



Editor: Bruce Maddy-Weitzman

Vol. 5, No. 4

February 27, 2011

Iraq's Day of Anger: Democracy for Arabs, Electricity for Iraqis

Rachel Kantz Feder

"What are they protesting about in Iraq?" reads a Facebook post beneath a picture of Baghdad demonstrations earlier this month. Iraq "is a mess, but at least it's almost a democratic mess." As this comment suggests, even Middle Easterners were initially perplexed by the protests. After all, Iraqis actually elect their politicians. However, the events that have unfolded in nearly all Iraqi provinces, and the dynamism of the Iraqi blogosphere this month, indicate that legitimate elections may no longer suffice in an evolving Middle East, and certainly not in today's Iraq. A glance at the "Egypt effect" through the prism of Iraq and its discourse on democracy may provide insights regarding regional turmoil.

Although Iraqis took to the streets shortly after Egypt's first massive demonstrations, their protests were scarcely noticed. Bloggers lamented the international media's disinterest in their plight and vowed to force the world to listen on Friday, February 25th. Billed as their own "Day of Anger", thousands of protesters converged on Baghdad's Tahrir Square and gathered in at least eight other cities throughout the country. Some demonstrations turned violent, leading to clashes that claimed twenty-nine casualties.

Iraq's youth spearheaded the organization of the protests through social media networks and intellectuals, civil society organizations, public sector employees, tribal leaders, and citizens of all ages have joined them on the street. They have employed tactics similar to those observed in other Arab countries, appropriating identical

images and slogans. Ahead of February 25th, Egyptian protest veterans imparted their wisdom to their Iraqi cohorts, advising them on how to adapt to slow or blocked internet connections and cope with security forces' methods.

Iraqis' demands are diverse, but a Facebook page central to organizational efforts encapsulates the thrust of grievances: "There isn't life without electricity," its title, a reference to Iraq's enduring electricity shortage. Activists' primary demands have focused on improving the provision of basic services, ending flagrant corruption, and reducing unemployment. In their increasingly persistent quest for transparency, Iraqis have recently inquired about the fate of missing reconstruction funds, such as six billion dollars that were allocated to the food ration card system. The demands also range from the civil and political-- full journalistic freedom, improved security and an end to all foreign political influence -- to the social, e.g., the cancellation of restrictions imposed on nightclubs. Less common have been online activists' requests to immediately expel foreign troops and elect a new government unhindered by sectarian and ethnic quotas.

Throughout February, grievances were leveled primarily at local governments; many local politicians and provincial council members were asked to resign. In Kut, protesters demanding the removal of a corrupt governor and a solution to the ration card shortage attacked government buildings and clashed with security forces, resulting in the death of three persons.

On February 17th, despite Kurdistan Regional Government President Mas'ud Barzani's preemptive promise to devolve powers, the autonomous region experienced its first major display of public discontent. Demonstrators in Suleimania threw stones at Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party headquarters, and the protest ended with two fatalities, the imposition of a curfew, and the deployment of Peshmerga forces. Since then, Iraqi Kurdistan has been roiled by consecutive demonstrations for political reform and improved services, and it even appears that, for the first time, a parliamentary opposition front is emerging.

Activists have insisted that demonstrations remain peaceful, and apart from a number of incidents, most protesters this month have been nonviolent. Facebook exchanges and Twitter feeds are replete with phrases like "Salamiya, Salamiya, Iraqiya, Iraqiya," and decidedly condemn expressions of sectarianism and ethnic strife. Like Egyptian and Bahraini activists, Iraqis have resorted to the annals of their

history in order to inspire nationalist unity. Activist leaders posted declarations like, “all Iraqis are descendants of the 1920 Revolution,” referring to the uprising against British forces, which sometimes has been interpreted as a nationalist revolution and employed to promote Iraqi nationalism.

The upheaval in Egypt reinvigorated the public discourse on democracy in Iraq. Days after it began, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki vowed not to run again and announced that he was slashing his salary in half. A colleague explained that Maliki’s move was unrelated to regional developments; his decision stemmed from his commitment to the vitality of Iraqi democracy. Since then, Maliki and other politicians have struggled to maintain an edge in the ongoing debate. They have brandished Iraq’s democracy as their greatest weapon against rising public pressure, and repeatedly reminded Iraqis that they are the fortunate ones because their constitutional rights guarantee freedom of expression and assembly. On numerous occasions, Maliki has invoked the memory of Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship in order to encourage Iraqis to cherish their democratic system and consider their conditions in relative terms. He has tried to imbue Iraqis with confidence in the future of the system, reassuring them that their democracy represents the will of the people in contrast to the Ba’athist days, when “the father was afraid to speak with his son.”

Iraqi officials have asserted that Iraq’s situation is incomparable to that of Tunisia or Egypt because their legitimacy comes from the people’s democratic choices. In Tunisia and Egypt, declared Vice-President `Adel `Abdul Mahdi, people “demanded radical political reforms such as rewriting the constitutions, a transition towards democracy and new elections, while Iraq has long surpassed all of those demands.”

Some Iraqis are unconvinced by their politicians’ reaffirmation of Iraqi democracy. They doubt the merits of their democratic system, asking what distinguishes their democracy from the previous regime. One blogger questioned “what kind of democracy is it where peaceful protesters are met with live fire,” while others observe that real democracies have no need for ration cards. Many who do believe that they live in a democracy wonder if they were not better off before the Americans delivered it to them.

Politicians have implored Iraqis to give them time to solve the country’s manifold problems. In a statement reminiscent of one of former Egyptian President Mubarak’s last declarations, Parliament Speaker Usama al-Nujaifi ominously warned

of the country's collapse should the gap between the ruler and ruled widen. While stressing his commitment to addressing Iraqis' grievances, he outlined the choice that lay before them, between chaos and stability. Concurrently, leaders have adopted a conciliatory approach. For example, Maliki personally met with representatives of NGOs in Baghdad and a number of politicians have resigned allegedly at his behest.

Ahead of February 25th, politicians stressed Iraqis' constitutional right to demonstrate peacefully, but cautioned that Ba'athist elements and al-Qa`ida seek to distort their legitimate demands, and warned of negative ramifications if protests are sectarian or partisan. Muqtada al-Sadr, an ascendant populist leader, returned to Najaf from Iran and publicly endorsed the demonstrations, suggesting that some politicians may try to capitalize on public discontent. However, days before Iraq's Day of Anger, he closed ranks with Maliki by encouraging Iraqis to stay home.

It is evident that although *prima facie* regional events appear to be similar, they are far from identical. In nearly each country, demonstrators have rallied around the same longstanding sources of contention that have galvanized popular discontent and internal strife in the past. In fact, one blogger boasted that Iraqis initiated the current wave of activism when last summer they vociferously objected to widespread corruption and the electricity shortage. The awakening of Arab publics may be understood as resulting from the confluence of two sets of demands. One is comprised of issues specific to each country, while the other centers on a more general insistence for democracy led by emboldened youth. Expressions in the social media speak of a yearning for the "Free Arab World," a trend characterized by a renewed (and cyber-virtual) pan-Arab cooperation and unity of purpose aimed at liberating Arab countries from corrupt authoritarian rule.

After the Day of Anger, a Facebook page with over 25,000 members called for civil disobedience until "the overthrow of the government." This appeal provoked many scornful reactions, some retorting that Iraqis are free to pursue their goals within their democratic system. Indeed, throughout the month's protests, many Iraqis symbolically waved yellow cards, as a football referee does when issuing a stern warning to players guilty of infractions. Developments in Iraq have shown that Iraqis conceive of democracy as more than just political rights and freedoms. They are demanding what they regard as the rest of the package of democratic rule: robust rule of law, transparency and accountability, functioning public services and infrastructure, and economic opportunity. The evolving Iraqi discourse on democracy

may portend that Arab publics will not settle for transitions to ostensibly, merely formal democratic systems; eventually some Arab leaders may be asked to deliver more. VP Abdul Mahdi expects "the situation next summer to be the same as it was last summer," with "no more than eight hours of electricity a day." It promises to be a scorching summer, but probably one quite unlike the last, in political terms at least.

Rachel Kantz Feder is a junior researcher of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University.

The Moshe Dayan Center publishes TEL AVIV NOTES, an analytical update on current affairs in the Middle East, on the 10th and 26th of every month, as well as occasional Special Editions.

TEL AVIV NOTES is published with the support of the V. Sorell Foundation

Previous editions of TEL AVIV NOTES can be accessed at www.dayan.org, under "Commentary."

You are subscribed to the Moshe Dayan Center Electronic Mailing List. Should you wish to unsubscribe, please send an email to listserv@listserv.tau.ac.il, with the message "unsubscribe dayan-center."



Editor: Bruce Maddy-Weitzman

Vol. 5, No. 4

February 27, 2011

Iraq's Day of Anger: Democracy for Arabs, Electricity for Iraqis

Rachel Kantz Feder

"What are they protesting about in Iraq?" reads a Facebook post beneath a picture of Baghdad demonstrations earlier this month. Iraq "is a mess, but at least it's almost a democratic mess." As this comment suggests, even Middle Easterners were initially perplexed by the protests. After all, Iraqis actually elect their politicians. However, the events that have unfolded in nearly all Iraqi provinces, and the dynamism of the Iraqi blogosphere this month, indicate that legitimate elections may no longer suffice in an evolving Middle East, and certainly not in today's Iraq. A glance at the "Egypt effect" through the prism of Iraq and its discourse on democracy may provide insights regarding regional turmoil.

Although Iraqis took to the streets shortly after Egypt's first massive demonstrations, their protests were scarcely noticed. Bloggers lamented the international media's disinterest in their plight and vowed to force the world to listen on Friday, February 25th. Billed as their own "Day of Anger", thousands of protesters converged on Baghdad's Tahrir Square and gathered in at least eight other cities throughout the country. Some demonstrations turned violent, leading to clashes that claimed twenty-nine casualties.

Iraq's youth spearheaded the organization of the protests through social media networks and intellectuals, civil society organizations, public sector employees, tribal leaders, and citizens of all ages have joined them on the street. They have employed tactics similar to those observed in other Arab countries, appropriating identical

images and slogans. Ahead of February 25th, Egyptian protest veterans imparted their wisdom to their Iraqi cohorts, advising them on how to adapt to slow or blocked internet connections and cope with security forces' methods.

Iraqis' demands are diverse, but a Facebook page central to organizational efforts encapsulates the thrust of grievances: "There isn't life without electricity," its title, a reference to Iraq's enduring electricity shortage. Activists' primary demands have focused on improving the provision of basic services, ending flagrant corruption, and reducing unemployment. In their increasingly persistent quest for transparency, Iraqis have recently inquired about the fate of missing reconstruction funds, such as six billion dollars that were allocated to the food ration card system. The demands also range from the civil and political-- full journalistic freedom, improved security and an end to all foreign political influence -- to the social, e.g., the cancellation of restrictions imposed on nightclubs. Less common have been online activists' requests to immediately expel foreign troops and elect a new government unhindered by sectarian and ethnic quotas.

Throughout February, grievances were leveled primarily at local governments; many local politicians and provincial council members were asked to resign. In Kut, protesters demanding the removal of a corrupt governor and a solution to the ration card shortage attacked government buildings and clashed with security forces, resulting in the death of three persons.

On February 17th, despite Kurdistan Regional Government President Mas'ud Barzani's preemptive promise to devolve powers, the autonomous region experienced its first major display of public discontent. Demonstrators in Suleimania threw stones at Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party headquarters, and the protest ended with two fatalities, the imposition of a curfew, and the deployment of Peshmerga forces. Since then, Iraqi Kurdistan has been roiled by consecutive demonstrations for political reform and improved services, and it even appears that, for the first time, a parliamentary opposition front is emerging.

Activists have insisted that demonstrations remain peaceful, and apart from a number of incidents, most protesters this month have been nonviolent. Facebook exchanges and Twitter feeds are replete with phrases like "Salamiya, Salamiya, Iraqiya, Iraqiya," and decidedly condemn expressions of sectarianism and ethnic strife. Like Egyptian and Bahraini activists, Iraqis have resorted to the annals of their

history in order to inspire nationalist unity. Activist leaders posted declarations like, “all Iraqis are descendants of the 1920 Revolution,” referring to the uprising against British forces, which sometimes has been interpreted as a nationalist revolution and employed to promote Iraqi nationalism.

The upheaval in Egypt reinvigorated the public discourse on democracy in Iraq. Days after it began, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki vowed not to run again and announced that he was slashing his salary in half. A colleague explained that Maliki’s move was unrelated to regional developments; his decision stemmed from his commitment to the vitality of Iraqi democracy. Since then, Maliki and other politicians have struggled to maintain an edge in the ongoing debate. They have brandished Iraq’s democracy as their greatest weapon against rising public pressure, and repeatedly reminded Iraqis that they are the fortunate ones because their constitutional rights guarantee freedom of expression and assembly. On numerous occasions, Maliki has invoked the memory of Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship in order to encourage Iraqis to cherish their democratic system and consider their conditions in relative terms. He has tried to imbue Iraqis with confidence in the future of the system, reassuring them that their democracy represents the will of the people in contrast to the Ba’athist days, when “the father was afraid to speak with his son.”

Iraqi officials have asserted that Iraq’s situation is incomparable to that of Tunisia or Egypt because their legitimacy comes from the people’s democratic choices. In Tunisia and Egypt, declared Vice-President `Adel `Abdul Mahdi, people “demanded radical political reforms such as rewriting the constitutions, a transition towards democracy and new elections, while Iraq has long surpassed all of those demands.”

Some Iraqis are unconvinced by their politicians’ reaffirmation of Iraqi democracy. They doubt the merits of their democratic system, asking what distinguishes their democracy from the previous regime. One blogger questioned “what kind of democracy is it where peaceful protesters are met with live fire,” while others observe that real democracies have no need for ration cards. Many who do believe that they live in a democracy wonder if they were not better off before the Americans delivered it to them.

Politicians have implored Iraqis to give them time to solve the country’s manifold problems. In a statement reminiscent of one of former Egyptian President Mubarak’s last declarations, Parliament Speaker Usama al-Nujaifi ominously warned

of the country's collapse should the gap between the ruler and ruled widen. While stressing his commitment to addressing Iraqis' grievances, he outlined the choice that lay before them, between chaos and stability. Concurrently, leaders have adopted a conciliatory approach. For example, Maliki personally met with representatives of NGOs in Baghdad and a number of politicians have resigned allegedly at his behest.

Ahead of February 25th, politicians stressed Iraqis' constitutional right to demonstrate peacefully, but cautioned that Ba'athist elements and al-Qa`ida seek to distort their legitimate demands, and warned of negative ramifications if protests are sectarian or partisan. Muqtada al-Sadr, an ascendant populist leader, returned to Najaf from Iran and publicly endorsed the demonstrations, suggesting that some politicians may try to capitalize on public discontent. However, days before Iraq's Day of Anger, he closed ranks with Maliki by encouraging Iraqis to stay home.

It is evident that although *prima facie* regional events appear to be similar, they are far from identical. In nearly each country, demonstrators have rallied around the same longstanding sources of contention that have galvanized popular discontent and internal strife in the past. In fact, one blogger boasted that Iraqis initiated the current wave of activism when last summer they vociferously objected to widespread corruption and the electricity shortage. The awakening of Arab publics may be understood as resulting from the confluence of two sets of demands. One is comprised of issues specific to each country, while the other centers on a more general insistence for democracy led by emboldened youth. Expressions in the social media speak of a yearning for the "Free Arab World," a trend characterized by a renewed (and cyber-virtual) pan-Arab cooperation and unity of purpose aimed at liberating Arab countries from corrupt authoritarian rule.

After the Day of Anger, a Facebook page with over 25,000 members called for civil disobedience until "the overthrow of the government." This appeal provoked many scornful reactions, some retorting that Iraqis are free to pursue their goals within their democratic system. Indeed, throughout the month's protests, many Iraqis symbolically waved yellow cards, as a football referee does when issuing a stern warning to players guilty of infractions. Developments in Iraq have shown that Iraqis conceive of democracy as more than just political rights and freedoms. They are demanding what they regard as the rest of the package of democratic rule: robust rule of law, transparency and accountability, functioning public services and infrastructure, and economic opportunity. The evolving Iraqi discourse on democracy

may portend that Arab publics will not settle for transitions to ostensibly, merely formal democratic systems; eventually some Arab leaders may be asked to deliver more. VP Abdul Mahdi expects "the situation next summer to be the same as it was last summer," with "no more than eight hours of electricity a day." It promises to be a scorching summer, but probably one quite unlike the last, in political terms at least.

Rachel Kantz Feder is a junior researcher of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University.

The Moshe Dayan Center publishes TEL AVIV NOTES, an analytical update on current affairs in the Middle East, on the 10th and 26th of every month, as well as occasional Special Editions.

TEL AVIV NOTES is published with the support of the V. Sorell Foundation

Previous editions of TEL AVIV NOTES can be accessed at www.dayan.org, under "Commentary."

You are subscribed to the Moshe Dayan Center Electronic Mailing List. Should you wish to unsubscribe, please send an email to listserv@listserv.tau.ac.il, with the message "unsubscribe dayan-center."



Editor: Bruce Maddy-Weitzman

Vol. 5, No. 4

February 27, 2011

Iraq's Day of Anger: Democracy for Arabs, Electricity for Iraqis

Rachel Kantz Feder

"What are they protesting about in Iraq?" reads a Facebook post beneath a picture of Baghdad demonstrations earlier this month. Iraq "is a mess, but at least it's almost a democratic mess." As this comment suggests, even Middle Easterners were initially perplexed by the protests. After all, Iraqis actually elect their politicians. However, the events that have unfolded in nearly all Iraqi provinces, and the dynamism of the Iraqi blogosphere this month, indicate that legitimate elections may no longer suffice in an evolving Middle East, and certainly not in today's Iraq. A glance at the "Egypt effect" through the prism of Iraq and its discourse on democracy may provide insights regarding regional turmoil.

Although Iraqis took to the streets shortly after Egypt's first massive demonstrations, their protests were scarcely noticed. Bloggers lamented the international media's disinterest in their plight and vowed to force the world to listen on Friday, February 25th. Billed as their own "Day of Anger", thousands of protesters converged on Baghdad's Tahrir Square and gathered in at least eight other cities throughout the country. Some demonstrations turned violent, leading to clashes that claimed twenty-nine casualties.

Iraq's youth spearheaded the organization of the protests through social media networks and intellectuals, civil society organizations, public sector employees, tribal leaders, and citizens of all ages have joined them on the street. They have employed tactics similar to those observed in other Arab countries, appropriating identical

images and slogans. Ahead of February 25th, Egyptian protest veterans imparted their wisdom to their Iraqi cohorts, advising them on how to adapt to slow or blocked internet connections and cope with security forces' methods.

Iraqis' demands are diverse, but a Facebook page central to organizational efforts encapsulates the thrust of grievances: "There isn't life without electricity," its title, a reference to Iraq's enduring electricity shortage. Activists' primary demands have focused on improving the provision of basic services, ending flagrant corruption, and reducing unemployment. In their increasingly persistent quest for transparency, Iraqis have recently inquired about the fate of missing reconstruction funds, such as six billion dollars that were allocated to the food ration card system. The demands also range from the civil and political-- full journalistic freedom, improved security and an end to all foreign political influence -- to the social, e.g., the cancellation of restrictions imposed on nightclubs. Less common have been online activists' requests to immediately expel foreign troops and elect a new government unhindered by sectarian and ethnic quotas.

Throughout February, grievances were leveled primarily at local governments; many local politicians and provincial council members were asked to resign. In Kut, protesters demanding the removal of a corrupt governor and a solution to the ration card shortage attacked government buildings and clashed with security forces, resulting in the death of three persons.

On February 17th, despite Kurdistan Regional Government President Mas'ud Barzani's preemptive promise to devolve powers, the autonomous region experienced its first major display of public discontent. Demonstrators in Suleimania threw stones at Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party headquarters, and the protest ended with two fatalities, the imposition of a curfew, and the deployment of Peshmerga forces. Since then, Iraqi Kurdistan has been roiled by consecutive demonstrations for political reform and improved services, and it even appears that, for the first time, a parliamentary opposition front is emerging.

Activists have insisted that demonstrations remain peaceful, and apart from a number of incidents, most protesters this month have been nonviolent. Facebook exchanges and Twitter feeds are replete with phrases like "Salamiya, Salamiya, Iraqiya, Iraqiya," and decidedly condemn expressions of sectarianism and ethnic strife. Like Egyptian and Bahraini activists, Iraqis have resorted to the annals of their

history in order to inspire nationalist unity. Activist leaders posted declarations like, “all Iraqis are descendants of the 1920 Revolution,” referring to the uprising against British forces, which sometimes has been interpreted as a nationalist revolution and employed to promote Iraqi nationalism.

The upheaval in Egypt reinvigorated the public discourse on democracy in Iraq. Days after it began, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki vowed not to run again and announced that he was slashing his salary in half. A colleague explained that Maliki’s move was unrelated to regional developments; his decision stemmed from his commitment to the vitality of Iraqi democracy. Since then, Maliki and other politicians have struggled to maintain an edge in the ongoing debate. They have brandished Iraq’s democracy as their greatest weapon against rising public pressure, and repeatedly reminded Iraqis that they are the fortunate ones because their constitutional rights guarantee freedom of expression and assembly. On numerous occasions, Maliki has invoked the memory of Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship in order to encourage Iraqis to cherish their democratic system and consider their conditions in relative terms. He has tried to imbue Iraqis with confidence in the future of the system, reassuring them that their democracy represents the will of the people in contrast to the Ba’athist days, when “the father was afraid to speak with his son.”

Iraqi officials have asserted that Iraq’s situation is incomparable to that of Tunisia or Egypt because their legitimacy comes from the people’s democratic choices. In Tunisia and Egypt, declared Vice-President `Adel `Abdul Mahdi, people “demanded radical political reforms such as rewriting the constitutions, a transition towards democracy and new elections, while Iraq has long surpassed all of those demands.”

Some Iraqis are unconvinced by their politicians’ reaffirmation of Iraqi democracy. They doubt the merits of their democratic system, asking what distinguishes their democracy from the previous regime. One blogger questioned “what kind of democracy is it where peaceful protesters are met with live fire,” while others observe that real democracies have no need for ration cards. Many who do believe that they live in a democracy wonder if they were not better off before the Americans delivered it to them.

Politicians have implored Iraqis to give them time to solve the country’s manifold problems. In a statement reminiscent of one of former Egyptian President Mubarak’s last declarations, Parliament Speaker Usama al-Nujaifi ominously warned

of the country's collapse should the gap between the ruler and ruled widen. While stressing his commitment to addressing Iraqis' grievances, he outlined the choice that lay before them, between chaos and stability. Concurrently, leaders have adopted a conciliatory approach. For example, Maliki personally met with representatives of NGOs in Baghdad and a number of politicians have resigned allegedly at his behest.

Ahead of February 25th, politicians stressed Iraqis' constitutional right to demonstrate peacefully, but cautioned that Ba'athist elements and al-Qa`ida seek to distort their legitimate demands, and warned of negative ramifications if protests are sectarian or partisan. Muqtada al-Sadr, an ascendant populist leader, returned to Najaf from Iran and publicly endorsed the demonstrations, suggesting that some politicians may try to capitalize on public discontent. However, days before Iraq's Day of Anger, he closed ranks with Maliki by encouraging Iraqis to stay home.

It is evident that although *prima facie* regional events appear to be similar, they are far from identical. In nearly each country, demonstrators have rallied around the same longstanding sources of contention that have galvanized popular discontent and internal strife in the past. In fact, one blogger boasted that Iraqis initiated the current wave of activism when last summer they vociferously objected to widespread corruption and the electricity shortage. The awakening of Arab publics may be understood as resulting from the confluence of two sets of demands. One is comprised of issues specific to each country, while the other centers on a more general insistence for democracy led by emboldened youth. Expressions in the social media speak of a yearning for the "Free Arab World," a trend characterized by a renewed (and cyber-virtual) pan-Arab cooperation and unity of purpose aimed at liberating Arab countries from corrupt authoritarian rule.

After the Day of Anger, a Facebook page with over 25,000 members called for civil disobedience until "the overthrow of the government." This appeal provoked many scornful reactions, some retorting that Iraqis are free to pursue their goals within their democratic system. Indeed, throughout the month's protests, many Iraqis symbolically waved yellow cards, as a football referee does when issuing a stern warning to players guilty of infractions. Developments in Iraq have shown that Iraqis conceive of democracy as more than just political rights and freedoms. They are demanding what they regard as the rest of the package of democratic rule: robust rule of law, transparency and accountability, functioning public services and infrastructure, and economic opportunity. The evolving Iraqi discourse on democracy

may portend that Arab publics will not settle for transitions to ostensibly, merely formal democratic systems; eventually some Arab leaders may be asked to deliver more. VP Abdul Mahdi expects "the situation next summer to be the same as it was last summer," with "no more than eight hours of electricity a day." It promises to be a scorching summer, but probably one quite unlike the last, in political terms at least.

Rachel Kantz Feder is a junior researcher of the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University.

The Moshe Dayan Center publishes TEL AVIV NOTES, an analytical update on current affairs in the Middle East, on the 10th and 26th of every month, as well as occasional Special Editions.

TEL AVIV NOTES is published with the support of the V. Sorell Foundation

Previous editions of TEL AVIV NOTES can be accessed at www.dayan.org, under "Commentary."

You are subscribed to the Moshe Dayan Center Electronic Mailing List. Should you wish to unsubscribe, please send an email to listserv@listserv.tau.ac.il, with the message "unsubscribe dayan-center."