

In 1970 the American artist and composer Gil Scott-Heron composed an angry and vibrant vocally driven jazz piece called 'The Revolution Will Not be Televised'. The song rides along the vibe of seething unrest in a tumultuous America at the time and ends with the words, "The revolution will be no re-run brothers; the revolution will be live." In the Twitter, Facebook, internet-connected age it's hard not to draw parallels between Scott-Heron's rap staccato lyrical vision (he's often referred to as the God-father of Rap) and the raw, jagged and uneven edge of events rolling across the deserts of the Middle East. Skeptics may ask what this has to do with the issues of energy, power, security and stability? The fact is that the tsunami which is building across the MENA region, sparked by a fruit vendor in Tunisia whose scale for weighing his produce was confiscated by police in order to exact a bribe and when they failed to return it he subsequently set himself afire in protest, has everything to do with energy, power, security and stability.

Global market stability rides on the back of the price of oil. Oil is in the Middle East. The Middle East is trembling. Global markets quiver. Like so many of the Middle East's petro-dictators desperately trying to cling to power, we as oil consumers are trying to deal with the symptoms of our own oil dependence (higher oil prices, a potential head-shot to global economic growth if contagion spreads further across the Arabian peninsula, cascading and increased unemployment at a time while global food prices have peaked to an all-time high [December 2010]) without addressing the disease (a general lassitude in creating economic and infrastructure environments that can furnish businesses and people with fuel alternatives to oil). There is no confusion here; oil prices did not trigger events now unfolding in the Middle East. However, dealing with oil and its myriad consequences is a responsibility for those of us found on the pointed-end of this stick.

Another aspect of the interesting times in which we live is that many of the issues, raised by JES contributors and followed by readers, are hybrid resource issues. The revolutions—there is no other word—we are witnessing are triggered by so many factors. The desperate bid of people to escape political and social repression have had not only short-term market repercussions but more importantly have brought about the collapse of long-standing seemingly intractable regimes. The water-energy-security nexus is yet another example of such a hybrid issue. This relationship has not yet sparked the kind of violence presently seen from Tripoli to Manama, but it is an important one to watch. This is why IAGS, publisher of the JES, in February co-sponsored along with our South African and Swedish partners a workshop on this nexus at the first annual South African Water and Energy Forum in Johannesburg. Water and energy are not silo, stand-alone issues but are intrinsically interconnected technically and are processed through the operating (e.g. security) environments that facilitate or encumber their generation and delivery. In short, many of the energy and security issues we face are altogether hybrid in nature and, if not dealt with properly, portend unforeseen developments we do not wish to imagine.

This issue of the JES, consistent with this hybrid metaphor, looks at the policy complexities of national energy security strategies in Poland, Hungary, and Azerbaijan. With the Polish and Hungarian contributions we round-out our Visegrad coverage which begun several months ago with our Czech and Slovak contributions. This issue examines Mexico with the links and implications of Mexico's drug-war on Pemex, Mexico's state oil company; Nigeria with the coincidence in the manipulation of piracy with the pending April Nigerian elections; and the US

From the Editor: The Revolution is Live

Written by Kevin Rosner

Tuesday, 15 March 2011 00:00

with an update on challenges confronting the further roll-out of the Smart Grid which unwittingly is catalyzing new cyber-security vulnerabilities (if not adequately addressed by both industry and government). Iran and Russia's fuel bank, DoD energy use, and rare earths are all addressed in this our most complete coverage of energy and security issues to date. Take a deep breath, have a good read and remember the revolution is live and this is not television.