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The Editor,
The Daily Telegraph,
111 Buckingham Palace Road,
London SW1W 0DT.

Wednesday 26th October 2011

Dear Sir,

Your editorial in today's paper, 'Resurgent Islamism' seeks to undermine the legitimacy of the various political parties and movements that have come to dominate the political scene in post-revolution Tunisia, Libya and Egypt.

The presumption that such movements and political parties represent "dark forces" in the underbelly of the Arab Spring is precisely the sort of scaremongering and histrionics that saw Western governments defend the imposition of a military junta in Algeria following the Islamic Salvation Front's (FIS) election victory in 1991. If a lesson was ever drawn by the North African people from that painful interregnum in Algeria's post-independence democratic development, it was that the Western powers paid lip-service to democracy all the while supporting and bolstering authoritarian regimes.

As election results emerge from the Tunisia's first free elections and preparations advance in Egypt and Libya to follow suit, the likelihood of 'Islamist' parties gaining on their secular rivals is in part, as your Chief Political Correspondent Peter Osborne put it in his column in the Sunday Telegraph last week, "a revolt against Western post-colonial domination".

It would be a catastrophic mistake to desire to repeat the history that provoked bloody revolutions on Europe's southern littoral by condescending, once again, to dictate the political choices and destinies of the people of the Middle and North Africa region.

Yours sincerely,

Shenaz Bunglawala
ENGAGE