

## MEMORANDUM

May 1, 2012

Over the coming weeks, 1.7 million college graduates will receive diplomas that launch them into a scary economy. In one sense, these are the lucky aspirants to the good life in America. “But a future that looked promising four years ago has dimmed for many in the class of 2012,” writes William B. Dickinson. “A disturbing number will join what has been likened to “a kind of B.A. breadline” for minimum-wage jobs or, worse, a forced return home.”

Dickinson, a former Washington editor and journalism professor, writes regularly for the Biocentric Institute, which conducts programs and studies directed toward the enhancement of quality of life for all peoples. A report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, he writes, says that only 5 of the 20 jobs projected to grow fastest over the coming decade will require a bachelor’s degree. Heavy debt to finance college also hangs over most graduates and their families.

“How will this play out on the political stage in a presidential election year?” he asks. “What does it portend for creation of traditional (or untraditional) families down the road? More importantly, with jobless youth a rising problem both in our country and around the world, what can be done to keep societies from imploding under the stress? In poor nations, youth unemployment statistics are still more shocking because there is often no safety net to mitigate the pain. The Arab Spring began when a young fruit vendor, one of Tunisia’s many unemployed university graduates, set himself on fire in late 2010 to protest police harassment.

“Back in the U.S., we need to find jobs for each new graduating class, college and high school,” Dickinson concludes. “Parents and friends watching the Class of ’12 proudly accept their diplomas have reason to wonder whether we have done enough to prepare them for ruthless competition in a globalized world.”

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