

Panel: Leadership and the Legacies of the Arab Spring (Grand Ballroom)

Date/Time: April 26, 2012 / 14:30 – 15:45

Organizing Institution: The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Talking Points for: Clement Henry
American University in Cairo

The striking similarities between last year’s Egyptian and Tunisian awakenings – relatively brief periods of intensive popular mobilization, leading to the collapse of huge internal security forces and the protection of the civilians by the military, overthrowing the dictator – built upon relatively similar historical trajectories of state building in the nineteenth century and colonial liberation movements in the twentieth. Yet the outcomes sharply differ. Following its January 14 Revolution, Tunisia seems to be making a textbook transition to a constitutional democracy roughly modeled on the French Fifth Republic, whereas Egypt’s January 25 Revolution seems to be stumbling back into the three-cornered power struggles of the 1923-1952 period, with the Muslim Brotherhood replacing the Wafd this time, an elected president to replace the king, and SCAF substituting for the British High Commission. Egypt is quite literally practicing a “revolution” in the sense of revolving back to pre-Nasser times.

* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.
