

Tiananmen not Tahrir seems to be the lesson that other Middle Eastern leaders have drawn from the Egyptian revolution. Iran, Bahrain, and Libya have reacted much more brutally to antigovernment demonstrators than Egypt did. Bahrain, an otherwise moderate Arab nation, has cracked down hard, routing demonstrators from the center of the capital. Libya and Iran have been just as iron-fisted.

But the world of 2011 is vastly different from 1989, when Beijing's communist rulers suppressed the democracy movement. For one thing, the Internet was barely a presence back then. And with China on the first leg of a historic economic boom, Beijing was able to convince its citizens that order trumped free expression.

In the Middle East, economic prospects are bleak, especially for young people. And the Internet gives them a powerful organizing tool. An authoritarian regime can clamp down for a while, but not forever. Want proof? Iran shut down the 2009-10 opposition movement, but it reemerged to challenge the regime in 2011. It may have to go back underground now, but it isn't gone.

John Yemma,
Editor

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Pakistan delays ruling on US official

HIS ALLEGED MURDER OF TWO PAKISTANIS STRAINS NATIONAL RELATIONS.

By **ISSAM AHMED**
CORRESPONDENT

LAHORE, PAKISTAN - A Pakistani court Thursday delayed a highly anticipated decision on whether Raymond Davis, the US official charged with murdering two Pakistanis, is entitled to diplomatic immunity. The delay threatens to prolong a dispute that has brought relations between the United States and Pakistan, a key ally, to a new low. The case is adjourned until March 14.

The three-week delay, requested by Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs so it could further investigate the status of Mr. Davis, could harm everything from US aid to Pakistan to military cooperation in a relationship that is already difficult.

The row has led to an intervention by President Obama, who on Tuesday said the US expects Pakistan to abide by its obligations to the Vienna Convention, which governs diplo-

matic immunity. The US also sent Sen. John Kerry (D) of Massachusetts, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to work on a swift resolution. He assured Pakistan that Davis would face criminal charges at home if deported.

Davis was arrested last month for shooting two men on motorcycle from his car in a lower-middle class area of Lahore. A third man was killed after being struck by a US diplomatic vehicle sent to assist Davis. Davis claimed self defense, though police officials have disputed that claim, saying that he shot his victims in the back.

The incident sparked widespread protests and has played into the hands of conservative religious parties. Many Pakistanis believe he is a US spy. It has dominated headlines, which have focused on the fact that Davis had surveillance equipment and an unlicensed semi-automatic weapon on him when arrested.

This is today's Monitor top story. For more of today's stories, go to: CSMonitor.com

US consumers begin to feel inflation

PRICE INDEX INCREASES 0.4 PERCENT FOR TWO STRAIGHT MONTHS.

By **RON SCHERER**
STAFF WRITER

NEW YORK - Inflation creep - especially for food and energy prices - is starting to take hold in the US economy.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 0.4 percent last month, the same increase as in December, the Labor Department reported Thursday. This is the first time the CPI has increased this much for two consecutive months since June and July of 2008.

The core inflation rate, which excludes food and energy prices and is less volatile, rose 0.2 percent in January - the fastest pace since October 2009.

Rising prices have important ramifications for the economy. They take money out of consumers' wallets to pay for necessities such as food and gasoline. This leaves less money for other purchases that could help boost the economy. Also, inflation is an area watched

carefully by the Federal Reserve, which has been able to keep interest rates near 0 percent for a long time because inflation has not been a problem.

The main driver behind the higher consumer prices: rising commodity prices. The Producer Price Index, which measures what manufacturers and wholesalers pay for goods, rose 0.8 in January, the Labor Department reported Wednesday.

"There has been a broad range of industrial commodity increases," for cotton, copper, tin, etc., says economist Joel Naroff of Naroff Economic Advisors in Holland, Pa.

In the recent past, some companies were reluctant to raise prices, concerned that consumers would simply find a less expensive alternative. But as other businesses announce price hikes, Mr. Naroff says, "companies that have been afraid to raise prices seem to think it's OK to do so."

Federal authorities charged more than 100 doctors, nurses, and physical therapists in nine cities with Medicare fraud Thursday, part of a massive nationwide bust that snared more suspects than any other in history. More than 700 law enforcement agents fanned out to arrest dozens of people accused of illegally billing Medicare more than \$225 million. The arrests are the latest in a string of major busts in the past two years as authorities have struggled to pare the fraud that's believed to cost the government between \$60 billion and \$90 billion each year.

In a deepening struggle over spending, Republicans and Democrats swapped charges Thursday over a possible US government shutdown when funding expires March 4 for most federal agencies. The sparring occurred as the House labored to complete work on legislation to cut more than \$61 billion from the budget year that's more than a third over. That bill also would provide funding to keep the government operating until Sept. 30.

Egyptian authorities arrested on Thursday former Interior Minister Habib el-Adly and two other ex-ministers who are under investigation for corruption. El-Adly, whose job gave him control over the 500,000-strong security forces, has been widely blamed for the deadly force used against protesters who forced President Hosni Mubarak to resign.

Hundreds of Iraqi demonstrators massed in the southern city of Basra Thursday to demand the local governor's ouster while protesters elsewhere stormed a local government building, the latest examples of the anger sweeping the country over poor government services and high unemployment.

More people applied for US unemployment benefits last week, one week after claims had fallen to the lowest level in nearly three years. The big drop

US military might stay longer in Iraq

IRAQ, PENTAGON OFFICIALS SHARE CONCERNS ABOUT YEAR-END EXIT.

By **ANNA MULRINE**
STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON – It is looking increasingly likely that American troops will stay in Iraq beyond the December 2011 scheduled date of withdrawal for the US military – a prospect that appears to be gaining bipartisan support in Congress.

One congressman suggested Thursday that the politically acceptable size of the force that would remain in Iraq “could be 20,000.”

Senior US officials have recently expressed concern about the ability of contractors and the State Department to take over the responsibilities that the Pentagon currently carries out in Iraq, including everything from providing security to maintaining intelligence networks. Under the terms of the US mission in Iraq, however, the United States military could stay only at the request of the Iraqi government.

Top Pentagon officials said Thursday that the Iraqi government shares some of their concerns.

“There have been a number of informal conversations with the Iraqis about this,” Defense Secretary Robert Gates told the Senate Armed

Services Committee.

During these talks, the Iraqi government indicated that it “is very open to a continuing presence that would be larger where we could help the Iraqis for a period of time,” Mr. Gates said. He cited three primary areas of US concern with Iraqi military operations as the Pentagon prepares for the pullout of its troops by the year’s end:

- The Iraqi military’s ability to exploit intelligence it collects.
- Its capabilities with logistics and maintenance of its vehicles.
- The burgeoning Iraqi Air Force’s ability to protect its own airspace.

“I’m not actually concerned about the stability of the country,” Gates told the committee. “But I am concerned about their ability to address these issues in particular.”

Gates concedes that the US troop presence is unpopular in Iraq, but that “leaders understand the need for this kind of help,” even if “no one wants to be the first one there supporting it.” As planned, he says, the US military’s departure would be abrupt.

Where is Bahrain’s unrest headed?

A MASS PROTEST IS PLANNED DESPITE GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN.

By **RAYMOND BARRETT**
CONTRIBUTOR

At least three people are reported dead and dozens more seriously injured in Bahrain after riot police violently dispersed protesters in the capital – escalating the confrontation and underscoring the government’s willingness to use force to stymie the growing calls for political reform.

The raid – in which police used tear gas, batons, and bird-shot – took place overnight Wednesday as security forces targeted a large crowd of demonstrators who had gathered at a protest camp at the landmark Pearl Roundabout in the capital, Manama.

The police action was clearly aimed at preventing a mass demonstration planned for Saturday to call for constitutional reform and a more representative parliament in a country where political power is concentrated in the hands of the ruling Al Khalifah family.

But it’s unclear whether the harsh action will tamp down protests or only serve to energize protesters, further destabilizing the Persian Gulf kingdom.

Armored cars are now patrolling the streets of the capital, and all further protests have been banned by the authorities.

Bahrain is a key strategic ally of the US and home to the US Navy’s 5th Fleet, yet the country has long been a scene of political and sectarian tensions. Attempts at political reform in 2002 that changed the country from an emirate to a constitutional monarchy have so far failed to yield meaningful change.

However, if the current maelstrom of political reform rushing through the region unites both the Shiite underclass with middle-class Sunnis tired of the status quo, the Al Khalifah dynasty may be forced to cede more power to the people, or use greater force to suppress dissent.

a week earlier had occurred largely because bad weather in many parts of the country had kept people from applying for benefits. The Labor Department said Thursday that 410,000 people sought unemployment assistance last week, a jump of 25,000 from the previous week. The rise was much larger than economists had expected.

A group of Democratic Wisconsin lawmakers blocked passage of a sweeping anti-union bill Thursday, refusing to show up for a vote and then abruptly leaving the state in an effort to force Republicans to the negotiating table. As ever-growing throngs of protesters filled the Capitol for a third day, the 14 Democrats disappeared just as the Senate was about to begin debating the measure, which would eliminate collective bargaining for most public employees.

Several thousand Yemeni protesters defied appeals for calm from the military and the country's most influential Islamic cleric and marched through the capital on Thursday, pressing on with their campaign to oust the US-allied president. The protesters fought off attacks by police and government supporters.

Compiled from wire service reports

“THE OBJECT OF THE MONITOR IS TO INJURE NO MAN, BUT TO BLESS ALL MANKIND.”

— Mary Baker Eddy

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EDITORIAL / THE MONITOR'S VIEW

Senator Brown's revelation

Why did Sen. Scott Brown (R) of Massachusetts take so long to reveal a big secret from his childhood? After all, he had done nothing wrong. What he has disclosed, decades after the fact, was that he was a victim of physical and sexual abuse.

Why did he wait? As a boy, he says, he was afraid his abusers would harm him if he spoke up. “If you tell anybody, you know, I’ll kill ya. You know, I will make sure that – that no one believes you,” his abuser warned him, Senator Brown explains in an interview on the CBS television program “60 Minutes” that will air this Sunday.

And later as an adult? “You’re embarrassed. You’re hurt,” the senator says. Abuse victims may feel needless shame or a sense that they will be seen as weak if they reveal what happened. But now, in a memoir (“Against All Odds”), he says he wants to inspire others to overcome similar obstacles and to have the kind of success that he has enjoyed.

Brown made an impressive debut on the national political stage in January 2010 when

he won a special election to replace the late Edward M. Kennedy. The affable family man from the Boston suburbs won election easily as a Republican in a heavily Democratic state. He became an instant news media star.

But like most people, he hadn’t really coasted through a Teflon-smooth life. His book recounts “savage” beatings by a drunken stepfather and being sexually molested by a summer camp counselor.

In an age when personal lives are quickly laid bare in the media, perhaps Brown couldn’t have kept his secret (which even his mother and wife did not know about) forever. By publishing his book Brown was able to choose the time and ways of telling his story. Though politicians regularly decide to confess to moral shortcomings, Brown was a victim, not a wrongdoer. He may be the first national politician to admit to having been abused.

Child advocates are rightly applauding his revelation, hoping it will encourage others that suffer abuse to find courage, hope, perhaps even the ability to forgive.

Congressional media star reveals that he was sexually and physically abused as a boy.

A CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE

An answer to loneliness

The trend of staying in constant touch with friends and family is huge today. The Internet, texting, and cellphones have all enabled people to connect anytime day or night. The desire for the reassurance, support, and love of family and friends is natural. But when the desire becomes an obsession, that can be a problem.

One day I felt absolutely separated from friends and family. I had just been stationed overseas for a military assignment, and I didn’t know anyone. Even my military colleagues had been sent to other countries. I was single – no family, no friends.

One Sunday while I was waiting for the service to begin at a local Christian Science church, my loneliness seemed acute. To find help I looked up the hymns we were going to sing and gradually began to feel a sense of comfort. Even in those few minutes before the service, my feelings of isolation and loneliness began to fade until they disappeared.

The first hymn was a musical setting of a poem by Mary Baker Eddy, and included the phrase “His habitation high is here, and nigh,/ His arm encircles me, and mine, and all” (“Christian Science Hymnal,” No. 207).

I walked out of church tangibly feeling God’s care and presence. That healing of intense separation not only helped regarding my own personal needs, but it also helped me look outward to those around me and to be more loving, more inclusive.

This psalm speaks with comfort: “Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me” (Ps. 139:7-10). God’s love is universal. No one can “flee from” His presence, because God, divine Love, is always present.

— Robert R. MacKusick