

- Gunnar Hökmark depicts two scenarios for the future of democracy in the Arab World.
- A new Homepage has been launched. Visit [www.hjalmarsonfoundation.se](http://www.hjalmarsonfoundation.se).
- Since 2003 JHS works in Azerbaijan where the Eurovision Song Contest will be held.
- Don't forget Ukraine!

## Hopes for Democratization in the Arab World

*“Where the future is uncertain, there are greater opportunities and many reasons to influence” writes Gunnar Hökmark on the developments following the Arab spring. He is convinced that when “the United States turns inward, because the country has its own domestic problems and that there is an aversion to involvement in other countries, it is important that the EU steps up and takes responsibility.”*

Rarely has it been so difficult to predict global political developments. The developments in Europe are uncertain. And the U.S. economy encompasses many problems including a deficit that weakens the role in the world that the United States is willing and able to play. At the same time the Chinese economy is rapidly up-and-coming providing increased strength to this totalitarian dictatorship. In addition, a number of emerging economies have a growing influence in the global economy and numerous political forces are competing for regions and countries' future developments. In this respect China has an active agenda trying to gain influence. Russia has an energy policy that seeks by pressure other countries to closer cooperation. In the Middle East, we see a trend where countries like Iran aggressively want to set a new agenda. This policy is combined with an Islamic agenda vying for political power in those North African countries that are opening up to the possibilities of democracy.

We can't take the changes for granted in neither North Africa nor the Middle East. Though, we know that this work in progress can't be stopped.

Where the future is uncertain, there are



Photo: Ramy Raouf

*Barbed wire close to the Tahrir Square in Cairo.*

great possibilities and need to influence. This is true for Europe and the EU that in these parts of the world should act as a model – combining an open society with personal freedom, democracy and prosperity. We also need to strengthen the democratic forces that work for the individual's rights and dignity. In that way we can support a development strengthening market economy and growth, as well as secular societies built on the rule of law and democracy. All these efforts contribute to an advanced society, but also to a more peaceful and stable environment.

The Arab spring has shown that the fundamental rights and freedoms are not a uniquely Western phenomenon. A way of thinking only in the rich parts of the world. Instead it is what

many of us - but not all - have always maintained, common to all mankind. The citizens in the U.S. and Europe are not the only ones wanting to express ourselves freely, choose who should govern our country and permitting us to set up a market stall without getting it confiscated.

The will to freedom and a decent life is as strong in the Arab world as in our. Questions are many where the Arab world is heading. Two different scenarios are conceivable, though to the extreme both might be useful as reference points.

In the first scenario al-Assad in Syria succeed in staying in power by using unrestrained violence against its own citizens. Russia and China continue to block a UN resolution and international action. As the death toll reaches even higher numbers than already today, the people give up and buckle under the brutal violence. During this time Europe looks silently at the tyrant's oppression. The Arab socialism under the Baath Party remains.

Al-Assad's victory has effect on the rest of the region. The success of using violence and oppression strengthens the audacity of those who would rather see brutal violence than give up their power. Iran becomes stronger. The Arab spring might turn into winter without any democratic progress.

Repression is preserved. No further dictatorships will fall. In countries where a revolt had already taken place the old oppressors will be replaced with new ones. The Islamists who present themselves as moderates - in Egypt and Tunisia - might be dominated by uncompromising forces. Women's position will be weakened, democracy will be put out of action and the market economy will never be put to use to create wealth. Individual human rights and dignity will be lost in favor of a more or less totalitarian system.

The countries are turning away from the West, taking the inner road. The mobility will be limited both in terms of goods, services and capital as well as people and information. There is no intra-regional integration. The liberal forces never have time to unite and form a critical mass and disappear into the periphery and the underworld.

In the second scenario al-Assad will be defeated thanks to international pressure in combination with the Syrian people's courage. Syria becomes the first major Arab country outside of North Africa where the Arab revolt led to drastic changes, creating surges of freedom in the region, where various regimes - for fear that the development will spread to their countries - will ease its repression.

The Arab Baath socialism will be relegated to the history as happened to socialism in Europe after the Berlin Wall came down. Iran loses its most important allies in the region. In Tunisia and Egypt the election-winning Islamists will be as moderate as they claim. These parties will move towards the Turkish AK party, rather than Sunni extremism. They become the Arab world's equivalent of the Christian Democrats, developing stability, transparency, rule of law and market economy. Openness to the outside world becomes a key strategy, and the countries in the region are integrated among themselves, with the EU and its single market as a model.

A European perspective will create a new image, that of the renewal of the Arab society. Thanks to freedom of association and freedom of the press the Islamic-democratic parties are challenged by liberal movements that have managed to build a critical mass. Within a decade democratic elections have brought about change of power and no violence has occurred.

The two scenarios are, as I said, drawn to the extreme. There are lots of variations and nuances to be discussed. And it is important to remember that the choice made by the Arab world is important also to Europe. In Europe we have an obligation to do utmost to influence the region in the right direction. Although these countries are far from Sweden the region is a close neighbor to Europe. Our influence is considerable, and has the potential to be even greater.

In a world where America turns inward, because of its own domestic problems and that there is an aversion to a global involvement, it is important that the EU steps up and takes responsibility. It was mainly the British and French forces that maintained the no-fly zone over Libya. Today we have to show a different strength and power in terms of ideas that will constitute the basis for future developments in this part of the world.

Our policy must be designed to realize as much as possible of scenario two. This means free access to European markets, capacity building support for democratic forces and help to maintain transparency in different ways. This benefits both us and the Arab countries. The liberal forces in North Africa and the Middle East should know that they have a friend in the European Union.

To accomplish this is a task for the EU, governments and political parties. In support of democratic forces an infinite number of tasks will be realized as soon as we see the opportunities that exist.

*Gunnar Hökmark, MEP and Head of the EPP Group for Neighbourhood Policy*

## Calendar

- 🕒 *February 9, Turkey*  
The Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation and the Olof Palme International Center arrange a one day seminar in cooperation with the Swedish embassy in Ankara. The discussions will focus on the political conditions for further reforms, questions concerning rights and legal frameworks.
- 🕒 *February 17-18, Stockholm, Sweden*  
This is the third and last part of a writers education organized by the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation. Speakers on the Friday will be Robert Andrew, Deputy Political Counselor at the US Embassy in Stockholm and Ian Bald, an expert on American presidential elections. The participants will also visit Svenska Dagbladet and editorial writer Claes Arvidsson.
- 🕒 *February 17-19, Turkey*  
The Foundation in cooperation with the Turkish think-tank Association for Liberal Thinking (ALT) will arrange an ideology conference for students. The seminar is based on Nigel Ashford's book "Principles for the Free Society". The conference will be moderated by Mr. Thomas Gür, senior advisor to JHS.
- 🕒 *February 21, Stockholm, Sweden*  
Lunch seminar for the Diplomatic corps. Karin Enström, Chairman Foreign Affairs Committee in Swedish Parliament will present the Moderate Party's new foreign policy platform.
- 🕒 *February 27, Stockholm, Sweden*  
A new book **Baltisk Befrielse – svenska insatser för friheten** will be launched. The author Ambassador Krister Wahlbäck writes mainly about Sweden's importance to the liberation of the Baltic countries. In a postscript Peeter Luksep tells the story behind the Monday meetings held at Norrmalmstorg.

## Eurovision Song Contest – in the Shadow of Dictatorship



*In 2011 Ell/Nikki from Azerbaijan won the Eurovision Song Contest and this year the contest will be held in Baku. Photo: Alain Douit (EBU)*

On May 26, the Eurovision Song Contest will be organized in Baku, Azerbaijan. The former Soviet state is today led by an authoritarian president. The legal system has serious defects and arbitrary arrests of political opponents are not uncommon.

Since 2003 the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation collaborates with the National Independence Party of Azerbaijan (NIPA), one of several opposition parties allowed to operate within very narrow limits.

At the Sverigemöte in Örebro, Sweden, on March 16 the Foundation will organize a seminar on Azerbaijan. Panelists are Fuad Muxtarov from Baku, active in politics and journalism, and Gerald Knaus, Chairman of European Stability Initiative, based in Istanbul. A report on Azerbaijan will be presented.

### Less Freedom on the Net

The internet has been further restricted in Belarus. From the beginning of January in capability cases not allowed to "visit and / or using foreign websites." Violation results in a fine of up to \$ 125.

The law states that owners and managers of internet cafes and other places that offer Internet access to prevent users from visiting sites that are outside Belarus. According to some sources of the new rules also shared connections (such as in an apartment building) and individuals who allow others to use their home computers to surf the net.

Read more at [www.hjalmarsonstiftelsen.se](http://www.hjalmarsonstiftelsen.se)



## Just a moment with Eva Gustavsson, Managing Director JHS

Dear Friends,

I wish you all a happy new year.

A new easy to navigate and comprehensible website is the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation's New Year's resolution to the visitors to our homepage. Our hope is that more people will find us this way and find the information they seek.

Ronald Reagan said that "Information is the oxygen of the modern age. It seeps through the walls topped by barbed wire, it wafts across the electrified borders." He was ahead of his time and was spot on. Information is effective in the service of democracy – in democratic as well as in non-democratic societies. We need both original records as well as processed texts in order to fully understand the state of things. Internet helps us to obtain both.

As a democracy foundation, we need to reach out with information about our values and activities (including knowledge of humanitarian

and democracy issues). Among other things, this way we can get in contact with volunteers and other interested parties. Already today our fantastic volunteers contribute greatly to our cause. Though, we can become more!

This website has been simplified to make sure that users in countries where the technology around the internet has not come so far have access. With a new specific search function, it is now easier to find information about our focus areas. Also new is that you can see the Foundation's Facebook feed (further down the right side) as well as a calendar of upcoming activities. A novelty is also that you can follow our work via RSS, i.e. you subscribe to material in a particular subject and will receive an email message as soon as the website has been updated.

Welcome to visit [www.hjalmarsonfoundation.se](http://www.hjalmarsonfoundation.se) and link to us and tell others that a visit is well worth a few clicks!

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## Don't forget Ukraine!

At the end of 2011 Julia Tymoshenko, former prime minister and leader of the Ukrainian Batkivshchyna Party, was transferred to a prison about 500 km outside the capital Kiev. This happened "despite the clear evidence of the grave state of her health and the fact that she was kept in a medical ward of the pre-trial detention center and cannot move without assistance," explained a spokesperson for Batkivshchyna Party. Neither members of her family, nor her defense counselors were informed in advance about the transfer. Both the EU and the U.S. have criticized the process of Yulia Tymoshenko as politically motivated.

An indication for this is that her husband, Oleksandr Tymoshenko in early January sought and was granted asylum in the Czech Republic. The reason for the exodus was,



according to her daughter Eugenia Tymoshenko: "He did not think they could use him to put pressure on my mother, as they did in 2001 when our whole family was subjected to politically motivated oppression because of my mother's opposition activities."

Yulia Tymoshenko was sentenced in October 2011 to seven years in prison for the decisions taken during her time in power.

This newsletter is published by the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation.

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