

## Ilan Mizrahi

### Strategical surprises – Arab spring/ ISIS

**Why we were surprised** – misunderstanding M.E :

religion,ethnicity,minorities,tribes,radicalization.Violent frustrated society ruled by autocrats. Failing to understand that revolutions might happen if there will be a spark.

Failure of nation state, speedy collapses of rulers and states.

**Intelligence and decision makers' concept-** Arab Street is manipulated by iron hand autocrats which will crush it if they will hit the streets.

Intelligence focused on leadership, not society, analysis of stability based on local internal security agencies.

ISIS – not connecting the dots of Sunnite wrath because of radical change of "world Sunnite order" in Iraq , vengeance of ex Saddam supporters in Syria, US pulling out from Iraq and the disintegration of Syria. The result-ISIS "invasion" of Iraq.

**Wrong concept-**the Iraqi army can deal with it.

Intelligence priorities – the volunteers from abroad as a major threat.

Lack of historical depth, wide knowledge of region, states and changing society , ignoring present characteristics of connectivity and velocity , wishful thinking, wrong concepts and priorities and **a central methodology problem** of analysis and decision making.

### **Challenges to Intel in M.E**

Unpredictable unordered chaotic domain, dramatic socio-economic change, and high volume of violence, rebalancing of power, changing alliances, competition and cooperation hand in hand, how to define stability? Whom to cover? Who is the enemy? Which are the targets? How to identify sub-terrain emerging trends? "in the past Intel. tried to identify " **secrets** of state, today, **mystery** of the individual and masses".

Changes are much quicker than ability to adjust.

### **So what can be done?**

**A non-hierarchy multidiscipline team** with talented, daring, aware of their biases members, using several methodologies and direct access to decision maker (to deliver the message is another problem).

**Moto** – study the past, understand the present, suggesting future probabilities including surprises beyond our vision and their implications to mitigate impacts of surprises.

**Collection** – open sources and social media? Dilemma of gigantic amount of information, reflecting only part of society. Are we able to understand society and masses?

**How to mitigate the impact of surprises?**

Avoiding "guts decision"

Immediate meeting to analyze the event, discuss impacts, collection issues, preventing acts if necessary.

Focusing also on strategic aspects not only the immediate.