity costs of US prolonged supports for these two regimes/the Al-Saud regime at that time. As deduced from Brownlee (2012b):Prados & Sharp (2007):Sharp (2010): Blanchard(2010): Prados & Blanchard (2007) Freemuse.org (2006): Byman et al.(2011), should US does not support Mubarak, Saleh ,Al-Saud and turn a green light to sudden democratization and free elections, chances are that the opportunity costs would be too high to bear since , in addition to the current international threats of terrorism, these regimes may fail in light of the populist sentiments against the regimes' poor legitimacy, especially during the era of Arab awakening when these autocracies suffer from intense public pressure and there is no guarantee that the democratized regimes would be pro-American after free elections .On the contrary, illiberal democracies, defined as '*freely-elected regimes that fail to fully protect basic freedom and human rights....without tolerance of opposition and secularism*', may be produced since 'the *newly-free groups*' may rise and make revenges on the former oppressors violently, which destabilize the whole countries ,as manifested by the example of the anti-American/Israeli Hamas takeover of Gaza Strip (Payne, 2012: Snow, 2012: Kirkpatrick, 2012).

Given the long-standing institutionalized discrimination against Shiites by these Sunni regimes ranging from political freedom to educational, economic opportunities suggested by Mabon (2012), if these two regimes suddenly collapse, it is deduced that the opportunity

costs would be very high since it may further embolden the assertive actions by long-standing Shiite oppositions in Bahrain and Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, as a means to improve their impoverished living conditions. Even worse, there has been a coup d'état in 1981 against Al-Khalifa by the Shiite Islamic Front with alleged support from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Corps (Byman et al., 2011). Some Shiite Bahraini clerics such as Abd-al-Wahab Husein, who led the al-Haq party, also sympathizes with Hizballah (Byman et al., 2011). Therefore, if these two regimes are toppled, the balance of power between Shia and Sunni may well be upset by extreme Shiite takeovers, which threaten not only other friendly Sunni regimes, but also the stability of the Persian Gulf and Israel, given Iran's nuclear program.

Peace as a national interest: Arab-Israel peace

Peace is also an important national goal of American foreign policy and it is also the ultimate objective of the rest of three goals since *'that is what power is supposed to safeguard, what prosperity is supposed to contribute to, what principles are supposed to undergird'* (Jentleson, 2010). Arab-Israel peace has been a long-standing issue in US foreign policy towards the region as manifested by the repeated US attempts to settle conflicts such as the Madrid Conference 1991, the Camp David Summit 2000 and the Obama administration's initiatives to peace process, of which agenda was to achieve *'peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict'* and Obama also appointed George Mitchell----an experienced peace-broker as a Special Envoy for Middle East Peace (Fox News, 2009, BBC News, 2007).

The reasons stem from the belief that Israel-Palestine peace could remedy the rise of Iran and its nuclear program, as manifested by the statement by former US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates in a press conference: *'the lack of progress in the peace process has provided political ammunition to our adversaries in the Middle East and in the region, and*

that progress in this arena will enable us not only to perhaps get others to support the peace process, but also support us in our efforts to try and impose effective sanctions against Iran' (US Department of Defence, 2010). In particular, it is expected that Arab countries would be more willing to cooperate with America since Iran's rhetoric built on Arab frustration associated with the 'unjust' American actions would lose grounds if the peace process is successful ;and regional anti-Americanism associated with US unjust favouritism towards Israel would also lessen , so the appeal of Islamic radicalism by terrorists would also be dampened (Gilboa, 2009: Malka, 2012: Petraeus ,2010).

However, the threats are that the peace process remains mediocre and US is often seen as an dishonest broker, leading to Arab discontents or even rhetoric from the Iranian clerics to destroy Israel. For example, because of Israel assertive actions, it was found that 83.7% of Arabs in the region did not accept the existence of Israel and 59.6% of them even agreed with the Arab possession of nuclear weapons against the nuclear proliferation in Israel, according to a survey by Tausch (2013). During the Ahmadinejad administration, he also stated that Israel should be 'wiped off the map' in a Conference called 'the World Without Zionism' in 2005 and Iran also delivered weapons to Hezbollah in 2013 by a Syrian convoy, which was stuck by Israel Defense Force (Reuters, 2013:IRIB News, 2005).

In this respect, the value of the Mubarak regime to the Israeli national security was of particular importance (Brownlee, 2012b). Ever since the Sadat administration and the Camp David Accord, Egypt has been the first Arab regime to establish and maintained bilateral relations/certain degree of cooperation with Israel such as the closure of the Egypt-Gaza border upon the Hamas takeover, albeit with diverging views on the issue of peace process and occasional condemnation on Israeli's assertive actions towards other Arab countries and US unfair favouritism towards Israel (Brownlee, 2012b). Upon Israel's unilateral 'disengagement plan' from the Gaza Strip in 2003, the Ministry of Defense under the

Mubarak administration had also played the role of security provider in Gaza and equipped the Palestinian security forces (Brownlee, 2012b).

In America's rationale before the ouster of Mubarak, it was logical to deduce that policymakers would think that there would be high opportunity costs if America withdrew supports since the Mubarak regime would collapse and end up with no any better alternatives, adding up to the regional hostilities against Israel. Among all MENA countries, Egypt is one of the three, along with Jordan and Turkey, to have a peace treaty and diplomatic relationship with Israel (Safty, 1991). Thus, an anti-American/Israel regime could probably lead to widespread instabilities and Arab-Israel conflicts again (Safty, 1991). These views gained salience when the Egyptian public opinions almost rejected totally the Egyptian-US-Israel strategic relationships (Black, 2011). Thus, the potential opposition figures including religious conservatives and secular nationalists in a democratized society may well reverse the policies of favouritism towards US and Israel, especially when the succeeding regime turns out to be strongly authoritarian and Islamic (Black, 2011).

Prosperity as a national interest: ensuring the stable supply of oil

Prosperity is usually linked to economic national interests, which aims to, on one hand, bring welfares to American people as well as to those economic elites and capitalists with profits drawing from transnational business, investments (Jentleson, 2010). In the MENA context, oil has played a very significant role. After the WWII, US economy has become increasingly oil-driven, especially in the case of transportation sectors and manufacturing industries , consuming a total of 68.9% of oil in America (U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2007:US Congress, 2008). Even with the 'Strategic Petroleum Reserve' and indigenou oil fields, MENA is still a very important source of crude oil, with its 40% share in the global oil supply market and most of which oil exports go to the US with a rate from 24% in 1970 to 65% in 2005, with 3,324 million barrels of crude oil exporting to

America in 2011 and the growth rate is likely to be 75% by 2015 (Boaz , 2008,Hudson , 1996, Forbes.com, 2005, Plevin, 2011, U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 ,Hassassian 1997,Barr, 2012:Momayezi & Rosenburg: 2011). America thus has to maintain good relations with those Arab oil-producing countries in MENA, so as to gain comparative advantages in oil acquisition.

However, there are different threats to the stable oil supply to America. Firstly, although there are new discoveries of oil sources other than MENA, there have been increasing competitions for fossil fuels from other countries such as China and India and in the case of China, it is expected that the oil consumption level would increase from 7.7 MBD in 2008 to 16.3 MBD by 2030 (Lyon et al., 2010). Secondly, the scope and effect of the Jasmine Revolution are still far from certain and the civil unrests and protests in Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Iran, Morocco, Syria have already caused worries in the global oil market, leading to fluctuations in oil prices during the Tunisian and Libyan revolution (Momayezi & Rosenburg: 2011)

Thus, among all Arab countries, Saudi Arabia is of particular importance. On one hand, the Al-Saud regime only suffered from mild protests because of the effective use of oil rents to buy off the oppositions successfully, and on the other hand, it has the largest oil reserve in the world and as a second-largest oil producer, it produced 9.5 million barrels of crude oil each day in 2005 and accounted for 11.3% of overseas oil imports in America and 7.4% of oil consumption in America by 2004 and the Saudi regime even helped to adjust oil prices by the gentlemen's agreement within OPEC in 2000 (Prados & Blanchard, 2007: Momayezi & Rosenburg: 2011).

The implication is that America will face high opportunity costs if the Al-Saud regime collapses, not to mention the current international threats to oil export to America. If there are internal instabilities or even regime collapse in Saudi Arabia as a result of US withdrawal

of supports, as suggested by Rumsey (2012): Momayezi & Rosenberg (2011), they would lead to price fluctuations in the oil market as a result of lower production, price speculation and market fears for the threats to the oil transportation, as manifested by the cases of decreased Libyan oil supply and a sharp increase of Tunisian oil from \$20 per barrel to \$113 per barrel following the protests in 2011 and the rise of Libyan oil prices by 20%, even though Libya only ranks 18th largest in global oil production. Thus if widespread unrests occur in Saudi Arabia, the second largest global oil producer would have a disruptive impact on the global oil supply, not to mention the risk of extremists' takeover and Iran assertive actions in the Strait of Hormuz against Saudi Arabia and America, as pointed out by Momayezi & Rosenberg (2011), all of which may even halt oil supply to US.

To sum up, the reasons for America to support Arab authoritarian regimes are that the international conditions in MENA are exceptionally anarchic and dangerous to US national interests in the region, and those regimes could offer almost secure deliveries of US national interests. All these make the opportunity costs of losing them are too high for America. The inflexible nature of liberal approach in relations to the changing MENA international conditions, the liberal approach's opposition to use force are also important points in this issue.

Chapter III: the rationale for continued supports to/eventual abandonment of Arab autocracies after/during the Arab Spring

As suggested by Dueck (2008): Trubowitz et al (1999), US foreign policy is not always fixed and is subject to changes/modifications known as '*the neoclassical realist model of strategic adjustment*' of grand strategies, measured by the changes in a number of factors such as the level of US political commitments as manifested by the size of foreign aids, size of military deployment, the engagement and/or disengagements from diplomatic activities and the changes would be further classified into 'first-order change' (significant changes),

‘second-order change’(less significant changes) and ‘minor tinkering’ (Dueck ,2008). An understanding of these changes could have some implications in the dynamics of US policy towards friendly autocrats in the wake of Arab Spring starting from 2011 during which they are challenged by increasing populist democratic forces (Byman, 2011)

Case studies: US foreign policy and Al-Saud Saudi Arabia in the wake of Arab Spring

In line with the ‘neoclassical realist grand strategy model’ by Dueck (2008), the US foreign policy towards Saudi Arabia has only experienced ‘minor tinkering’ after /during the Saudi revolution starting from 2011, despite Al-Saud repressive actions against civilian protestors (Blanchard, 2014). For example, the Obama administration, since the late 2012, has proposed arms sales worth over \$20 billion including the continuation of the existing training programs and the upgrade of the Saudi-owned US-fighter aircrafts by providing ‘advanced stand-off air weaponry’, and other existing joint-cooperation would also be likely to continue so as to foster stronger bilateral links in national security, economic, educational and interpersonal areas (Blanchard, 2014). In 2013, arms sales include the SANG Modernization Program Extension and Mark V Patrol Boats, amounting to \$4000 billion and \$1200 billion respectively and even in 2011 during the initial outbreak of Saudi Spring, US arms sales to Saudi forces amounted to around \$1 billion (Blanchard, 2014).

Although US officials often criticize the regime’s poor democracy and human rights records and failure to conduct genuine reforms, these criticisms are reported to be confined to occasions during ‘private diplomatic engagement’ instead of open criticism publicly because of the overriding needs to continue the close bi-lateral cooperation and although an award was given to a Saudi women right activist by the Department of State, US officials even praised the King Abdullah administration for being ‘*responsive and transparent*’ to the voice of protestors in the wake of the Saudi Revolution and cited the Saudi government efforts since 2011 such as housing and employment-related social programs by the expulsion of

foreign workers in Saudi Arabia , the expansion of the Shura Council with women included in 2013 (US Department of State , 2012:Blanchard, 2014).

However, the facts remain *'managed, limited political and social reforms'* such as the arrest of women driving advocates and Shiite protestors in the Eastern Province and the conviction of human right activists such as Mohammed al-Qahtani (US Department of State , 2012:Blanchard, 2014). Furthermore, when the regime expressed discontent in 2013, such as its rejection of non-permanent seats in the UNSC, over Washington's reluctance to send troops to Syria, America sent Secretary of State John Kerry to Saudi Arabia and assured the Saudi Foreign Minister the importance of Saudi-US relations to America by saying that *'Right now we have some very important things to talk about to make certain the Saudi-U.S. relationship is on track, moving forward and doing the things that we need to accomplish'* and *'We will be there for Saudi Arabia, for the Emirates..... We will not allow those countries to be attacked from outside. We will stand with them'* (Al Arabiya, 2013).

Case studies: US Foreign policy and Al-Khalifa Bahrain in the wake of Arab Spring

As for US foreign policy towards Bahrain, it could be classified as *'second-order change'*, which is something less significant and more or less the continuation of existing approach after the outbreak of unrest in 2011, as deduced from the neoclassical realist model by Dueck (2008). For example, the Obama administration did not force Al-Khalifa to step down amidst the Bahraini unrest, saying that along with Al-Khalifa good history of reform, the force used by Bahrain was not as serious as those by Al-Qaddafi and Assad and the US government also maintained that it has always expressed objections as to the use of force against Bahraini protestors, as manifested by the five visits of the Assistant Secretary of State to Bahrain in 2011 to facilitate political reforms and settlement (Katzman, 2012). However, those are only rhetoric and the facts remain that the US government *'downplayed the human right abuse'* because of US national security concerns to contain Iran and even though there

was a hold to sell armoured vehicles and anti-tank weapons as well as a reduction in military aids to Bahrain initially because of the unrest, these arms sales resumed in mid-May 2012 so as to increase the self-defense ability of the regime and balance the threat of Iran (Katzman, 2012). For example, 40% of the original \$25 million military aids were provided to Bahrain in FY 2012 and 2013 (Katzman, 2012). Furthermore, US officials even hoped to expand the US naval facility in Bahrain in 2012 and had no plan of relocation of the naval base out of the concern for feasibility and national interests and the US-Bahrain Bilateral Defence Pact continues until today (Agence France Presse, 2011a; Katzman, 2012).

Case studies: US foreign policy and Mubarak Egypt in the wake of Arab Spring

When the neoclassical realist model by Dueck (2008) is applied to the policy towards Mubarak Egypt, there was a major ‘first order’ change since Mubarak was said to be ‘abandoned’ by America, albeit reluctantly, at last (Guzansky & Striem, 2013). During the mounting Egyptian uprising, although America initially provided almost ‘unconditionally supports’ to Mubarak, it later switched to support the former head of intelligence Omar Suleiman or even the military as alternatives, and eventually Washington accepted the ouster of Mubarak (Brownlee, 2012a). Initially on January 25 2011, Hilary Clinton only mentioned words like restraint but did not ask Mubarak to step down and said that ‘*our assessment is that the Egyptian government is stable and is looking for ways to respond to the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people*’ and refused to refer Mubarak as an dictator (Waguih, 2011; Brownlee, 2012a; PBS, 2011).

However, things had some changes on Sunday as protesters posed increasing challenges to the regime, when Clinton said ‘*an orderly transition*’ was needed so that US could, because of such a ‘limited leadership change’, on one hand maintained stability and seemed to answer the call for democracy on the other hand by transferring power to Suleiman (Landler, 2011; Brownlee, 2012a). As demonstrations continued, there were over 1

million people in Cairo urging Mubarak to step down '*right away*' instead of waiting until the expiration of his term on September, prompting Obama to issue a statement '*orderly transitions must be meaningful, it must be peaceful, and it must begin now*' and started to '*turn Mubarak into a lame duck*' by working with Egyptian military and Omar Suleiman to facilitate power transition to Omar Suleiman (Sanger, 2011:Brownlee, 2012a: Cooper et al,2011).

After the 'Battle of Camel', gunshots targeting protestors and the failure to disperse the protestors, Washington's desire to substitute Mubarak by the vice president of the time Omar Suleiman were reaffirmed and later because of other subsequent events such as the rising political activism, cross-sector nation-wide protests triggered by the satellite TV broadcast of the Google Executive, Mubarak unwillingness to transfer power and Suleiman's inability, US asked for a more 'serious transition' and the SCAF Egyptian military people subsequently intervened and ousted Mubarak and Obama then approved the SCAF actions "to depose Mubarak , suspend the Constitution, and lead Egypt until new elections were organized' and the SCAF also proposed to reforms and facilitate '*clean and free presidential electionafter current conditions passed*' and Obama also said '*The people of Egypt have spoken, their voices have been heard, and Egypt will never be the same*' (The White House , 2011a & b:Beinin & Vairel, 2011: Sanger & Kirkpatrick, 2011: Brownlee, 2012b: SCAF, 2011: Weaver &Mccarthy, 2013).

As for US aids to Mubarak Egypt, following the use of live fires against protestors, the White House spokesman said that aids to Egypt were also 'under review', especially the military aids which are subject to changes in events as US monitored the crisis unfolding during the 2011 uprising (The White House, 2011c). However, Washington had been unwilling to 'severe or freeze aids' for national interests reasons (The White House, 2011c).

Case studies: US Foreign policy and Saleh Yemen in the wake of Arab Spring

By the same token, US policy towards Saleh in Yemen has also undergone a ‘first-order change’, in line with the neoclassical realist model by Dueck (2008). Similar to the case of Mubarak Egypt, US initially expressed supports to Saleh and did not ask Saleh to resign explicitly, as manifested by the words of US Deputy National Security Adviser ‘*I think our view is that there’s clearly going to have to be a political situation in Yemen that includes a government that is more responsive to the Yemeni people*’ and US military and economic assistance worth \$ 115 million were even requested to aid Saleh Yemen in the wake of unrest in February 2011 for the FY 2012 (Sharp, 2011).

However, after violence against protestors and mounting tensions, Washington had started to think about the possibility of a “‘negotiated exit’ for Saleh” and a transfer of power to the vice president Hadi on April 3(Kasinof & Sanger, 2011). On April 8, Washington expressed the view that GCC-deal would work, of which content was about ‘*Saleh’s timely resignation*’ (US Department of State, 2011). When Saleh refused to accept the GCC deal on power transfer, Hilary Clinton was disappointed and ‘*urged him to accept the initiative*’ and Obama also expressed similar views on May 25 that ‘*We call upon President Saleh to move immediately on his commitment to transfer power*’ (Ibtimes Staff Reporter, 2011: Agence France-presse, 2011b).

Although Saleh had survived though the assassination attempt by the hospitalization in Saudi Arabia, US advised that Saleh should not be re-admissible to Yemen (The Huffington Post, 2011a). As for US aids to Saleh, there had indeed been a reduction in military assistance , dropping from \$176 million in 2010 to only \$30 million in 2011 upon Saleh’s use of force to attack unarmed civilian protestors and the aids were restored to normal levels when Saleh was succeed by Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi (DeYoung, 2012). Furthermore, a Presidential executive order was also made in 2012 freezing anyone’s assets

in US if deemed to support Saleh and spoil the political transition to Hadi, and this order targeted especially Saleh relatives and supporters in the political and military sectors (DeYoung, 2012).

Reasons: International condition/pressure

As suggested by neoclassical realist grand strategy model , ‘strategic adjustment in foreign policy’ would occur due to threatening international conditions/pressures (Doyle, 1997:Gilpin, 1986: Christensen, 1996:Dueck, 2008).For examples in the international conditions analysis by Petras (2011),it includes the pro-American regimes ability/inability to cope with protests, military loyalty/defection and the absence/existence of viable alternatives ,all of which could explain the differences in US foreign policy responses towards the Mubarak Egypt, Saleh Yemen, Al-Saud Saudi Arabia, Al-Khalifa Bahrain. In addition, the asset mobility approach and US domestic politics analysis could also play some roles in the explanations here.

US foreign policy and Regime capability to cope with protests

First of all, it is the factor of regime capability to cope with protests suggested by Petras (2011). This factor is one of the most important factors to determine the regime ability/resilience to survive, as manifested in the 3rd wave of democratization and thus weak regime capabilities to withstand popular protests would easily lead to regime collapse eventually (Huntington, 1991). Therefore, the level of uncontrolled protests would affect the reliability for Washington to depend on regimes to gain benefits and the significance of this factor could be manifested in the Washington eventual abandonment of Mubarak and Saleh, in contrast to Washington continued support to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

In the case of Mubarak, it was obvious that the popular protests/unrests starting from January were far beyond Mubarak’s control and should the military fail to step in, the protests are likely to continue days after days.

On Jan 25, 2011, the ‘Day of Rage’ began with thousands of protestors demonstrating against the Interior Minister, poor wages, Emergency law in Tahrir Square, and similar protests had also spread to other Egyptian cities (ICG, 2011a: Brownlee, 2012a). Although protestors were hit by tear gas and rubber bullets and internet access and text messages were shut down, an addition of tens of thousands protestors went to Tahrir Square on January 28 demanding the end of the regime and they ‘*outnumbered security forces by a million or more, shocking the Interior Minister and the president*’ (ICG, 2011a: Brownlee, 2012a: El-Ghobashy, 2011). On February 1, the streets in Cairo were already filled with more than 1 million protestors and despite the attacks by Mubarak’s police and ‘*thugs on horseback and camelback*’ ending up with 1000 injuries on February 2, the Tahrir Square was filled with ‘over one hundred thousand people’ on February 4 (Schemm& Lucas, 2011: Shokr, 2011:Brownlee, 2012a).

Despite the vice president Omar Suleiman telling people to go home, tensions mounted on February 10 with nationwide workers’ strikes, leading to the eventual military action to force out Mubarak from power with the agreement with the USA (Brownlee, 2012a: ABC News, 2011: CNN, 2011a). Thus, with all these ever escalating regime-civilian tensions, the number of demonstrators as manifested in the timeline from the political rally in Tahrir Square to Mubarak’s repeated failure to quell the protests, nationwide strike and subsequent military coup, America could sense that he could no longer effectively deliver America’s interests and Mubarak would collapse eventually no matter how hard the regime was to suppress the mass protests. Washington’s calculation was that it was to US benefits to give up Mubarak eventually so as to foster closer cooperation with the potential rulers in the future. If not, Mubarak would become a liability to US and generate far more popular anti-Americanism in the post-Mubarak era, which would further hurt America’s interests in Egypt by damaging the prospects of America-Egypt cooperation in the future.

Similar scenarios also happened in Yemen during the Saleh era, which was proved to be incapable to withstand popular pressure, and America thus withdrew supports for similar reasons as shown by the case of Mubarak Egypt.

On January 27, 2011, the streets of Sanaa were filled with 16000 protestors demanding the resignation of Saleh and on February 2, despite President Saleh's announcement of no desire to be re-elected, Sanaa was filled by over 20,000 protestors on the 'Day of Rage' on February 3 and protests later spread to other parts of the country in March, involving hundreds of thousands people calling it a '*Tuesday of Rage*' (Al Jazeera, 2011a: Arabia Today, 2011). Despite subsequent government brutal crackdowns injuring and killing several dozen protestors on March 4,6,8, 12, and the declaration of state of emergency March 18, Saleh faced 'calls for resignation' from his tribe together with the resignation of Yemen ambassador to the UN and the deflection of military commanders, Obama's calls for resignation (Al Jazeera, 2011a: Arabia Today, 2011).

Later, in spite of Saleh initial resistance to the GCC power transfer plan on April 8, he was seriously injured by a bomb attack in a mosque and he subsequently signed the GCC plan on November 2011 in Saudi Arabia and formally resigned on February 2012 (Finn, 2011:Ahramonline, 2011 Mounassar, 2012). Therefore, as shown in the timeline starting from initial demonstrations in Sanaa to later tribal/GCC's call for resignation and the subsequent assassination attempt against him, Saleh's ability to quell popular uprisings was proved to be overwhelmed by the ever increasing scale of popular demonstration, despite repeated violent crackdowns on civilians and Saleh's departure was counting days also because of increasing pressure from other neighbouring countries, most notably Saudi Arabia. America thus has every major reason to drop Saleh for fear that continued America supports would impede US-Yemen cooperation in counterterrorism against Al-Qaeda in the

future, given increasing popular anti-Americanism in the post-Saleh era and the worsening relations with the GCC countries, not to mention the ongoing AQAP terrorism in the country.

However, as for Saudi Arabia, the story is different. Up till now, the Al-Saud regime has been quite stable and America thus continues to support the Saudi regime even in the wake of civilian protests since without the prospect of regime collapse since the Al-Saud regime is more dependable to deliver US national interests such as oil and counterterrorism in the long run. For example, although there had been attempts to use Facebook as a media for mobilization purposes and to learn from the Egyptian Tahrir Square model to organize 'Day of Rage' in 2011, such attempts were successfully 'pre-empted' by a large number of nationwide Saudi police and security forces presence; demonstrators were also intimidated by the extremely repressive, conservative Wahhabi clerics, making the number of protesters of 'Day of Rage' only 'several hundred people' and only limited to the Shiite-concentrated Eastern Province and those feminists fighting for the women rights (Stewart, 2011: Byman et al., 2011: Banerjee, 2011).

However, those Saudi Shiites minorities, numbered only 10-15% of the population and 'only a few hundred of them' joined subsequent demonstrations in the rest of 2011 and 2012 and the whole Saudi Revolution only amounts to a few thousand protestors till now and for Saudi feminists, their main goal is to increase women's rights such as the right to drive, electoral rights but not to overthrow the Al-Saud regime (Alsharif & Benham, 2011: Byman et al., 2011: Lugo et al., 2009: Shaheen, 2011: Al Jazeera, 2011b: Press TV, 2011). Thus, it is clear that the Saudi monarchy thus faces no any significant threat so far and is highly unlikely to collapse with its large-scale, frightening repression since regardless of protestors' calls for reform, those demonstrators were only marginal segments of the Saudi society such as Shiite Saudis and Saudi women, not to mention the only a small number of them participating in protests and America is thus reluctant to drop Al-Saud because US can comfortably continue

to cooperate closely with its Saudi counterparts, without any fear of significant popular anti-Americanism and threats damaging US interests such as counterterrorism and balancing Iran in the future.

Likewise, Washington does not abandon the Al-Khalifa Bahraini monarchy because of the perceived Bahraini regime stability. Although the civil unrests starting from 2011 posed a serious threat to the monarchy, the regime was strengthened by the arrival of troops from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to carry out brutal crackdown against protestors and the imposition of martial law (Mcevers, 2012).

Admittedly, in the initial stage, the government was a bit overwhelmed by Shiite protestors with tens of thousands protestors occupying the Pearl Roundabout for several weeks, with the numbers of protestors rising from 100,000 to 300,000 with several resignation of Shiite Parliamentarians (Slackman & Audi, 2011; ICG, 2011b; The Hindu, 2013). However, protests had started to decline following the arrival of GCC troops accompanied by more forceful crackdown, during which 1000 Saudi army and 500 UAE and Qatar policemen protected Bahraini strategic positions and stationed in military checkpoints alongside Bahraini military in Manama and the monarchy itself also issued a state of emergency, banning all protests with 5000 security forces engaging in the Pearl Roundabout crackdown on March 16 and arresting more than 1000 protestors on March 17 and demolishing the Pearl Roundabout on March 18 eventually (Bassiouni et al. 2011; Welsh & Laumea, 2011; CNN, 2011b; ICG, 2011b).

In addition, many Shiite mosques were destroyed in April and Shiite workers were laid off in May and even with protests, people were effectively and quickly 'forced off the streets by security forces' and Bahrain citizenships of some Shiite protestors were also revoked (Bassiouni et al. 2011; Welsh & Laumea, 2011; ICG, 2011b; The Hindu, 2013). Therefore, with the help from GCC troops in stabilizing the situation and the regime's

forceful reactions, America would not want to drop Al-Khalifa since US is likely to perceive that the Bahraini regime is still reliable and strong enough to protect US interests such as the naval base and countering the Iran's rise, as manifested by the absence of large-scale protests after the GCC and Bahraini authorities' violent crackdown and total ban of protests. America, at least up to this moment, could count on its GCC counterparts to derive national interests in Bahrain without any threats of damaging national interests in the long term.

US foreign policy and military loyalty to the regime

Another factor influencing US foreign policy decision to continue to support or abandon the friendly Arab authoritarian regimes should be military loyalty, as pointed out by Petras (2011). To elaborate, this factor is important in the sense that it is, firstly, linked to regime survival. If the military, amidst domestic unrests, chooses to deflect to the protesters' sides, chances are that the regime would lose the most important coercive apparatus and the power balance would tilt towards the protestors (Gause III, 2011). Once again, if the Arab regime is not likely to survive in the future, it is advisable to abandon the regime/rulers as soon as possible, albeit in a controllable fashion, so as to develop relationships with the leaders during the regime collapse period to pave for the way to cooperate. Among the case studies of Mubarak Egypt, Saleh Yemen, Al-Saud Saudi Arabia and Al-Khalifa Bahrain, only the first two's military deflected to the protesters' side amidst the Arab Spring and this also explains why US would give up Mubarak and Saleh in the end.

In the case of Egyptian military, although it initially supported Mubarak, it later switched sides. (Brownlee, 2012b). For example, although the Egyptian military later was pulled out of barracks to the streets of Cairo and were given orders to shoot civilian protestors, those commanders refused to attack Egyptian citizens in the Tahrir Square and the military later also formally announced that '*they would not fire upon demonstrators*', although it did

not mean that the military was protecting civilians (Shadid, 2011:Brownlee, 2012b).When Mubarak refused to relinquish power quickly, the military also joined hands with American officials and Omar Suleiman to facilitate the process (Cooper et al, 2011). Following Mubarak and Suleiman's failure to lessen the unrest, the military started to intervene and issued a communiqué saying that '*they would remain in session indefinitely and take appropriate measures to safeguard the nation and the achievements of the Egyptian people*' and then the military '*deposed Mubarak*' and the whole country was ruled by Field Marshal Tantawi and other generals (SCAF, 2011: Brownlee, 2012b).

Now that the Egyptian military had emerged to become the real boss of Egypt, Mubarak's power had been hollowed out and he was doomed to be stripped of power no matter how hard he resisted since he had lost the main apparatus to coerce Egyptian civilians to follow his will and further supports to him would only make the matter worst with not only anti-Americanism from the Egyptian public ,but also from the Egyptian military. America thus gave up Mubarak when the military successful forced him out of power.

For the case of Yemeni military, one could also spot the split of Yemeni military in the wake of widespread social unrests because of different '*tribal affiliation*' (Barany, 2011).Military units belonging to the same tribes/friendly tribes to Saleh and his families generally backed Saleh, while the rest of other units either sided with the protestors or just remained neutral (Gause III, 2011). For example, after the outbreak of Yemen Revolution 2011, there were defections of 12 military commanders, senior generals to protestors' side in Sanaa along with many of their soldiers and among their commanders defected, they include "Brigadier Hameed Al Koshebi, head of brigade 310 in Omran area, Brigadier Mohammed Ali Mohsen, head of the eastern division, Brigadier Nasser Eljahori, head of brigade 121, General Ali AbdullahaAliewa, adviser of the Yemeni supreme leader of the army" and most importantly, General Ali Moshen al-Ahmar also defected ,notwithstanding being a friend of

President Saleh from the same tribe (Al Jazeera, 2011c; Barany, 2011; Finn, 2011). Although Saleh depended on Republican Guard, Central Security Forces, he later suffered from an assassination attempt 'by a dissident unit on the Presidential Compound' (Barany, 2011: Dorsey, 2011).

Therefore, President Saleh was in a much more inferior position than anti-government protestors when even his tribal friend revolted , not to mention the massive military defections and official resignations, losing much more of the coercive power alongside his popular legitimacy to rule. Even if America continued to support him, he would collapse one day and America thus would have no reason to stick with Saleh due to a sharp drop in Saleh's value and utility. Saleh had become more of a liability than anything else.

US foreign policy and the existence of better alternatives

As pointed out by Petras (2011), the existence of better alternatives would also affect US foreign policy decisions to stick to the status quo Arab autocracies or not. It could explain by the concepts of 'asset mobility' and 'the fear of redistributive pressure', as suggested by Brownlee (2012a). In particular, if there is only one ruler/regime being able to deliver important America's national interests in the MENA, Washington is very likely to stick with it, however high the tension of the civil unrests is (Brownlee ,2012a). On the contrary, if there are more than one persons/regimes being able to do so, America would likely to abandon the original leader/regime (Brownlee ,2012a). This is what happened in Mubarak Egypt and Saleh Yemen, but not in Al-Saud Saudi Arabia and Al-Khalifa Bahrain.

In the case of Mubarak Egypt, Egypt was characterized by its unique importance to deliver America's national interests such as Arab-Israel peace and counterterrorism, as suggested by Brownlee (2012a). However, Mubarak is not the only one being able to do so, leading to America's decision to drop Mubarak. During the Egyptian Revolution 2011,

America, from time to time, deemed that Omar Suleiman as a very suitable substitute to Hosni Mubarak, as a form of '*orderly and meaningful transition*' (Landler, 2011: Brownlee, 2012a).

The reason is that Omar Suleiman was also able to deliver the above US national interests of counterterrorism and Arab-Israel peace. In terms of counterterrorism, Omar Suleiman, as the intelligence chief, the purpose of extraordinary rendition was achieved since Islamic terrorists were captured and transferred to Egyptian sites of detention and some of them were also executed (Brownlee, 2012b). Indeed, the Egyptian General Intelligence Services (GIS) headed by Omar Suleiman functioned like the CIA for overseas and domestic intelligence collection to safeguard national security against Islamic terrorism, with arrests and detention of Islamic terrorists amounting to 25000 times and 19000 persons respectively, killing and injuring 1106 persons in the war against Islamic terrorism (Springborg, 1989: Brownlee, 2012b).

In terms of peace with Israel, Suleiman also lived up to this role. For example, his efforts led to the peace between Israel and Hamas in June 2008 (Navarro, 2008). He also sought to improve Israel-Palestine relations by persuading Israeli and US officials to give more credits to Fatah by improving Gaza conditions and telling US Embassy in Cairo that '*the Israelis must help Abbas*' and asserted that '*his agents would helped Fatah and worked closely with Israeli officials to secure to release of Sahlit*' and there was a 'hotline' between Suleiman and Israel Ministry of Defense for daily updating purposes and Israel was reported to depend more on Suleiman than Mubarak (Wikileaks, 2008a: Wikileaks, 2008b: Brownlee, 2012b: Shen, 2008).

Apart from Omar Suleiman, the Egyptian military is also proved to be capable of doing these two tasks. It is not surprising that towards the end of Mubarak presidency when

the military tried to depose Mubarak from power, Washington approved the military leadership immediately following the ouster of Mubarak (Brownlee, 2012b). Thus, US assets are not only fixed on Mubarak since even when Mubarak was deposed, US assets would still be able to depend on the military side, ending up with low redistributive pressure and high asset mobility in Brownlee's language.

Firstly, the Egyptian military and US government had been maintaining a long-standing close relationship ever since the conclusion of Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979 Camp David Accord (Abul-Magd, 2013). For example, there is a total sum of \$1.3 billion from US to the Egyptian military every year, as a part of the Foreign Military Financing Program, including US training of Egyptian military officers, military sales of F-16 fighters, Apache helicopters and MIAI Abraham tanks and all these have led to considerable long-standing America's leverage 'for more than three decades' over the Egyptian military, as suggested by one professor specializing in studying Egyptian military '*Without that sustainment money, planes won't fly and tanks won't drive*' (Abul-Magd, 2013: Schmitt, 2013).

In terms of counterterrorism, the Egyptian military has formed the Task Force 777 counterterrorism unit with US supports during the Sadat era and received trainings from the US Army Delta Force (Ryan et al, 2004). In addition, the Egyptian military also conducts the 'Bright Star' military exercise with the US forces and other Western countries' forces biannually for regional security and counterterrorism purposes (Terrill, 2011). The Egyptian military has also been avoiding hostilities against Israel. For example, although the Egyptian Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi rejected the US idea of placing 'high-tech surveillance' to stop the smuggling in the Egypt-Gaza border in 2009 during the Israeli Gaza Blockade, the Army '*implanted a subterranean steel wall of nearly five inches thick running from ten feet below the surface to more than sixty feet down*' and '*became a symbol of the*

army's part policing Gaza' (Wikileaks, 2009: Brownlee, 2012b). In addition, the military also honoured the peace treaty with Israel by placing only 750 border police officers with the absence of heavy military vehicles (Sharp, 2008: Brownlee, 2012b).

Given the fact that both the Egyptian military and Omar Suleiman can safeguard America's asset in counterterrorism, Arab-Israel peace, America's position could easily be switched from Mubarak to either Omar Suleiman or the military, making Mubarak more of a liability than the sole person to deliver US national interests and most importantly, there was no harm done if America did not support Mubarak anymore since the status quo would continue anyway, so such a low 'redistributive pressure' in the language of Brownlee(2012a) contributed to America's comfortable drop of Mubarak eventually when other conditions also turned unfavourable, so as to yield more benefits in the future cooperation with the military or Omar Suleiman.

As for Saleh Yemen, the GCC-deal of power transfer is likely to be the reason for US willingness to drop Saleh in the Yemen Revolution 2011. Indeed, the Saudi-brokered GCC power transfer plan stipulated that although Saleh could still bear the title of president and the leader of his party (General People's Congress (GPC), presidential powers should be transferred to the Vice President al-Hadi in the 30-day period following the Saleh's signature of the deal, so that Saleh and his family members could enjoy 'immunity from prosecution' and a presidential election had to be held in 60 days to elect a new president (Durac, 2012: Sohlman, 2011). However, this plan was an 'inter-elite deal', a 'transfer of power within current elites rather than fundamental changes' without any involvement from the oppositions such as the youth or the Houthi rebels in the negotiation stage nor did the GCC proposal live up to the protestors' demands for removing the corrupt system and instead, it promoted the status quo power system and most importantly, because of the inherent weakness of other

political actors, the GPC won again with its only Presidential candidate (Colombo, 2012: Durac, 2012; Nevens, 2011).

Clearly, Al-Hadi Presidency would be more of a continuation of Saleh Presidency, as expected in the Saudi-brokered GCC power transfer deal, in line with America's expectation (Durac, 2012). It is therefore understandable that all the previous cooperation between Yemen and US on counterterrorism against the AQAP would continue with virtually no any significant possibilities of Islamist takeover/genuine democratization. In the face of this credible alternative together with Saudi Arabia's efforts in brokering the power transfer proposal and many unfavourable conditions against Saleh, Washington interests could switch to Al-Hadi by dropping Saleh without any significant threats to US interests in Yemen afterwards because of high 'asset mobility' and low 'redistributive pressure' hurting America's interests in counterterrorism, if one employs the language of Brownlee (2012a).

As for Al-Saud Saudi Arabia and Al-Khalifa Bahrain, however, things are entirely different since there are not better alternatives to deliver America's national interests in counterterrorism against Al-Qaeda, for example, securing oil supply and maintaining a power balance against the Shiite anti-America Iran, if the status quo regimes collapse, making a high level of 'asset immobility' and 'redistributive pressure' in the language of Brownlee (2012a). Should America drop the dictators like Al-Saud and Al-Khalifa monarchies, chances are that there may be extremists' takeover, who threaten America's interests.

This scenario is especially likely in the case of Bahrain of which the Sunni monarchy governed the majority of Shiite population, who was deemed, in the eyes of the West and the monarchy, to have links with the radical anti-Semitic, anti-American Iranian leader Khomeini, sparking of great mutual mistrusts, as manifested by Iran's claim of Bahrain, Iran's

involvement in the IFLB coup d'état in 1981, 1996 and the 1994 Iran-backed Shiite popular uprising against the Bahraini monarchy (Ghanmi, 2009; Byman et al., 2011; Mabon, 2012). Given the fact that all the main political oppositions such as the Al-Wifaqare Shiites are suspected to have ties with Iran, as pointed out by Byman et al. (2011), the 'redistributive pressure' after the collapse of Al-Khalifa regime on US national interests are very high because there is no any better alternative and the only alternative is the Iran-linked Shiites, which is not feasible for US since it would lose national interests in the case of Shiite takeover and this is further worsen by the fact that the US Fifth fleet naval base in Bahrain is also immobile from the US perspective because of strategic and convenience reasons, as indicated by Katzman (2012), Washington has no incentive to drop Al-Khalifa.

In the case of Al-Saud monarchy in Saudi Arabia, there is no doubt that the Saudi regime ability to cope with popular protests/uprisings is very good since the Al-Saud controls almost every arena of politics and there is no any systematic, well-organized internal popular political opposition (Library of Congress, 2006). However, like Yemen, Saudi Arabia has also been affected by presence of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) terrorists, leading to '*a vicious and violent struggle*' in Saudi Arabia from 2003 to 2006 with gunshots and bombings in almost all Saudi cities so as to topple the Al-Saud regime, and even Prince Nayif was almost killed by al-Qaeda and the AQAP has also been stronger these days since the Yemeni authority has failed to effectively control beyond Sanaa (Byman et al., 2011).

Therefore, if America drops the Al-Saud regime, the alternative is definitely extremists takeover, which is not a good idea to the US, and since US assets are almost immobile in Saudi Arabia due to its status as one of the largest oil producers, and as one of the greatest Sunni powers in the Arab world, the 'redistributive pressure' is very high and US interests would definitely greatly suffer after regime collapse as a result of disrupted global

oil supply, great shift power balance to Shiite Iran's favour and that is why similar to the case of Al-Khalifa, there is no incentive for US to abandon the Al-Saud regime.

US Domestic politics

In line with the neoclassical realist US grand strategy model by Dueck (2008), it is fair to deduce that the US foreign policy changes towards friendly Arab autocracies could also be explained US domestic liberal factors, albeit to a lesser extent, which could fulfil 'the filtering role' and limit and change US foreign policy options towards Mubarak, Saleh, Al-Saud, Al-Khalifa, on conditions that certain conditions are met. Thus, together with the realist national interest and international conditions analysis, this US domestic politics analysis could mutually reinforce each other to explain the US foreign policy changes towards friendly Arab authoritarian regimes.

Congressional/senior security advisors opposition unity/disunity during the Arab Spring

As suggested by Jentleson (1990), the effects of congressional/senior advisory opposing pressures work greatest during unity. By deduction, this could be the case of US congressional/senior advisory dissenting pressures towards Mubarak and Saleh.

Although international conditions play the greatest role in the subsequent US policy changes, the unified opinions, pressures from the senior national security advisors during the wake of the Egyptian and Yemeni Revolution 2011 did also count. Furthermore, the Congress, with the powers of oversight and budget control, also reacted to this Egypt and Yemen Spring foreign policy crisis from the liberal side, President Obama's realist policies options towards Mubarak and Saleh were thus be filtered and suffered from lots of constraints, forming parts of the reasons for policy changes, though to a lesser extent. Together with the unfavourable US domestic politics/international conditions such as lack of regime capability

to stop protests, military defection, the presence of other viable power alternatives, all these lead to Obama's eventual abandonment of Mubarak and Saleh.

However, this is not the case in US policies towards Al-Saud and Al-Khalifa, during which there were no unified congressional/senior advisory voices to criticize the two dictators, not to mention abandoning them and Obama thus faced no significant pressure from the congress and senior advisors to drop Al-Saud and Al-Khalifa up till now.

In the case of the Egyptian Spring, there had been a consensus to abandon Mubarak in favour of transition to Omar Suleiman among the senior security advisors such as Joe Biden (the Vice President), Hilary Clinton (the Secretary of State), Robert Gates (the Defense Secretary), Thomas Donlion (National Security Advisor) (Nicholas & Parsons, 2011: Brownlee, 2012b). For senators, there also seemed to be a bipartisan consensus in forcing Mubarak to go. For example, the Senate passed a resolution ,initiated by Sen. John Kerry (D-MA)(Senate Foreign Relations Chairman) and Sen. John McClain (R-AZ)(Senate Armed Services Committee) and supported by all 100 Senators, telling Mubarak to step down immediately so that the caretaker government could initiate a transparent free election process (Rogin, 2011).

There has also been a call from the Senate to temporarily stop military aids to Mubarak such as by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) (the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Ops.) and by Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) (McArthur, 2011). Similar positions were also expressed by congressmen in the House such as Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) (the head of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee) calls for immediate popular elections in Egypt and also by Rep. Gary Ackerman(D-NY) (the ranking Democrat on the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia) (Mohammed & Spetalnick, 2011: Examiner.com, 2011).

For the Yemen spring, the opinions of senior security advisors in the latter stage of the revolution were also united. For example, Hilary Clinton (the Secretary of State) said that Saleh must follow the GCC power-transfer deal and John Brennan (a high-ranking counterterrorism adviser/the Homeland Security adviser) discussed with GCC countries on how to make Saleh back to negotiation about his exit and another senior national security official also said that other possible actions would be considered if the GCC-deal failed to force Saleh to step down and said *'We think it's in everyone's interest for Saleh to go'* (Ibtimes Staff Reporter, 2011: Entous & Coker, 2011: Sharp, 2011).

Although there was no large-scale congressional bipartisan statements/opinions on this issue possibly because of the fact that the ties between Yemen and America is not as extensive as that of Egypt, there had not been any significant voices from the Congress to back Saleh and similar oppositions were also expressed by some members of Congress such as by Sen. John McCain(R-AZ) and Republican Speaker of the House John Boehner saying that Saleh should step down immediately and *'receiving you (the Nobel Peace Prize Winner Tawakul Karman) at U.S congress is acknowledgment of Yemeni Youth revolution'* respectively (Yemen Fox, 2011b: Yemen Fox, 2011a).

However, the congressional/senior advisory dissenting opinions to drop the Saudi and Bahraini dictators were not unified enough and in some occasions, there were even absence of such opinions or even opinions to keep America's supports to Al-Saud and Al-Khalifa. All these failed to create enough pressures upon President Obama to drop them in the wake of Saudi and Bahraini Revolution starting from 2011.

In the case of Bahraini Spring, the congressional opinions were far from united and nobody has ever asked King Al-Khalifa to step down. Some members of Congress neglected the Bahraini crisis, during which Shiites were killed and injured and instead

congressmen/senators continued to support Al-Khalifa and dismissed the use of sanctions against the Bahraini monarchy ,as manifested by fact that Democrat Senator John Kerry (Senate Foreign Relations Chairman) once remarked that ‘the Saudi –led GCC forces in Bahrain was “*not looking for violence in the streets*” and they would like to encourage the King and others to engage in reforms and a dialogue’(Mitchell, 2012:Swanson, 2014).

However, there were other senators such as Richard Durbin (D), Robert Casey(D), Marco Rubio (R) and Ron Wyden (D) who pressured the Al-Khalifa monarchy to release a human right activist named al-Khawaja and some such as Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and U.S. Rep. James McGovern (D-MA) also proposed a temporary halt of arms sales to the regime and McGovern even argued that ‘*human rights ought to matter in our foreign and military policy*’ (CNN, 2012: BCHR, 2011: Srour, 2014). Similar scenarios of supporting Al-Khalifa also occurred among people in the senior advisory circles. For example, when the Defense Secretary Robert Gates visited Bahrain during the Bahraini protests in 2012, he gave reassurance to King Al-Khalifa that US would back the Al-Khalifa regime, which is a very important ‘*security partner*’ in the region and the Secretary of State Hilary Clinton also gave legitimacy of the Saudi-led GCC forces in Bahrain and acknowledged Al-Khalifa’s efforts to facilitate the production of a report by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry examining the Bahraini protests starting from 2011 (Mitchell, 2012:Zill, 2012: Ziezulewicz, 2012).

Similarly for the Saudi Spring, there has not been any harsh criticism (neither members of congress nor senior security advisers) proposing any foreign policy changes nor calling the Saudi King to step down, not to mention the issue of unity/disunity and abandonment. Due to the limited size of anti-government protests in Saudi Arabia, the US policymakers and Congress were not driven into significant actions and thus only a limited amount of information has been collected for this research.

For example, William M. Daley (President Obama's chief of staff, 2011-2012) asserted that from the US perspective, popular uprisings for democracy should not be allowed in Saudi Arabia and further explained that '*the possibility of anything (like in Egypt) happening in Saudi Arabia was one that couldn't become a reality. For the global economy (a reference to Saudi oil), this couldn't happen. Yes, it was treated differently from Egypt. It was a different situation*' (Cooper & Worth, 2012; Wickham, 2013). As for congressional opinions, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee 2012 report stated that stability in the Persian Gulf is vital to America's economic growth, making the Saudi monarchy invaluable to the U.S. and the most significant congressional dissenting voices against the Saudi monarchy was nothing more than the fourteen female senators' criticism on 'the ban on women driving', and urged the King to lift the ban in a petition letter (Wickham, 2013: Epstein, 2011).

The strength of lobbying activities during the Arab Spring

As suggested by Jentleson (2010), lobbying activities could influence foreign policymaking decisions to some degrees because of lobby groups' influence upon congressmen/senators/foreign policy-makers to preserve the interests of their voters/constituencies. Therefore, it is fair to say that the relative influence/powers of different lobby groups working for the governments of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, Yemen respectively could be one of the explanations, albeit confined to a small role, of whether the US government's decisions to abandon the regime or continue to support the regime in the wake of Arab Spring. If particular lobby groups are very powerful in defending the interests of a particular regime, that regime is not likely to be abandoned because of the probably strong opposition from congressmen/senators.

In order to measure the relative strengths of the lobby groups of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen and Egypt, the following factors are examined: campaign finances (lobbying costs and financial contributions to the election campaigns of senators/congressmen involved), their organization structures, the ease of access to foreign policy-makers, ability to guarantee of lawmakers' jobs (whether the lobbyists could mobilize voters to vote for congressmen/senators favourable to them or any forms of post-retirement employments) (Gregg, 2002: Dekker, 2010: Smith, 2000: Dershowitz, 2010).

Among all Arab lobby groups, the Saudi lobby is by far the most powerful one and it has achieved brilliant success throughout the years acting on behalf of the Al-Saud regime (ArutzSheva 7, 2011). Therefore, when the Saudi protests happened, there would be a remarkably strong commitment of the congressional and many other US domestic political factors to preserve the regime, thanks to the Saudi-paid lobbyists and coupled with the US domestic politics/international conditions favouring the Al-Saud dictator such as minimal size of protests, loyal military and absence of viable power alternatives. Thus, the Obama administration would be very reluctant to criticize or even abandon the Al-Saud monarchy.

Here are some of the remarkable influences of the Saudi lobby. Despite the Israel lobby objections over the arms sales of AWACS planes to Saudi (the largest single arms sales in US history), the Saudi lobby won and this arms sales gained congressional approval in the end and Saudi pressures have also prevented the efficient investigation of the al-Qaida-involved Khobar Towers bombing in 1996 and the USS Cole Bombing in 2000 (MacArthur, 2007).

In particular, because of Saudi's large amount of oil money, the Saudi regime has been paying over \$100 million for the past 14 years to over 14 public relations firms, lobbyists in America to lobby for the regime such as Qorvis Communications, LLC (over

\$60.3 million since the past decade), the Loeffler Group, LLP (over \$10.5 million), Burson-Marsteller (over \$3,619,286.85), Loeffler Tuggey Pauerstein Rosenthal, LLP (\$2,350,457.12), Middle East Policy Council with \$1 million from Prince Alwaleed bin Talal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud in 2007 (Goldberg, 2010:Goldfarb, 2009).

Instead of the ‘bottom-up’ approach of ethnic lobby, Saudi lobby has a well-organized of ‘non-partisan American experts’, consisting many retired officials from the State Department, diplomats, current congressmen, senators, US Defense Contractors, academics to form the ‘elite lobbying corps’ and thus formal officials could provide the Al-Saud regime with guidance on the way ‘to manipulate American policymakers decisions’ and the contacts accumulated when they served as government employees could also be used to enable ‘Saudi’s access to existing policymakers’ and the Saudi Prince Bandar is also a close friend with former President George H.W. Bush and Bush junior , all these would effectively solve the problems faced by Arab ethnic lobbies such as the prejudice against Arab Americans and difficulty in the access to policymakers (Dershowitz, 2010: ArutzSheva 7, 2011:MacArthur, 2007: Dekker, 2010). The employment problems faced by congressmen and senators are also solved since besides the campaign contributions and salaries provided by the Saudi lobby, the Saudi lobby has also in turn provided post-retirement employments for congressmen and senators depending on their ties with the regime(Dershowitz, 2010).

As for the Egypt lobby, although it is also a strong lobby, it is comparably weaker than the Saudi lobby, so when the Egyptian Revolution broke out in 2011, the power of the lobby might not be strong enough to safeguard the Mubarak interests in the US Congress, so when faced with relatively low pressures from congress and other foreign policy advisers, this would be another intervening variable to why Obama abandoned Mubarak in the end when other international/US domestic political conditions had also turned unfavourable.

In terms of campaign finance, although Mubarak spent an amount of 1.1 million annually to lobbying activities to enhance the US-Mubarak relations with the help of lobbying firms such as Podesta, Livingston, and Moffett , all of which were responsible for facilitating the interactions between American policymakers and Egyptian officials, military aids, the amount of spent by the Al-Saud regime is much more higher, amounting to 7.14 million annually (Good, 2011: Goldberg, 2010). In terms of access to decision-makers, the Egypt lobby also played a good role here since through the use of American public relation firms and members of congress, the problems of access to decision-makers and anti-Arab prejudice faced by ordinary ethnic lobbies were solved and for example, there were ‘at least 279 contacts’ between the lobbying firms and congressmen, senators, officials, defense contractors, and even some of the best lobbyists were hired in the wake of Egyptian uprisings such as the Podesta Group, Bob Livingston (R-LA.) (Livingston Group), Toby Moffett (D-CT.) (chairmen of the Moffett Group) (Rosiak et al, 2009: Good, 2011).

However, in terms of organization structure and employment issues of the members of congress, the Egypt lobby performed not so good as what the Saudi lobby did. For example, since the Egypt lobby did not employ former officials and former members of legislations, the Egypt lobby, albeit with financial contributions to election campaign, did not secure them with post-retirement employments, lowering their commitment towards the Mubarak government or even leading to their withdrawal of supports during the crisis in Egypt (Lichtblau, 2011).

For the Bahrain lobby, it is irrefutably even weaker than the Egypt lobby and Saudi lobby in almost all aspects (campaign finance, organizational structure, access to policymakers, votes/post-retirement employment). However, the Al-Khalifa monarchy survives till now without the abandonment by Obama because of the help from the Saudi

lobby along with many other favourable international/US domestic political conditions to the Bahraini monarchy (Entous, 2011).

In terms of campaign finances, ever since the Shiite unrests in Bahrain 2011, Al-Khalifa monarchy has spent ‘millions of pounds’ to improve the regime’s image particularly in America (Tomlinson, 2012). However, compared with the hundreds of millions spent throughout the years by the Egypt and Saudi lobby, the Bahraini regime has only started significant efforts in lobbying in America ever since the uprisings in 2011 and the money spent (although numbered in millions), is not comparable to the amounts by the Saudi and Egypt lobby. For access to policymakers, Al-Khalifa has employed many public relations firms such as the Potomac Square Group, Joe Trippi & Associates, Sanitas International, Qorvis Communications (Bockenfeld, 2011). However, the lobby’s organization structure has only been mature since the unrests in 2011, which is incomparable to the high-ranked powerful Saudi and Egypt lobby groups and since there are no any former officials are employed, the employment issue of lawmakers is unsolved (Bockenfeld, 2011).

The main point in Al-Khalifa’s survival thus lies in the overwhelming influence of the Saudi lobby in Washington, despite the Bahrain lobby’s own relative weaknesses (Askari, 2011). Because of Al-Saud’s fears of further emboldening the Shiite protests in the Eastern Province and the rise of Shiite Iran, the powerful Saudi lobby has tried hard to persuade Washington not to pursue a ‘regime change’ in Bahrain and as suggested by Professor Hossein Askari, the reason for Washington’s failure to back Shiite uprising against the Al-Khalifa monarchy was ‘*the power of Saudi lobby in Washington*’ and he also remarked that ‘*our(America’s) marriage to the Al-Saud threatens our(America’s) national security*’ (Byman et al, 2011:Turse, 2011:Askari, 2011).

For the Yemen lobby, the lobby was even weaker and failed to defend the Saleh's interests, leading to Obama's eventual abandonment of Saleh when there was a power-transfer deal to Hadi (US Department of State, 2011). Similar to the Bahrain lobby, the Saleh government had also employed several American public relations firms such as Qorvis Communications (The Huffington Post, 2011b). However, the whole organizational structure of Yemen lobby was poor with relatively fewer funding and indeed it is reported that there was virtually no any lobby groups for the Saleh government between 2002 and 2010, except when an American F-16 pilot proposed to lobby for Yemen in 2010, not to mention the problems of lack of powerful figures in the lobby group, lack of post-retirement career opportunities as well as the lobby's poor ability to mobilize the public to vote for the relevant senators/congressmen (Tiron, 2010).

Thus, even the Yemen lobby could reach policymakers because of the use of public relations firm, it was largely ineffective and thus when the Yemeni revolution 2011 escalated there were no any effective supports from powerful lobbying efforts. Thus, when the GCC brokered a deal and other international/US domestic political conditions turned unfavourable against Saleh, Obama abandoned Saleh (US Department of State, 2011).

American mass media and US public opinion during Arab Spring foreign policy crisis

As suggested by Naveh (2002):Smith & Hadfield & Dunne (2008), the US mass media could affect foreign policymakers' decisions (the CNN effect) and mass media coverage could also be shaped by foreign policymakers to achieve their political goals if they have a media management(MM) policy. In the case of Arab Spring, the US mass media was likely to pose an effect on US foreign policymakers' decision to drop Mubarak and Saleh eventually while the US mass media failed to force Obama to abandon Al-Khalifa and Al-Saud possibly because of the media management policies controlled by the Obama

administration in the Bahrain and Saudi Arabia cases not to cover information unfavourable to the US government (Francesca, 2013).

In the case of Egypt Revolution 2011, the CNN effect on the US policymakers to drop Mubarak worked through agenda-setting, priming, and framing. For example, in light of the close political ties between the US and the Mubarak government, the American mass media such as (CNN) repeatedly had live reports of new events during the popular protests against Mubarak, broadcasting thousands of '*violent, emotional, negative*' images from time to time, despite a government-caused internet shutdown, as manifested by the US media coverage of a Egyptian protestor yelling 'I will die today' together with images of millions of protestors on the Qasr el Nil Bridge and Tahrir Square as well as Mubarak police brutality against protestors (McPhedran, 2011:Sheline, 2011: CNN Press Room, 2011:Naveh, 2002: ABC News, 2011).

Furthermore, the American media also framed the issue in a liberal side telling Mubarak to go. For example, a columnist of New York Times named Nicolas Kristof once remarked that '*it should be increasingly evident that Mr. Mubarak is not the remedy for instability in Egypt; he is its cause. The road to stability in Egypt requires Mr. Mubarak's departure, immediately*' and a CNN news reporter named Anderson Cooper also criticized strongly the Mubarak government upon being hit twice by pro-Mubarak protestors (Jurkowitz, 2011: The Huffington Post, 2011c).

Thus, the effects of agenda-setting, priming are served because the media highlighted the issue of Egyptian uprising against Mubarak in America and most importantly, the American public is likely to judge the Obama's policies towards Mubarak as a failure. Furthermore, it is not surprising that the American public/policymakers were guided to think in the way that Mubarak should step down as soon as possible because of the American

media's interpretative frame. Thus, all these would generate a huge media pressure forcing the Obama administration to drop Mubarak. Furthermore, the American media has also generated American public opinion in favour of the Egyptian protestors, as manifested by the fact that the American favourable opinion of Egyptian government decreased from 58% in 2010 to only 40% in the wake of Egyptian revolution 2011, while 50% of Americans had unfavourable opinions of the Mubarak government and 82% of respondents were even 'sympathetic towards the Egyptian protestors' (Drake, 2011&Jones, 2011).

As a consequence, the Obama administration was repeatedly confronted with many violent, negative media images and videos showing the brutality of Mubarak government and the plight of protestors together with the powerful dissenting U.S. public opinions. As a liberal democracy accountable to the public, the US government had no choice but to withdraw supports to Mubarak eventually when other international/US domestic political conditions also turned unfavourable to Mubarak.

Similar to the Egyptian revolution, the CNN effect on the American foreign policy decisions in the case of the Yemeni Revolution 2011 also manifested itself in agenda-setting, priming and framing. In the case of agenda-setting and priming, the US mass media reported '*violent, emotional, negative*' events of Yemeni revolution from time to time. For example, the New York Times showed images of hundreds and thousands of protestors demonstrating against Saleh at Sanaa University (10,000) and 6000 elsewhere and CNN also reported images more than 1000 women protestors attacked by gangs, the government's murder of protestors (Bakri & Goodman, 2011:Jamjoom& Almasmari , 2011:Naveh, 2002:Almasmari, 2011a).

Thus, these American media reports have put the issue of Yemeni revolution onto the highlight and became a heated issue in among US citizens or even US foreign policy makers

(agenda-setting) and the American public was likely to think that it would be a policy failure if Obama's continued to support Saleh. In addition, the extremely violent and negative reports/images broadcasted by the US media have also guided the American public/policymakers to side with the Yemeni protestors. For example, the Washington Post and CNN reported repeated Saleh's loyalists, gunmen' attacks on anti-Saleh protestors, especially in the capital of Sanaa, CNN's editorial praising youth protestors and democracy (Raghavan, 2011: Oweidat & Schneider, 2011: Alasmari, 2011b). Furthermore, some dissenting American public opinions were also formed against Saleh. For example, an American civil right advocacy NGO named 'Center for Constitutional Rights said that it would file a lawsuit in the American civil court against Saleh once he sought medical treatment in the United States and urged the US government not to issue visa to him on the grounds of his human right crimes (Yemen Fox, 2011c).

To sum up, the American public/foreign policymakers were likely to be guided by the American media's interpretative frames to think that Saleh should go for the sake of the Yemeni democracy and stability. Most importantly, from time to time, the Obama administration was confronted with repeated negative U.S. media reports/images which would generate mounting media and public opinion pressure and as a liberal democracy thanks to the effects of agenda-setting, priming and framing. Thus, Obama could not effectively ignore these pressures when other international/US domestic political conditions also turned unfavourable to Saleh and eventually U.S. dropped Saleh.

However, as for the Bahraini and Saudi spring, the CNN effect failed to exert its effects on Obama foreign policy decision-making, possibly because of the media management policies of the US governments for the sake of preserving national interests. Thus, the mainstream American media tried to minimize coverage/downplay the seriousness of the Bahraini/Saudi protests, making any agenda-setting, priming and framing impossible,

not to mention generating public opinion in favour of the protestors (Cavell, 2012). Thus, the Obama administration so far has neither been confronted with any significant pressure from the media nor the American public opinion forcing him to drop Al-Saud and Al-Khalifa.

In the case of Bahraini protests, while there was 489-minute coverage of the Egyptian Revolution by ABC, NBC and CBS news, there was only a total of 34-minute American media coverage of the Bahraini protests in 2011 (Lobe, 2012; Cavell, 2012). ABC News (The Global Affairs Anchor), CNN (An anchor and the Chief International Correspondent) even neglected the Bahraini protests in '*the year-end summary of Arab Spring*', while focusing on the Arab Spring uprisings in Egypt, Syria and Tunisia, Libya (Cavell, 2012; Amanpour, 2011). In 2011, CNN personnel was exposed to '*extreme intimidation*' while trying to make a documentary of Arab Spring in Bahrain and the documentary was also never broadcasted by the CNN International (Krieger, 2012).

For the Saudi protests, the mainstream American media also seemed to downplay the seriousness of the protests (Francesca, 2013). For example, while most of the US media such as CNN covering the Saudi protests starting from 2011, female protestors fighting for women's right in Saudi Arabia was always the focus and even in the media coverage of the Shiite protestors, police brutality and killing of protestors were downplayed and neglected, with news reports entitled '*161 arrested in Saudi Arabia protest over detentions*' and '*Saudi security breaks up protest, witnesses say*' (CNN, 2013; Jamjoom, 2013; CNN, 2011c). Indeed, according to Adala Centre for Human Rights (2012): Francesca (2013), over 600 hundred people were arrested by the Saudi authorities for protesting against the monarch and some were even killed and wounded by the Saudi police in the Eastern city of Qatif and those Shiite human right activists were even '*harassed*' and banned to travel overseas after their release from prison, and the total number amounted to over 300 people such as Fadhil Al

Manasif from Qatif and Mohammad AlBajadi from Riyadh, all of whom failed to get significant news coverage in the American media.

The reason for such scenarios is possibly due to the mounting US government pressures not to broadcast the Bahrain/Saudi Spring in a very negative way because of important US national interests in Bahrain such as power balance against the Shiite Iran, and the Fifth Fleet Naval Base, or even out of the reason to protect the Saudi interests so as to protect America's oil interests/counterterrorism in return and the Saudi and Bahrain lobby also played a role here because they could also influence foreign policymakers decisions, as mentioned above and thus the US media coverage of the Saudi and Bahraini protests also failed to affect the US policymakers to change their positions (Krieger, 2012: Cavell, 2012: Francesca, 2013).

Chapter IV: Conclusion, Limitations, Suggestions

To conclude, this research has provided reasons/rationales behind the seemingly contradictory US foreign policies towards friendly Arab autocracies (Mubarak Egypt, Saleh Yemen, Al-Saud Saudi Arabia, Al-Khalifa Bahrain) (realism in practice with some liberal elements) by answering the research questions and hypothesis using qualitative analysis, literature review with a set of theoretical models.

For example, the US grand strategy model, when applied in the context of the Arab world, explains that there are both realist and liberal policies in US foreign policies towards the friendly Arab regimes and the reasons why realist policies always predominate over liberal policies in the US foreign policies towards friendly Arab regimes, possibly because of the following reasons: the highly anarchic situations in MENA, the fast changing conditions in MENA and most importantly, the overriding US national interests concerns (the revised

national interest analysis; power, peace, oil and Israel) which can be delivered only by those friendly Arab authoritarian regimes.

This research also seeks to understand why Obama abandoned Mubarak and Saleh in the wake of the Arab Spring, while the Al-Saud and Al-Khalifa are still supported till now. This research suggests that international conditions (regime capability to cope with the protests, military loyalty, the existence of better alternatives) by Petras (2011), and US domestic politics (congressional/senior advisory unity in opinion, the strength of lobbying groups, US media and US public opinion) do play very important roles in explaining Obama foreign policy changes.

For example, Obama gave up Mubarak and Saleh because the civilian protests have gradually gone far beyond their control and their militaries deflected and sided with the protestors and there were also better alternatives to them (Omar Suleiman and the Egyptian military, the Vice Yemeni president Hadi), while the reverse applied to cases of the Al-Khalifa and Al-Saud regimes. For the factors of US domestic politics in the case of Mubarak and Saleh, there had been unified oppositions from the Congress and senior advisors and the Egypt and Yemen lobbies were comparatively weaker than the Saudi-Bahrain lobbies, and there had been widespread American media coverage of the atrocities committed by the Mubarak and Saleh authorities committed against civilians, leading to American public opinions to give up these regimes, while the reverses were true in the cases of the Al-Saud and Al-Khalifa regimes.

This research is significant in a way that it makes great contributions to MENA (Arab democratization) since US support is very important to the survival of these neopatrimonial Arab regimes (Hinnebusch, 2006). Secondly, it also contributes to counterterrorism efforts since the prolonged US supports to these regimes breed anti-Americanism/anti-Israel

sentiments (Byman et al., 2011). Furthermore, although there are existing journal articles accounting for why US supported fellow Arab autocracies, there is a shortage of research articles using theoretical models such as US grand strategy model to understand the reasons for the prolonged US aids to these regimes and there have not been many articles using a combination of analyses of international conditions and US domestic politics to explain Obama's drops of Mubarak and Yemen, all of which would provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics in US foreign policy towards Arab authoritarianism in the wake of the Arab Spring.

There are also several inherent limitations of this research paper due to some insurmountable difficulties and some suggestions for future research are also listed below.

For example, the case studies in this research articles are only confined to the four most representative and most important Arab regimes (Mubarak Egypt, Saleh Yemen, Al-Saud Saudi Arabia, Al-Khalifa Bahrain) to US national interests in the Arab world due to time and resources constraints. However, it is suggested that there were also other friendly Arab regimes worth a mention which either experienced serious protests and some government changes such as the al-Maliki Iraqi regime, which represented US interests in counterterrorism and power balance between Sunni and Shiite. For the Ben Ali Tunisia regime, although it was not discussed in this article due to relatively low value in counterterrorism (Brownlee, 2012a), it is worth a mention due to the fact that it was the first country to start the Jasmine Revolution. The Hashemite Jordanian regime has also been suffering from civilian unrests and protests till now and the regime is important to preserve America's interests in protecting Israel, counterterrorism (Jordan Times, 2012: Department of State, 2012).

Furthermore, the whole research is based on secondary sources and literature review, without any primary sources collecting in either in the US or those Middle Eastern Arab countries due to time and capability constraints, lowering the level of originality to a certain extent. For example, the American public opinion poll of whether the US should drop Mubarak was cited from secondary resources such as a newspaper called Politics Daily and the Gallup Politics opinion poll without any primary sources used. Furthermore, the relative strengths of lobby groups are also based on literature review without any first-hand interviews. Thus, for any future research in the US supports towards other friendly Arab regimes such as Iraq, Jordan, it is thus suggested that on-site survey and interview be conducted to find out the relative strengths of Egypt, Yemen, Saudi, and Bahrain lobby groups in the wake of Arab Spring and the American public's opinions on US supports to these regimes.

Meanwhile, although the focus of this research is not on Arab democratization, it is about how and why US supported these regimes. There are some relevancies to Arab democratization and it is worth noting that Arab democratization does not solely depend on US foreign policy supports.

Indeed, there are many other factors affecting democratic transition such as economic crisis, regime type, level of neo-patrimonialism, the role of military, the possibility of having a strong democratic opposition, history of political/economic liberalizations, diffusion (contagion effects) of protests in other neighbouring countries (Andersen, 2011: El-Shimy, 2011, Timpane, 2011). As for democratic consolidation, it also hinges on factors of economic development, so that countries with more capitalist development are likely to consolidate their democratic systems in the long run (Miller & Martini, 2012: Teorell, 2010). Thus, it is also suggested that any further related research on Arab democratization should take all these

factors into account, so as to generate a full picture of what the obstacles to Arab democratization are.

Most importantly, there is an urgent need to have some useful suggestions to the US government future foreign policies towards friendly Arab authoritarian regimes since the changes in US policies towards Arab autocracies were only confined to the abandonment of Mubarak and Yemen. However, the overall principle to supports authoritarian regimes in exchange for national interests has not changed yet, as stated by Brownlee (2012a).

It is suggested that the US government should fight for long-term interests of solid stability, power in MENA rather than short-term interests of fragile stability. For example, while the US government should maintain some supports to its friendly Arab regimes for the time being, those supports should not be that extensive as before and instead the US government should adopt real and meaningful pushes for reforms, transformations in a gradual manner, in lieu of the hypocritical, rhetorical urges for democratization and reforms in the past. For example, apart from exerting gradual pressure on the Arab regimes, the US should also enhance her democracy promotion programs by increasing the amount of funding and strengthening the existing commitment/initiatives to build better civil societies and rule of law.

The reason is that, as manifested by the Arab Spring, a myriad of political, economic problems have aroused from authoritarian regimes, which could breed people's discontent, ending up with a series of large-scale protests, civil disobediences and uprisings and thereby lowering the legitimacy of pro-American Arab regimes and destabilizing the peace process (Byman et al., 2011). In short, America's image overseas is, once again, tarnished, being seen as a victimizer, hypocrite more than a liberator and US's efforts in making a stable Arab World are doomed to backfire (Byman et al., 2011). According to Byman et al. (2011), an

Arab opinion poll showed that Arab people disliked US interferences into the Arab world (Byman et al., 2011).

To sum up, Byman et al. (2011) suggested that the US itself has further facilitated *uncontrollable* Islamists' hostile takeovers/terrorism/anti-Semitism and hostile Iranian actions. Therefore, should America stop supporting autocrats as a means to do away with radical Islamists or the Iranian theocratic regime at the expense of short-term interests like temporary free flow of oil, temporary stable oil prices and temporary political stability? Or should America stick to the current mode of doing things because of the high opportunity costs of unforeseeable long-term benefits? The answer is simple and obvious if the American foreign policymakers learn from the lesson of Arab Spring and Arab discontents as a result of US foreign policies of supporting Arab authoritarian regimes.

While some may argue that the withdrawal of US supports to these regimes may breed Islamist takeover with increasing anti-Semitism and Shiite Iranian rise in MENA, this argument is not really convincing if the US government adopts the above suggestions of *gradual* push for Arab democratization, liberalization and initiatives to build better civil societies. Although there may be some short-term periodic instabilities such as occasional Islamic terrorism, those problems are only occasional and short-term because of the temporarily lack of civil societies. They would not exist in the long-term since Islamic extremism and terrorism are in negative correlation with the strength of civil societies in Arab countries.

If Arab civil societies could be built in a gradual manner with US long-term democracy promotion program and genuine push for democratization, these civil societies would be more mature since without US supports to autocracies, the rent-seeking behaviour and levels of neo-patrimonialism/rent-seeking behaviour would be largely lowered in the

cases of Arab regimes, especially those non-oil states such as Egypt and Yemen. With a civil society and a relatively good civil society, it would foster the development of ‘*a significant degree of institutional differentiation between religion and state*’, also known as ‘*twin toleration*’ so that religious authorities and the government officials would not act against each other and both could peacefully co-exist with a consensus so that the chance of Islamic terrorism would be lower and the level of anti-Semitism would be also be lessened, albeit not totally eliminated (Stepan& Linz, 2013).

For example, in Tunisia after the fall of Ben Ali, it is considered to be ‘a civil state (*dawlamadaniyah*) rather than a religious state’ with relatively a strong civil society and there had been no significant violent, anti-American Islamist takeover with strong rhetoric to destroy Israel so far since both moderate Islamists led by the Ennadha movement and liberals led by Moncef Marzouki cooperate and have formed a coalition government (Stepan& Linz, 2013). In addition, the Islamic doctrines themselves are not considered to necessarily violent and anti-democracy since according to the Koran (2:256), ‘*there should be no compulsion in religion*’ and a political scientist from Indonesia, which is a democracy, also remarked that ‘*the Koran doesn’t say anything about the formation of an Islamic state or about the necessity and obligations on the part of Muslims to establish a Sharia or Islamic State*’ (Künkler & Stepan, 2007).

Similarly, for the case of Iran’s possible ascendancy in MENA, since the Iranian appeal of Islamic revolutions is based on frustration, if there are changes in American foreign policy to improve the political rights and economic situation of Arab people, the rise of Shiite Iran would encounter lots of difficulties and carry no legitimate grounds at all and thus the threats of Iran extremism and anti-Israel sentiments would also be lowered (Chubin, 2012). For the threats of oil supply, it is worth noting that the Al-Saud regime, apart from its vast oil resources, also depends heavily on US supports for its effective control over the population

and military capabilities. If the regime suddenly breaks friendly relations with the US, Al-Saud may fail to compete with Shiite Iran in the region nor be able to withstand Islamic terrorism. Furthermore, the regime may also suffer from great opportunity costs to establish new relationships with other great powers like Russia, which is a close friend of the Iranian regime by breaking the long-standing, solid friendships with the US.

Therefore, it is not worthwhile for US to stick to those dictators anymore since those dictators themselves are also parts of the problems. They may provide US with short-term interests, but in the long-term, they pose more harms than benefits to US national interests in MENA.

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