

## 47<sup>TH</sup> ISCSC CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

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### **The Caterpillar Metaphor for Rapid Change During “Interesting Times”**

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**As Jared Diamond notes in his 2005 book “Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed”** some nations and civilizations face stressful periods of rapid change and thrive, while others collapse or even die. The emerging global civilization is in just such a period, which the ancient Chinese called “interesting times.” Therefore, I have been giving many lectures at military and intelligence colleges during recent years, under the general heading “The Developing Global Crisis.” Those typically end with something I call the “Caterpillar Metaphor,” but since this is at the end of a long list of global problems and how they interact, it is typically one slide of cheerleading that solutions are possible.

For ISCSC in 2017 I propose to focus entirely on the Caterpillar Metaphor to detail how the Developing Global Crisis could be transformed into an opportunity for fundamental changes in how the world is organized for the Third Millennium of the Common Era. If, of course, it wants to change and survive. The alternative is death or at best profound decay. But Diamond showed very clearly that elites can choose either path depending on their circumstances and leadership, or lack thereof.

**Whither the Arab and Muslim World? Religious Fascism or Legal  
Authoritarianism, Quo Vadis!!**

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In early 2011, the “Arab Spring” started in Tunisia, and after the collapse of the bin‘Ali régime, a huge wave of revolutionaries across Egypt led to the resignation and removal from power of the autocratic leader President Mubarak. Since then, the region has gone through several riotous and unstable years, with numerous elections, fluctuations in governing authority, and vagueness in the legal framework.

On the social and human rights level in Egypt, prior to and since the 2011 uprisings, Egyptian civil society has been governed by various constitutional and legal provisions, such as the law on NGOs governed by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Notwithstanding the vastly restrictive spirit of these legal norms, Egyptian civil society in both public and private sectors plays a fundamental role in raising the social awareness of the general public in area of political, social, and economic civil rights. While it may seem incompatible that so many NGOs can exist in a country whose NGO law is among the most obstructive according to international records, in which the impact of the constrained legal framework has not been to entirely bar civil society but rather to give massive discretionary powers to the Social Solidarity apparatus.

One particular case offers fascinating prospects for comparative constitutional law experts, and international human rights activists, as laws restricting women’s rights have been confronted as unconstitutional in several Arab and European countries. Indeed, this judgment facilitated fruitful comparative analysis on the free exercise of religion, expression, children and women’s rights. This case has been featured as a cornerstone in Middle Eastern constitutional theories, as it examined Egypt’s constitutional jurisprudence–interpretation of Islamic law.

## **Black France, Black America: Engaging Historical Narratives**

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During the first quarter of the 20th Century a small group of black intellectuals, artists, and musicians abandoned the United States for Paris. They heard that France offered social and economic opportunities not available in the States. This entry critically examines that narrative as well as America's "E pluribus Unum." Historical narratives tell us a great deal about ourselves.

Consider, the Irish slave narrative, a myth based on a misinterpretation of North American history; or a narrative deeply embedded in current social and political thought, that the modern liberal democratic state is the product of a social contract – an agreement – forged by free and equal individuals in the distant past.

Conventional wisdom has it that certain rights and freedoms are derived from this agreement. By contrast there are philosophers who argue that, in the United States at least a social contract never existed. This paper is a reflection on the ways in which historical narratives obscure and conceal past and present realities, signaling the significance of judiciously evaluating present day story lines in light of the past. In sum, it advances an argument about the importance of destabilizing fallacious historical narratives.

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## A Survey of How Revolutions Shaped Modernity

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Five revolutions that have changed the world began with the French Revolution of 1789. Preceding it was the American Revolution of 1776, which was less a revolution than a revolt against the mother country that considered the New World settlers to be disobedient colonials. The next influential revolution was the Russian, which replaced traditional imperial power with an ideological imperial power, Communism. The Chinese were the next to revolt against both traditional governance and growing anarchy, following the Russian model with the ideology of Communism. And the last revolution that has had global reach was the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the first to reject both the Enlightenment values that spurred the others (justice, equality, new codes of law) and rejection of modernity in favor of a 1300-year-old religion, Shia Islam.

These revolutions can be compared and contrasted, which is basic to our conference: exploring what revolutions are and how they have shaped our modern world.

Two sources are particularly useful for this discussion: Crane Brinton's *The Anatomy of Revolution*, 1958, who wrote this book a generation before the Iranian Revolution took place. Reading Brinton was eerie, in that he described the elements that are constant in all revolutions. The Iranian Revolution could have been strangled in its cradle had the United States and the UK responded to the warning signs.

The other source is Jacques Barzun's final book, *From Dawn to Decadence: 1500 to the Present: 500 years of Western Cultural Life* (1999), which begins with a tour of the medieval world, the French Revolution, and its consequences through the Russian and Chinese revolutions. He is a master of showing how societies go from vibrant to decadent and collapse, only (if they have innate vitality) to go through a renaissance and become vibrant again. He was none too flattering of the American culture of the 1990s, which is the final "decadence" in his book. Advocates of the common man will not be pleased, nor will the creators of the "edgy" in culture. He has me on his side in both cases.

I will be discuss how these revolutions were alike, and more important, how they were different. The latest revolutionary attempts in the contemporary world,

inspired by the Islamic Revolution of Iran, have all failed. Although Barzan left us before he could have surveyed them, he certainly would have predicted them and their consequences.

**Can Civilizations Hibernate? A look at the emerging resurrection  
of desert civilization across the Sahara.**

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The idea that civilizations rise and fall is almost foundational to the study of civilization itself. Yet if “civilizations” are a phenomenon separate from the lives of those living within their confines, do they really die?

This paper looks at a recent evolving phenomenon, the emergence of new “life” along the East-West trajectory across the Sahara Desert across the northern tier of the area known as the Sahel. This is area that today, by outsiders, is seen as being a holding pen for active terrorist groups as well as a now developed route for the drug trade from South America to West Africa to North Africa and Europe.

Since the fall of the Kaddafi regime in Libya, it has been the source of increasing armed intrusions into Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, as well as a staging ground for the kidnapping of Westerners for ransom. This area is the traditional homeland of the Tuaregs, while to the west is Mauritania, home to a culturally similar group, the Bidan (White Moors). Yet its most striking change may be its development in terms of increased population, actually more developed and vibrant communities, new institutions – such as a serious new Islamic University- 1000 kilometers into the desert from the western coast – and an increasingly greening environment.

Drawing on his recent trips to the area, the author describes the situation as well as the unusual way what is seen –with reason - as terrorist and criminal behaviors, with “vibrant” ties to modern globalization, may also be an active agent bringing back to life what was long assumed to be dead desert civilization.

## Political Revolutions: A typology of concepts, causes, consequences

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While scholars disagree about the precise definition(s) of a “revolution,” the underlying concept involves abrupt change in the social order. Yet not all abrupt changes in societies, and civilizations become labeled, retrospectively, as “revolutions.” I suggest the term has been applied usually to episodes, which, even if just initially, have resulted in a freer, and more open democratic society, not to those whose immediate consequences resulted in political suppression and dictatorship (or of greater intensity than previously).

Exceptions include those with Marxist influence, e.g. the “Cultural Revolution” in China 1966-1976 and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917. Whatever changes Franco may have made in Spain, no one terms these a Spanish revolution. Many term it reactionary. (Indeed the term “reactionary” as a pejorative political appellation has evolved from the activities of those who have “reacted” with hostility to a revolution.) The term “revolution” also depends on the perspective of the historian. Whigs not Tories designated political events in England in 1688 as the “Glorious” revolution.

Topics to be discussed include: the political perspective of the historian, under what circumstances “revolution” is a pejorative term, the distinction between a “rebellion” and “revolution”, types of consequences, and, notably, types of causes: precipitating versus predisposing, and chance versus deterministic. For instance, Leonard Woolf maintains the French Revolution of 1789, and the first Russian Revolution of 1917 overthrowing the Romanovs was as inevitable as a principle of physics. Bertrand Russell maintains that the Bolshevik Revolution resulted from a chance event. Among hundreds of episodes history affords, I will consider from the perspective of this meeting not only recent revolutions, but earlier episodes denoted as “revolutions” including that in England in 1688, North America 1775-1783, France (starting) 1789, Europe in 1848, Russia in 1917, and China in 1911, 1926, and 1966-76.



## Can Civilizational Analysis Contribute to our Understanding of a World in Disarray?

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During the last several years, a variety of scholars have pointed out that our international order is in a state of disorder bordering on chaos and in some areas, collapse. Writers such as Henry Kissinger, Richard Haass, and Michael Mandelbaum—among numerous others—have made this case while laying out a bevy of intractable international problems facing the world community. Among these issues, they mention the threat of nuclear proliferation, the rise of international terrorism, a chaotic Middle East, a flood of refugees and displaced persons besieging Europe, the precarious balance of power in the Asian-Pacific, the challenge of climate change, the revolt against free trade and globalization. Not mentioned, however, is the problem of the rise of populism and its potentially debilitating effects on democracy and the open society.

Given the severe intellectual challenges laid out by the scholars mentioned above, the question is whether or not those engaged in civilizational studies and *civilizational analysis* can contribute to this critical dialogue about the fate of the global order. What tools or insights can we bring to bear? If the ISCS is going to be able to contribute to dialogue and discussion on this level, then I submit that it has to regain its commitment to *comparative analysis* of civilizational configurations and move away from focusing on “civilization” in the singular, for civilization, per se, cannot solve any problem: it is our intelligence applied to comparative civilizational analysis that offers any hope of contributing to our national and global dilemmas.

## The Challenge to Religious Tolerance In Islam—Fundamentalists’ Resistance to a Non-Muslim Leader

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Indonesia is a most Muslim populous nation in the world with approximately 200 million Muslims. The country itself has opted to maintain republicanism, and Islamic law or *shariah* has never been a formal legal foundation of Indonesia. Yet, it is a fact that some hardliner Muslims still wish to realise full implementation of *shariah* in the country. We witness some conflicts between so-called fundamentalists and liberals on the degree of the abidance of *shariah*.

The gubernatorial election of Jakarta in February 2017 is one of the most heedful elections in its modern history of Indonesia as the popular candidate for the governor is a non-Muslim Christian and Chinese descendant named Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or popularly known as Ahok . However, his comments on the leadership in an Islamic community citing from *al-Quran* has invited a huge condemnation from Muslim clerics in September 2016. His outspokenness has been much criticised, and several huge demonstrations against him took place in the following months.

Despite this political challenge, Ahok managed to obtain the most votes in the first round of the election in February 2017. However he failed to secure his governorship, missing the total votes of 50%. Ahok and another candidate have to compete in the second round of the election in April. (in the time of the submission of the abstract, the election has not been taken place).

This paper will observe how both fundamentalists and liberal Muslims have reacted towards Jakarta gubernatorial election. We will also examine the political attitude of ordinary masses in relation to Ahok issue in order to find out whether religious tolerance in Indonesia is disregarded or respected.

**Civilization Studies and Big History**  
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The paper compares the IBHA (International Big History Association) and ISCSC approaches to the study of civilization.

Big history (BH), provides an overview spanning from the origin of the universe to today. Creating such a history is doable, in William McNeil's words, by using an *'appropriate level of generalization.'* BH scientists and historians have identified a timeline of eight major emergent thresholds of increasing complexity starting with: (1) the origin of the universe (Big Bang), (2) stars and galaxies, etc., leading eventually to (6) humans with language and collective learning, (7) agriculture, which eventually supported the larger population needed for cities and states of civilization, and (8) the modern age using fossil fuels beginning 1700 CE. Prior to 1700 CE, reflecting energy limitations, BH calls a civilization an Agrarian Civilization.

BH starting at the beginning of the universe provides a top-down approach able to see general patterns of each new type of complexity. A top-down approach also potentially allows one to see humanity as a whole.

Culture in BH is simplified to "collective learning," which allowed humans with language to learn how to survive and thrive in almost every ecosystem on the earth. But from a ISCSC point of view such a simplification throws the baby out with the bath water. Civilization studies, as I see it, started as a reaction by Spengler, Toynbee, etc., to the World War One's catastrophic damage to Western Civilization's deep cultural core. I value the ISCSC detailed cultural analyses and cross-cultural comparisons.

Some members of both the ISCSC and IBHA complain about and would like to exclude talks advocating a religious position. As I see it, such presentations are inevitable for any academic group that discusses the origin of things.

## **Can Spengler Explain the Islamic State?**

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Considering Iran-USA (IU) Conflicts from Civilizational Perspective

My paper will be about whether civilization theorist Oswald Spengler's thoughts can shed light on the nature of the Islamic State. I will first summarize Spengler's account of Islamic civilization both at its peak and during its decline. Based on his analysis, but keeping in mind the findings of classical orientalists as well, I will set up an interpretative framework which describes the late Islamic civilization as a post-civilizational society characterized by a lack of historicity, a popular form of religiousness and the rigidity of cultural forms.

After systematically comparing this interpretative framework with the Islamic State's actual practice and ideology, I plan to conclude that Spengler's account of post-civilization mostly fails to explain current developments in the Middle East. I will then raise the question of whether the Islamic State can nonetheless be interpreted in Spenglerian terms, maybe as the birth of an altogether new culture. My answer will be that the dogmatic nature of the Islamic State's ideology makes it impossible to consider it the beginnings of a new culture.

I will then examine the shortcomings in Spengler's theory that lead to its inapplicability to current affairs: My explanation for this will be that Western industrialization represents a break with the cultural cycles that formed the basis of Spengler's theory. I will conclude the paper by providing an alternative account for the rise of the Islamic State. Focusing less on the Islamic civilization's inherent structure than on its relationship to the West, I will argue that the Islamic State is a brutal response to Western dominance based on industrial modernization, much like Maoism was in China.

## Cultural Resource Protection: Navigation Through Climate Change

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Cultural resources can be thought of as a record of the human experience. Together, archeological sites, cultural landscapes, ethnographic resources, museum collections, historic buildings and structures connect generations. They also help illustrate different methods used by civilizations to adapt, survive or succumb to environmental changes.

Government agencies along with public and private entities, work to conserve cultural resources with a shared goal that they may be experienced in some way and enjoyed by future generations. Climate change adds challenges to this effort and affects cultural resource protection. At the same time, through tangible and intangible qualities, cultural resource protection can help to preserve civilizational comparisons, lessons and context.

There is currently a revolution of conflicting doctrine regarding the consideration of climate science to any discipline. The conflicts and hostility to varying concepts make scientific application a difficult undertaking. However, several strategies and approaches for managing impacts, adaptation and learning from cultural resources in the era of climate change in addition to those impacts on civilizations will be covered in this paper. Collaboration with various partner efforts, both nationally and internationally, can help shape and support difficult decisions in relation to climate change, stewardship and protection of cultural resources.

By looking at a scope of cultural resources and climate change response, by studying from the past, and being informed by the present, we can more clearly manage impacts and information for current and future generations. Science, adaptation, mitigation, and communication will be key tools for implementation.

## Jihad and Violence

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The word "Jihad" means "to struggle." Quite often, since it is expressed so frequently in the Qur'an and in the historical experience of humanity, Jihad is considered the sixth pillar of Islam and equated with military means to bring non-believers as well as apostates who have fallen from the faith and those who have deviated from purity and practice "shirk" or impure customs to Islam. This interpretation of the word is prevalent today in the world due to radical Islam. However, there are forms of Jihad which this article will also examine. "Jihad of the heart" deals with an individual's internal struggle to gain personal purity, and in so doing advancing the cause of Islam through one's own example. Other forms of Jihad as a tool for advancing Islam are "Jihad of the mouth" with an emphasis upon advancing Islam through rhetoric and poetic literature which along with Jihad of the heart is identified with the devotional school of Sufi Islam. Other versions of Jihad stress the advancement of Islam through "Jihad of the pen" or writing and "Jihad of the hand" which involves the advancement of Islam through good deeds. However, it is "Jihad of the sword" which has become the dominant version of Jihad. In fact, even this version has subdivisions of defense and offense. This article will examine both the historical and contemporary versions of Jihad in both its violent and non-violent aspects.

## The Phoenicians and the Formation of the Western World

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Scholars generally agree that there are two sources of the Western tradition, Judeo-Christian doctrine and ancient Greek intellectualism. There is also recognition that Western civilization is largely built atop the Near Eastern civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. A basic question arises, however, as to which antique people specifically prepared the way for the West to develop. While early Aegean cultures are often viewed as the mainspring, careful assessment of the growing literature reveals that the city-states of Phoenicia *stimulated* (Bronze Age) and *fostered* (Iron Age) a new civilization in the West. The Phoenicians were pioneering seafarers, skilled engineers, gifted artisans, and the master entrepreneurs of antiquity. In the Mediterranean, cultural interaction resulted from peaceful, long-distance exchange of goods and ideas—also representing the core, urbanized Eastern civilizations.

Bronze Age sea trade brought Phoenician merchants to Minoan Crete before and during its height (c.1950-1450 B.C.). Consequently, embryonic Western civilization received Eastern concepts: monumental construction techniques; luxury products of gold and ivory (later, glass); advanced sailing ships; monetary silver; weights and measures; and an administrative model, including clay tablets, seals, accounting methods, and syllabic (perhaps Old Phoenician) writing that became Linear A.

During the Early Iron Age, led by Tyre, the Phoenicians created an intercontinental, commercial network with colonies reaching the Atlantic coasts—they discovered—of Africa and Europe. Carthage (f. 814 B.C.) later became a superpower, making large-scale agricultural, nautical, and constitutional contributions.

Between the protohistoric and classical eras, the expansion of Phoenician mercantilism, capital, and routes encouraged European state formation. Moreover, the center of civilization shifted from the Near East to the West. Indeed, from the Phoenicians early Archaic Greece borrowed alphabetical writing (and the book), weights and measures, commercial contracts, large-scale art

and architecture, shipbuilding technology, and fine luxury goods as artistic models. Succeeding Greece and Carthage was Rome.



## Comparing Deng Xiaoping's Views of Socialist Revolution and Their Results with the Visions of Marx, Lenin and Mao Zedong

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For almost forty years Deng Xiaoping's views of socialist revolution have determined the course of history in China. Differing significantly from Marx, Lenin and Mao Zedong in his understanding of socialism and in his approach to socialism, Deng saw economic growth as the most fundamental task of socialist revolution.

To increase productivity he encouraged the introduction of capitalism into China and dismantled China's planned economy through decentralization and marketization, essentially abandoning the socialist course charted by Marx, Lenin and Mao. In insisting on maintaining the dictatorship of the Chinese Communist Party as a sine qua non for rapid economic growth he also discarded the vision of democracy and the withering away of the state under socialism, a vision cherished by Marx and Lenin.

Championed by Deng, the fundamental economic reforms and the preservation of the single-party political system in China have resulted in a host of serious, widespread problems, including erosion of communist ideology, official corruption and socioeconomic stratification. In addition, as it strives to satisfy people's material needs Deng's "socialism with Chinese characteristics" encourages consumerism and distracts the public's attention from political issues.

Meanwhile, the single-minded pursuit of economic efficiency has led to the privatization of state-owned enterprises, which has not only undermined the foundation of socialism even further but also worsened workers' working and living conditions. Ideologically, the Communist Party, following Deng's lead, has promoted nationalism as a substitute for socialism to justify its own authoritarian rule. By comparing Deng's views of socialist revolution and their real-life consequences with the revolutionary visions of Marx, Lenin and Mao Zedong, my presentation examines how China, led by Deng and his successors, has moved away from orthodox socialism.

## The Power Configurations of the Central Civilization/ World System in the Eleventh Century

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This paper is the sixteenth in a series in which the political careers of civilizations/world systems receive snapshot codings of their overall power structures at feasible intervals. The narratives are produced by collating histories with large frames of reference. The codings are done using a nominal variable, polarity, with seven available values: nonpolarity, multipolarity, tripolarity, bipolarity, (nonhegemonic) unipolarity, hegemony and empire. Previous articles in the series have examined the Indic system 550 BC-AD 1800, the Far Eastern 1025 BC – AD 1850, the Southwest Asian c 2700 – 1500 BC, the Northeast African c. 2625-1500 BC. The Northeast African and Southwest Asian systems and sequences merged c. 1500 BC to form the Central system. A previous article has coded this system from 1500 BC to 700 BC, and previous papers have examined the system from AD 1100 to date. In the current paper, the Central system's power structure is coded at 10-year intervals AD 1000-1100. The century is entirely multipolar, although there is significant turnover among actors and movement of borders.

### Special Presentations

#### Eric Trager

Our guest speaker this year is Eric Trager, an Esther K. Wagner Fellow at the Washington Institute in Washington, D.C. He is the author of the widely acclaimed, *Arab Fall: How the Muslim Brotherhood Won and Lost Egypt in 891 Days* (Georgetown University Press, 2016). Dr. Trager is an expert on the Middle East, was in Egypt during the revolts, and continues to conduct field research during periodic returns to Egypt. His writings have appeared in numerous publications, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Foreign Affairs*, the *Atlantic*, and the *New Republic*. We are excited to have him as our guest speaker at this 47<sup>th</sup> ISCS Conference. More information about Mr. Trager can be found here:

<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/trager-eric> .

## Daniel Chirot

We are fortunate to have another very special speaker at this year's conference. Daniel Chirot is the Herbert J. Ellison Professor of Russian and Eurasian Studies in the University of Washington's Henry Jackson School of International Studies. He has an international reputation and will give a paper on the continuing importance of the European Enlightenment. Chirot's most recent book, co-authored with Scott Montgomery, is *The Shape of the New: Four Big Ideas and How They Made the Modern World* (Princeton University Press, 2015). Chirot has worked in and written about Europe, Africa and Southeast Asia.

His other books have been about genocide, ethnic conflicts, tyranny, social change, and Eastern Europe. He has consulted for NGOs, recently for CARE in Africa. He has received a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship and a Senior Fellowship at the United States Institute of Peace. More information about Mr. Chirot can be found here: <https://soc.washington.edu/people/daniel-chirot>

### **FILM: How to Start a Revolution** An Award Winning British Documentary

As waves of revolutionary spirit sweep the world, one man's ideas continue to inspire, mobilize and unite protestors, giving them the tools to topple authoritarian regimes. Quiet, unassuming, and softly spoken, 83 year old Professor Gene Sharp is celebrated by revolutionaries and feared by dictators. So what are his ideas, how have they spread from his tiny Boston office, and how are they actually used on the ground?

For the first time, this film shows how Nobel Peace Prize nominee Sharp's controversial book *From Dictatorship to Democracy* has been used against dictatorships from Serbia to Ukraine to Iran, climaxing in its use in the Egyptian revolution and the ongoing Syrian uprising. We see how the book's 198 strategic "weapons" of non-violent direct action have brought dramatic results, and why it has become the standard manual for anyone wanting to start a revolution.

Through exclusive interviews with Sharp, his associates and the revolutionary leaders he has inspired, this film goes behind the scenes of revolutions, showing the sheer force of non-violent people power. With revealing footage filmed covertly in Egypt and Syria, it explores how social media can now be used to

threaten dictators. This is the inspirational story of the power of people to change their world, the modern revolution, and the man behind it all. Best Documentary at Rain-Dance Film Festival. Best Documentary at Boston Film Festival. Mass Impact Award at Boston Film Festival. Special Jury Award at Ottawa One-World Film Festival. Best Documentary at Fort Lauderdale Film Festival.