

The People Speak

This is a quick note to all of you who have been in touch these past days, enquiring on 'my take' of the incredible emergence of people energy – across the greater region.

I will kick off by saying that I am actually overjoyed by what has happened in recent months, both close to me here but also in other territories – from Athens, to Bangkok, to London, to the Ivory coast – and now Bahrain and more – as the power of voice places the cry for human respect in the global spotlight.

I suggest that voice power – deployed swiftly by 'new-world' global connectivity is now apparent as the 'new-world ammunition of youth-heavy nations'.

In Arabia, my prayer is that the collective voice of Bahrainis* as they call for economic balance in the name of 'dignity' is indeed heard - but of course without 'violence' and the recent loss of life (*and others who 'feel they are on the same boat' where ever they are, from Cairo, to Benghazi, to Tehran, to Beirut, to.....).

What I observe is what you might suggest is 'a no-brainer'..... our somewhat educated, internet-savvy, brand-fed populations want to be treated fairly and with respect. We all want a job, a home, the means to raise a family. We just want a fair passport to fair opportunity. I also observe that does not mean that we all have to have exactly the same, it just means that we want what is fair.

In Bahrain for example, there has been an elected parliamentary system for almost a decade (and I will not labour on this point here) – however, the root of this recent uprising (bearing in mind that the Bahraini people have been vocal for many years, but you may have not heard about it) seems to lay in the widespread discomfort with the hereditary government. Indeed, I suppose such a government structure is all well and good, given that in systems like the UK and the USA we have a history of struggling to find the right-effect people to elect in the first place. BUT only if the government – and rulers play fair.

Like many, I witness that the global financial crisis has revealed the very few play(ed) it fair for decades past – be it at the helm of leader corporations or mature government. Instead, they play(ed) for short-term abundance into the pockets of a few, while feeding the rest of us with narrative and screenplay to keep us nourished with a false aspiration of what we can hope to achieve. The reality is that many of us now – whoever and where ever we are - struggle to survive in the world that is 2011.

I see that the double dip that we have all been 'waiting for' is upon us, driven this time by the people for the people, not the assumed leaders and players of government and financial institutions - the tyrants who gambled roulette-like on a mammoth chess board - and with our hard-earned money.

It may be being understood in different ways, but I clearly hear that the collective demand is that those who continue to roll the dice in corporations and in government - wherever they are, must change – or be changed. Leadership must shift in action and in consciousness as humanity shifts – and we will shift. In the past 30 months or so, the ego blocks and misplaced intentions of these stubborn individuals have proven that too many are too slow to own up to this reality, so the power of the people is now engaged,

enraged and energised to knock the 'king' right off the board - and the 'queen' too, as we have seen in both Tunisia and Egypt.

The time is now. There is no stopping it. Let's gather courage and come out of the closet. Let's walk away from what does not work anymore. Let's do this by voice and not violence. However, I am 53 and not 23 – and I know that anger and violence does not work. Maybe I didn't realised that either - when I was 23.

I am scheduled to be in Bahrain next week on February 23 & 24. If the people of this God-given island nation are still gathered around the palm-fringed Pearl Roundabout – then look out for me there. I will proudly hold the People's Flag and add to the People's Voice. Indeed, Pearl Roundabout, Tahir Square, Trafalgar Square, Times Square – wherever the next square, I am one of those people, as I too want to be part of a world that plays it fair....a connected world, not a world in disconnect.

In closing, my hope is that I have not misread the compelling leadership of the UAE, my chosen home country – and that in comparison to Port-au-Prince, Rangoon, Tunis, Cairo and Manama the people of the Emirates are truly led with authentic respect.

But perhaps I am showing my 23-year old naivety again, and this is a pandemic that must touch all to cleanse all for what is next. Including me.

Blessings,

Susan Furness

+97150 6556126