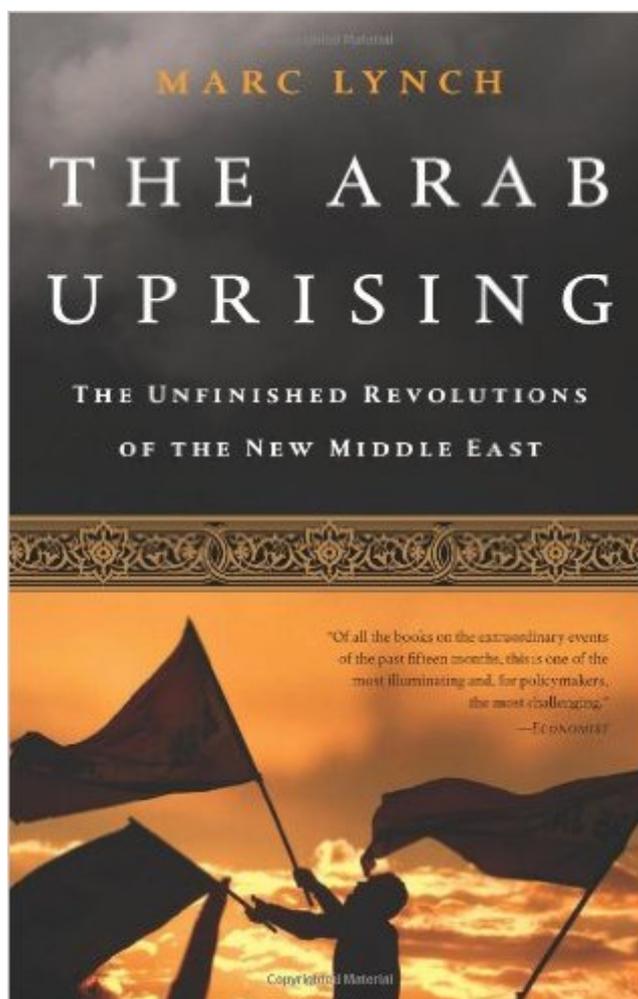


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The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions Of The New Middle East



Synopsis

Barely a year after the self-immolation of a young fruit seller in Tunisia, a vast wave of popular protest has convulsed the Middle East, overthrowing long-ruling dictators and transforming the region's politics almost beyond recognition. But the biggest transformations of what has been labeled as the "Arab Spring" are yet to come. An insider to both American policy and the world of the Arab public, Marc Lynch shows that the fall of particular leaders is but the least of the changes that will emerge from months of unrest. The far-ranging implications of the rise of an interconnected and newly-empowered Arab populace have only begun to be felt. Young, frustrated Arabs now know that protest can work and that change is possible. They have lost their fear—meanwhile their leaders, desperate to survive, have heard the unprecedented message that killing their own people will no longer keep them in power. Even so, as Lynch reminds us, the last wave of region-wide protest in the 1950s and 1960s resulted not in democracy, but in brutal autocracy. Will the Arab world's struggle for change succeed in building open societies? Will authoritarian regimes regain their grip, or will Islamist movements seize the initiative to impose a new kind of rule? The Arab Uprising follows these struggles from Tunisia and Egypt to the harsh battles of Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, and Libya and to the cautious reforms of the region's monarchies. It examines the real meaning of the rise of Islamist movements in the emerging democracies, and the long-term hopes of a generation of activists confronted with the limits of their power. It points toward a striking change in the hierarchy of influence, as the old heavyweights—Iran, Al Qaeda, even Israel—have been all but left out while oil-rich powers like Saudi Arabia and "swing states" like Turkey and Qatar find new opportunities to spread their influence. And it reveals how America must adjust to the new realities. Deeply informed by inside access to the Obama administration's decision-making process and first-hand interviews with protestors, politicians, diplomats, and journalists, The Arab Uprising highlights the new fault lines that are forming between forces of revolution and counter-revolution, and shows what it all means for the future of American policy. The result is an indispensable guide to the changing lay of the land in the Middle East and North Africa.

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Customer Reviews

He lays his politics out (left wing), he does not demonize anyone, and he tells the truth about what happened during the Arab Spring. So even though I disagree his stance on Israel, I can read him without feeling he lets his bias lead him into falsehoods. As the author relates, the Arab spring fell apart because it could not agree on what to do next. The revolutionaries including the Islamist groups fought among themselves so much that they could not cooperate. There are identity divisions in the Arab world (and this is not counting Christians, non Arabs, such as blacks, and other oppressed minorities). The author notes that past popular democratic movements all came to the same ends, anarchy followed by urgent calls for stability and order so that ordinary life could continue, leading to more authoritarianism. For instance, Mubarak liberalized the political realm in Egypt in the 1980s, which resulted in movements to overthrow the government, which led to Mubarak cracking down. More lately, people supported the movement that brought down Mubarak but then got fed up with unending upheaval. As the author writes, neighborhoods and villages were happy when the army moved in to stop the demonstrations and rallies. Since this book, things have changed in Egypt. A military leader has been elected president. The people did not want disorder and apparently they did not want an Islamic government that would impose strict religiosity on them. (That does not mean that they want western style liberalism). The author praises President Obama for how he dealt with Egypt, yet now many there hate him for supporting an Islamist government. The author is very unfair to President Bush and implies he should have done something to make things good in Iraq. Like what?

This is an informative history of the course of the Arab Spring uprising(s), although the prognosis hasn't stood the test of time, being written pre ISIS. What Lynch terms alliances is not very clear

except to observe that N. Africa is now integrated into the Arab world. Much of the region now constitutes areas of contention rather than any political states capable of making meaningful alliance. It's Shia vs. Sunni and ISIS and Hamas vs. Iran and Hezbollah reluctantly supported in self defense by Saudi Arabia. Lynch emphasizes the role of telecommunications technology in the uprisings. He credits first al-Jazeera and secondly Facebook with enormous influence in spreading discontent and rebellion across the region. There is nothing to support his premise that it's self evident that the Arabs want democracy. The US has backed away from the concept after seeing results of voting in Iran, Palestine, Egypt and Iraq, with free elections becoming a license for the majority to murder the minority. Starting with the self immolation of a street vendor in Tunisia, where PM Ben Ali stepped down, the so called Arab Spring spread to Algeria and Morocco where it was eventually contained with monarchical survival after making concessions. Extension to Egypt resulted in overthrow of long time US ally Mubarak, who the US quickly abandoned. Bahrain and Jordan seem to have contained their rebellions. In Jordan's case with concessions and Bahrain with repressions. With a bit of irony, Lynch says the uprising in Yemen has been forgotten. After the bloody Saudi intervention we now know better. Most interesting is the account of NATO intervention in Libya with the immediate fall of Qaddafi. As we know, the bloody rebellion in Syria is still not resolved.

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