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**RELEASE EMBARGO DATE: April 22, 2014 at 9:00 AM**

**Panel:** Back to Winter in the Middle East? (G2)

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, April 22, 2014 / 13:00-14:15

**Talking Points for:** Ellen Laipson, Stimson Center

We need strategic patience to understand the long-term meaning of the Arab spring. Most political transitions, including in Asia, have taken a decade or more, and even then, political systems may remain weak and subject to reversals. The demand for change in the Arab world remains strong, and demographic realities will bring younger people into positions of influence. Tunisia is an important case; it seems an outlier now, having passed a new constitution and avoiding Egypt’s setbacks, but other Arab states will also eventually move to relatively more participatory political systems. The reaction in the Arab Gulf, however, is a powerful new dynamic in inter-Arab relations. The major Gulf states vehemently oppose democratization in the Arab world, and are using their substantial financial clout to try to shape the region to their preferences. Sectarianism, environmental stress, and the challenge of Iran further threaten regional stability, but return to the status quo ante is no longer a viable option.

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