

Mauritania

I am convinced that Mauritania is certainly timely and fits the area of Arab Spring. This article from Mid-May from the Carnegie Endowment does a great job summarizing the current situation in Mauritania:

<http://carnegieendowment.org/arb/?fa=show&article=44062>

Mauritania will also become increasingly important in the next couple of years as Iran sees them as a partner internationally (<http://www.presstv.com/detail/182575.html>).

There is a lot of discussion of the EU working with or putting pressure Mauritania, but not a lot on what the US role should be. There are some interest groups pressuring Obama to deal with the situation in Mauritania and there is some indication that he was considering putting pressure on them in February during their protests.

My only concern about including them is the fact that Mauritania is a situation in flux and the democracy movements may or may not make many gains which would make it a non-starter for most affs (<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Commentary/2011/May-27/Mauritanias-days-of-reformist-rage.ashx#axzz1OS5YxTI4>).

I think that long list topics should include Mauritania as it fits well in the area and it is my opinion that it is going to rise in international/strategic significance. However, I think that it is lower on our list of countries to include if we are trying to create a smaller list of countries. One other place that it fits well would be on a list topic that covers only emerging democracies – I think its size, population and recent protests mean it would fit well into an emerging democracies topic.

Morocco

Like Mauritania, Morocco is a hotbed of protest actions, especially in past few weeks, (http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/moroccans-march-to-protest-death-of-demonstrator-from-main-opposition-islamist-group/2011/06/05/AGGTDIJH_story.html). Unlike Mauritania, the Moroccan protests have a much higher likelihood of causing political unrest. The more widespread access to technology and closer ties to Western nations make the protests success more likely.

One of the major differences between Morocco and many of the other countries being consider for inclusion is that Morocco has be considering democratic reforms that would serve to placate some of the protesters demands. I think this gives the US an opportunity in Morocco and makes them a nice country to include. The big disadvantage to including them is that the advantage areas (and most likely disads links) would be smaller than we might hope due to the fact that Morocco is already making gains and it seems as if many Western nations are already willing to lend their support. Additionally, the belief that Moroccan reforms are motivated by internal pressures and not by external efforts seem prevalent (<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/experts-warn-of-risk-to-us-if-arab-spring-turns-to-season-of-discontent-call-for-us-to-partner-with-reformers-to-spur-growth-positive-change-123137183.html>).

The biggest problem with the inclusion of Morocco is that I had a hard time finding advantage areas. Unlike Mauritania, no one argues that Morocco is a lynchpin. Unlike Sudan no one argues that the US has a responsibility to act. So I think we could include Morocco and I think that the US could help democratic reforms in Morocco, but I am unsure why many affirmatives would choose Morocco.