

emerge in these countries. Noueihed and Warren emphasize the fluid and unpredictable nature of the movements, and share their thoughts about the region's uncertain future. ✂

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**DAFNA HOCHMAN RAND.** *Roots of the Arab Spring: Contested Authority and Political Change in the Middle East.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. vii + 171 pages, notes, index, acknowledgements. Cloth US\$47.50 ISBN 978-0-8122-4530-1.

**A** senior policy planner in the U.S. State Department at the time of the uprisings, Dafna Hochman Rand takes a retrospective look at the Arab Spring in order to trace the progression of public frustration and political insecurities of regimes and to offer an explanation for the origins of the Arab Spring. Drawing on three years of research in Morocco, Tunisia, and Bahrain before the Arab Spring, Rand identifies and discusses three factors occurring during the 1990s and 2000s that fueled the political upheaval in the Middle East. First, rising demands for free expression created a public forum for discussion that the states could not regulate. Second, top-down de-democratization efforts by ruling groups restricted people's personal freedoms. Third, new leaders coming into power halted liberalizing reforms promised by their predecessors. Each of these was a catalyst of the Arab Spring, fifteen years in the making. Following the emergence of these three forces, the relationship between states and societies as well as authorities and citizens began to transform. The fourth and final chapter of the book lays out the U.S. response and the challenges pro-democratic policy makers will face in the wake of the Arab Spring. ✂

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**BARBARA ANN RIEFFER-FLANAGAN.** *Evolving Iran: An Introduction to Politics and Problems in the Islamic Republic.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013. xii + 231 pages, bibliography, index. Paperback US\$28.95 ISBN 978-1-58901-978-2.

In *Evolving Iran*, Barbara Ann Rieffer-Flanagan consolidates information from a range of diverse, highly specialized scholarship resources in order to describe the context within which the Islamic Republic of Iran makes political decisions. Rieffer-Flanagan begins her analysis by examining the important political events that preceded the creation of the Republic, including the Constitutional Revolution (1905–11) and the Pahlavi dynasty. Referencing Ayatollah Khomeini's writings, she describes his influence on the Iranian Revolution and the organization of Iranian politics that followed. Her description of Iran's political system emphasizes the importance of Shi'i Islam and elections in the Republic, and explains its commonly misunderstood political institutions such as the Guardian Council and the Assembly of Experts. Rieffer-Flanagan examines Iran's poor human rights record, which she attributes to the government's narrow interpretation of Islam, and the way it perceives threats. She also addresses the negative implications that Iran's oil supply carries both for the country itself, and for the international community. Concluding her analysis, Rieffer-Flanagan comments that Iran's foreign policy is motivated more by realpolitik than by Islam, and argues that when working with Iran, other countries should cooperate on common interests, and avoid threats of coercive or military action. ✂

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**AARON SPEVACK.** *The Archetypal Sunni Scholar*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014. Vii + 212 pages, acknowledgements, introduction, conclusion, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$80.00 ISBN 978-1-4384-5371-2.

In this work, Aaron Spevack delves into the life of Al-Bajuri, a vibrant and influential Islamic scholar and thinker of the nineteenth Century who served in the highest scholarly position of Sunni scholarship—Shaykh Al-Azhar. Spevack carefully constructs Al-Bajuri throughout the work in such a way that the reader understands why certain aspects of his scholarship were critical in his context. The book explores the dynamic aspects of Al-Bajuri, particularly his intellectual development, which the author argues is particularly important due to the many movements that sprang up during his time to challenge the traditional model of scholarship that had developed over 1300 years. He is thus seen as an important component of preserving