

by Christopher Murphy

## Watching Anxiously— From Afar

**S**INCE THE CRISIS IN EGYPT STARTED, many of us have been watching events unfold and hoping that the huge protests in Cairo and Alexandria would result in greater freedom for the Egyptian people, including open elections, no more one-man rule, and the elimination of systematic repression of dissent. But, even though I'm merely an observer with no direct personal stake in the outcome of these events, I admit to a certain sense of anxiety, knowing that at any moment the streets can erupt in violence (there have already been some incidents as I write this column) and that regardless of the best intentions of most of the groups in the protest movement, the results of all this effort and risk may not be what we would like to see.

But, for a moment, imagine that you are a nineteen year-old student from Cairo, staring your second semester at a college or university in the United States, and just back from a holiday visit home to see your parents and friends when the news of the protests breaks across every major news outlet. The jumble of emotions—fears for your friends and family, hope for political change, longing to be there to take part, and anxiety about what you might find when you do return home—could make your daily life nearly impossible to handle. The usual worries about examinations, papers, presentations, and the like, can pale in comparison to the events in your far-off homeland. Yet you would have no way to influence that distant struggle. Still, your classes move forward, your studies continue, and you must concentrate.

Frustrations and anxieties for students far from home during times of intense upheaval—like that in Egypt or Tunisia—or even for students from nations like Burma, Pakistan, or Sudan, to name just a few, where tensions are constant but not currently acute, require a special care and awareness from international student advisers. In this issue, Alan Desoff's article "Supporting International Students from Countries Dealing with Trauma" includes a number of excellent insights from veteran advisers on the best ways to work with the students on your campuses who live with these tensions daily.

### Also in this Issue...

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