**EXERCISE 5**

POLITICAL TURMOIL IN NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRIES

The recent events on the North African countries have proved the volatility of the current political status in the world. Actually, we were not familiar with the real political and social situation in the area, and we were shocked when the series of protests and demonstrations started across the Middle East and North Africa. It has become known as the "Arab Spring"

Numerous factors have led to the protests, including issues such as the concentration of wealth in the hands of autocrats in power for decades (dictatorship or absolute monarchy), human rights violations, government corruption, economic decline, unemployment, extreme poverty, etc.

The catalysts for the revolts in these countries have been especially the refusal of the population to accept the status quo. Some thousands of young Africans have collapsed the apparently stable international order and have raised a new revolution difficult to control.

The balance of power in this strategic region is now unclear. This precariousness causes the instability of the global economy; prices of oil and natural gas are increasing quite quickly. It seems clear that if these undeveloped countries did not manage to create a new political structure, some extremist groups could take advantages of the situation and, consequently, put in danger our borders.

As far as I do believe that the key factor to assist these countries in reaching democracy is a firm commitment from the international community to help them in a number of areas, like by supporting both the requirements of the population and, at the same time, the strength of their institutions.

Miguel Rodríguez Sánchez