Op-Med: Opinions on the Mediterranean

Ongoing series of opinion pieces on topical issues in Mediterranean politics from a transatlantic perspective

• On the Virtures of Inconclusiveness. The Egyptian Constitution of 2014,
by G.P.Parolin

In December 2013, a draft of Egypt's new constitution was approved by members appointed to the committee charged with amending the 2012 constitution. The referendum on the draft was held on January 14-15, 2014, and the text was approved by an overwhelming margin of voters. Even a cursory look at the text of the 2014 Egyptian constitution shows that it left many matters for the legislators to dec ide, including state/Islam relations, military trials of civilians, and the independence of the Constitutional Court. While the pros and cons of the text are being widely discussed, what of its inconclusiveness? This may prove less harmful than expected.

• Tunisia's Constitutional Process: Hurdles and Prospects, *by D.Pickard*

After a long period of uncertainty and political deadlock, Tunisia's national assembly has approved the text of a new constitution, the first since the overthrow of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali.

The chief political parties of Ennahda and Nidaa Tuis, which had clashed on different visions of Tunisia future, put aside their differences in December when the ruling Islamist Ennahda party agreed with the secular opposition, Nidaa Tuis, to relinqu ish power to a technocrat in order to salvage the constitutional process. The paper traces the competing visions of Ennahda, which seeks the rebirth of a Tunisian political identity rooted in Islam, and Nidaa Tuis, which aims to return to the progressive, French-style secularism of former president Habib Bourguiba, in the run-up to the December agreement.

IAI Working Papers

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• Moroccan Exceptionalism Examined: Constitutional Insights pre- and post-2011,
by M.Hashas

"Moroccan exceptionalism" is often drawn on as a positive status, the result of at least one decade of reforms implemented by the monarchy, long before the Arab Spring events. An alternative view is offered by some civil society movements inside the country and by the 20 February Movement, born amidst the waves of the Arab Spring, which are critical of this exceptionalism and call for more reforms. By examining the constitutional reforms undertaken by the country since 1908 and by assessing the most recent reform efforts, this paper argues that "Moroccan exceptionalism" is yet to go through the test of the implementation of what is often referred to as a "promising constitution" that pave the way for a genuine constitutional monarchy.