TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY SYMPOSIUM
Re-thinking Western Policies in Light of the Arab Uprising
Istituto affari internazionali (IAI)
Rome, 12/IX/2011

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Istituto Affari Internazionali

TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY SYMPOSIUM 2011

Re-thinking Western Policies in Light of the Arab Uprising

Rome, 12 September 2011
Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sala Conferenze Internazionali

AGENDA

With the support of: Compagnia di San Paolo, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Rome Office, Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Robert Bosch Stiftung, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

NATO OTAN

Robert Bosch Stiftung

Ministero degli Affari Esteri

Compagnia di San Paolo

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

To be held under the Chatham House Rule[1]

MONDAY, 12 September

9:15-9:30 Welcome address and seminar introduction

Welcome address: **Stefano Silvestri**, President, IAI, Rome
Pierfrancesco Sacco, Head, Analysis and Programming Unit, MFA, Rome

Introduction: **Riccardo Alcaro**, Researcher, Transatlantic Programme, IAI, Rome

9:30-10:30 **KEYNOTE SPEECH**
The West and the Arab Spring: Accepting the Challenge, Embracing the Change

Chair: **Ettore Greco**, Director, IAI, Rome

Speaker: **Steve Heydemann**, Senior Vice President, Grants Programme, USIP, Washington, DC

Q&A session

10:30-10:45 COFFEE BREAK

10:45-12:30 **FIRST ROUNDTABLE**
US Response to the Arab Upheavals: Challenges and Priorities

Chair: **Richard Youngs**, Director General, FRIDE, Madrid

Paper-givers: **Robert Springborg**, Professor, Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey (CA)
Issandr El Amrani, freelance journalist (former Crisis Group staff member), Cairo

Discussants: **Hassan Nafaa**, Professor of Political Science, Cairo University
Raffaella Del Sarto, Pears Fellow in Israel and Mediterranean Studies Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford University, and Visiting Professor, SAIS Bologna Center, Johns Hopkins University.

Open debate

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[1] "When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed".

12:30-13:00 **KEYNOTE SPEECH BY NATO REPRESENTATIVE**

Rolf Schwarz, Political Officer, MD & ICI countries section, Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, NATO

13:00-14:15 LUNCH

14.15-16:00 **SECOND ROUNDTABLE**

EU Response to the Arab Upheavals: Challenges and Priorities

Chair: **Michael Wahid Hanna**, Fellow and Program Officer, The Century Foundation, New York

Paper-givers: **Silvia Colombo,** Researcher, Mediterranean and Middle East Programme, IAI, Rome
Ahmed Driss, Director, CEMI, Tunis

Discussants: **Sami Moubayed,** Editor-in-Chief, *Forward magazine*, Damascus
Daniel Levy, Senior Research Fellow, American Strategy Program, Co-Director, Middle East Task Force, New America Foundation, Washington, DC

Open debate

16:00-16:15 COFFEE BREAK

16:15-17:30 **THIRD ROUNDTABLE**

Coordinating Transatlantic Response to the Arab Uprising

Chair: **Roberto Aliboni**, Scientific Advisor, IAI, Rome

Paper-givers: **Khaled Elgindy**, Visiting Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Brookings Institution, Washington, DC
Muriel Asseburg, Head, Research Division Middle East and Africa, SWP, Berlin
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Discussants: **Soli Özel**, Lecturer of International Relations, Kadir Has University, Istanbul
Yossi Alpher, Co-editor, *Bitter Lemons*, Tel Aviv

Open debate

Final remarks **Fabrizio Colaceci**, Head, NATO Unit, MFA, Rome

A special thanks to Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for kindly making the conference room available.

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NATO OTAN

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Ministero degli Affari Esteri

Compagnia di San Paolo

FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG

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Istituto Affari Internazionali

TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY SYMPOSIUM 2011

Re-thinking Western Policies in Light of the Arab Uprising

ROME, 12 SEPTEMBER 2011

Us Response To Arab Upheavals: Challenges And Priorities

by

Robert Springborg
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The Obama Administration's response to upheavals in the Arab world that commenced in Tunisia in December, 2010, has been remarkably cautious. What it has done is much less remarkable than what it has said, or what it might have done.

As is characteristic of this Administration in general, and of its President in particular, words have been more forthcoming than actions. And those words have followed a pattern. As uprisings gathered steam, language supporting protesters and criticizing incumbent regimes grew more pointed, but in almost all cases remained equivocal. Removals of the Tunisian, Egyptian and then Yemeni presidents were tacitly endorsed.[1] Wording of statements about the al Khalifa and their draconian crackdown in Bahrain was yet more cautious.[2] The strongest statement by President Obama on Syria's President Bashar al Assad prior to the intensification of the regime's crackdown in July was that "he can lead [the] transition or get out of the way," a statement described by former State Department spokesman, P.J. Crowley, as "curious," since Assad seemed to have no intent of reforming.[3] When in May President Obama signed an executive order approving sanctions against Assad and his inner circle, his stated, limited objective was to pressure Syria to "begin transitioning to a democratic system that ensures the universal rights of the Syrian people."[4] It was not until 18 August when the Syrian issue was on its way to the UN Security Council that the US government called for its president to step down. Only with regard to Libya has the language of regime change been strident, unequivocal, and accompanied with direct action to achieve that end. But even that direct action was limited primarily to the opening stages of establishing the No Fly Zone, itself a tightly confined operation.[5] The Libyan engagement, moreover, resulted not from US urgings, but from diplomatic initiatives commenced by France and then supported by other European states.[6] For the first time since WWII the US took a back seat to Europe in laying the diplomatic groundwork for joint military action in the Middle East, and then in the actual conduct of the action itself.

Another feature of US rhetoric is that much of it has been pronounced by spokespersons for the President or the Secretary of State, thereby distancing those officials from the message, reducing their responsibility for it, and implicitly devaluing its importance. So, for example, in reaction to Bashar al Assad's speech on 20 June, in which he pointedly refrained from announcing specific reform measures and continued to blame outside agitators, which he likened to "germs," for the upheaval in his country, the French Foreign Minister, Alain Juppe, said that

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[1]Once President Ali Abdullah Salih was evacuated from Sana to Saudi Arabia to receive medical treatment, the US made no secret of its desire for him not to return.

[2]His personal comment on Bahrain was included in his May 19 speech, in which he encouraged dialogue between the government and the opposition, which he said cannot be real "when parts of the peaceful opposition are in jail." He did not condemn the government's excessive use of force against protesters, nor the dispatch of troops to Bahrain by Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

[3]P.J. Crowley,"Obama Must Tell Assad to Go," *Washington Post* (June 19, 2011), http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/obama-tell-syrias-assad-he-has-to-go/2011/06/17/AGIZB3bH_story.html

[4]Cited in *IPRIS Digest*, 4, 124 (June 23, 2011).

[5]By late June, 2011, for example, NATO had launched only one-third of the air sorties over Libya that it did over Kosovo in 1999. Those sorties were conducted almost exclusively by European, not US aircraft. They were deemed by qualified western military experts to be insufficient to change the balance of power on the ground. See for example James Blitz, Michael Peel and Anna Fifield, "An Uncertain Mission," *Financial Times* (June 23, 2011), p. 7.

[6]In virtually his final public statement prior to retirement, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates attributed France's forward posture toward Libya to President Sarkozy's "personal reasons," thereby further underlying US skepticism toward this intervention. James Kantner, "Sarkozy Rebuts Gates's Remarks on Libyan Strikes," *The New York Times* (June 25, 2011), p. A8.

the Syrian president had reached "the point of no-return." His German counterpart, Guido Westerwelle, said that the speech was that of a "hopeless person who seems not to have understand the signs of the times." By contrast, the American response to what may have been the last chance for the Assad regime to come to terms with its opposition, was provided not by President Obama or Secretary of State Clinton, but by Victoria Nuland, spokeswoman of the Department of State, who simply characterized the speech as "mere words."[7]

The net effect of its cautious, essentially verbal reactions has been to convey an impression that the Obama Administration is anxious not to become sucked into the tumultuous events of the Arab Spring and is grappling with upheavals on a case by case basis. It has shunned formulation of an overall strategy that would force it to choose between security concerns and support for those pouring into Arab streets. It seems to be struggling to find words it hopes will appease protesters, but not commit the US to specific outcomes or actions. In some cases, such as that of Saudi Arabia's crackdown on women protesters violating the ban on their driving in the Kingdom, the Administration preferred complete silence, despite appeals by the protesters for words of encouragement.[8] Obama's second major speech on the Middle East since becoming President, delivered on May 19, 2011, sounded like a dusted off version brought down from the US diplomatic shelf. It laid out traditional US concerns with supporting Israel and the peace process, fighting terrorism, opposing nuclear proliferation, and ensuring the flow of oil. This litany of interests is the same as that enunciated by Obama's predecessor, although President Bush typically added a commitment to democratization. The speech, billed as President Obama's reaction to the Arab Spring, was conspicuously not used to declare new departures in US policy toward the region.

In the meantime the absence of major policy reactions by the US to the Arab Spring is notable. No US troops have been committed to Libya or any other country in the region since that Spring blossomed. Indeed, the drawdown of US forces continued in Iraq and was announced for Afghanistan on June 22 as the upheavals were in progress. No substantial increase in foreign aid has been declared, even as regards traditional beneficiary Egypt. Despite its straightened circumstances, deemed by its Finance and International Cooperation Ministers to require $12-$15 billion in additional external funding in this financial year, it was promised by President Obama in his 19 May speech debt relief of only $1 billion, and that on conditional terms, as well as an additional $1 billion of new loan guarantees. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, speaking in Cairo on 15 March, had announced a rather derisory $90 million of emergency economic assistance. The US thus committed itself to covering less than five percent of the funding required by Egypt for the coming fiscal year, a very modest amount indeed in comparison to the some $3 billion annually Jimmy Carter committed to Cairo in support of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty back in 1979.[9] In deeds then, if rather less so in words, responses by the Obama Administration to Arab countries wracked by internal dissent and/or facing major economic challenges have been characterized by their discreetness, or by their complete absence.

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[7]"They Said in Response to al-Assad's Speech," *al Quds al Arabi* (June 22, 2011), as cited in *Mideastwire.com* (June 22, 2011).

[8]After a campaign directed against her by Saudi women, Secretary of State Clinton finally issued a statement on 21 June in which she declared that what "these women are doing is brave, and what they are seeking is right." No criticism of the Saudi government was offered. Her spokesperson explained the dilatory response on the grounds that the Secretary had been engaged in "quiet diplomacy." Steven lee Myers, "Clinton Praises Protest by Saudis," *The New York Times* (June 22, 2011), p. A8.

[9]Total Egyptian public debt in 2011 is $183 billion, of which some $3.6 billion is owed to the US. Because the debt to the US is on concessional interest terms, it requires minimal debt servicing, so the $1 billion of debt forgiveness provides Egypt annually an amount about equal to the pledge of additional US funding for 2011. But that amount in any case is required to be committed to a "debt swap" which will create funds for youth employment, not immediate relief from the looming fiscal crisis.

Indeed, one former Administration insider boasted that this approach reflected the Obama strategy of "leading from behind."[10] Whether that is explanation or justification is unclear, but the low key approach does raise questions as to what alternative responses were possible, why they were not preferred, and what the consequences of leading from the rear have been.

What the US has not done

The Arab Spring is said to be the most momentous event in the Middle East since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.[11] Even by a lower, possibly more accurate standard, the U.S. response seems remarkably timid. As the brief overview above indicates, the reaction has been primarily verbal and indirect. Washington has deliberately shunned a visible leadership role. While it may be "leading from behind" in that is has sought to coordinate moves from within NATO, the UN and the world financial institutions, that coordination has not resulted in unified, effective actions by the US and its allies.[12] It is hard to imagine how it could be otherwise as long as Washington's objectives remain unclear. So the lack of substantive, decisive reactions to the near collapse of the long standing post-Ottoman Arab order, begs the question of what has not been done, or put slightly differently, how Washington might have responded were the Obama Administration's reactions more like those of its predecessors.

First, the US has conspicuously refrained from using the traditional levers of its power. Military deployment has been limited to the Libyan theater and, even in that case, not of major significance. There have been no other special alerts, ship, troop or aircraft movements. Nor have there been any threats of military action, even for protection of US citizens or as possible reprisals for attacks on US interests. Gunboat diplomacy has been shunned, in part no doubt because it would be unclear what the targets would be or, if any potential ones were hit, such as Syria's Fourth Armoured Division under Maher al Assad's command and responsible for much of the brutalization of civilians, what the consequences might be. The most coercive action taken by the US to date, other than against Libya, has been imposing sanctions on a dozen members of the Syrian political elite, several of whom in any case already were laboring under sanctions previously imposed.

As far as support for democratization conducted by or with funding provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), there have been some attempts to reconfigure and upgrade existing programs to provide more direct, substantial support to protest movements. The most notable attempts at such change have been in Egypt. Secretary of State Clinton announced in the wake of Mubarak's departure in February that some of the $250 million annual economic assistance would be redirected to "support the transition and assist the economic recovery." In March USAID/Cairo launched a $65 million program for "democratic development" focused on elections, civic activism and human rights. Fayza Aboul Naga, long serving Minister for Planning and International Cooperation, speaking on behalf of the government--which means the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF)--immediately criticized this initiative and formally complained to the US Embassy on the grounds

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[10] P.J. Crowley, op cit.

[11] Gordon Lubold, "Senator John McCain: U.S. Must Sustain Momentum of Arab Spring," *News Feature*, U.S. Institute of Peace, (May 20, 2011), http://www.usip.org/publications/sen-john-mccain-us-must-sustain-momentum-arab-spring

[12] At a minimum, "leading from behind" is a "politically disastrous wording," according to Daniel W. Drezner, who further notes that, "Unless and until the president and his advisers define explicitly the strategy that has been implicit for the last year, the president's foreign policy critics will be eager to define it—badly—for him." "Does Obama have a Grand Strategy?" *Foreign Policy*, 90, 4 (July/August 2011), pp. 57-64.

that the action violated Egypt's sovereignty.[13] USAID/Cairo delayed implementation of the program until June, at which time the new US Ambassador, Anne W. Patterson, reported to Congress that USAID was about to commence distribution of $40 million for democracy assistance, implying that it had reduced the original commitment by $25 million.[14] In mid August the USAID Mission Director, James Bever, was recalled simultaneous with the announcement that it had been agreed that all future U.S. funding to Egyptian NGOS would require the approval of a committee whose members would be appointed by the SCAF. Egyptian NGOs immediately protested what appeared to be the US Embassy knuckling under to the SCAF at the expense of civil society.[15] The government of Egypt also continued its ban on the two major organizations that receive democracy funding from the US Government—the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute--so they have been unable to operate on the ground in Egypt. Possibly most telling, USAID and the US Office of Military Cooperation in Cairo refused to address the critically important issue of civil-military relations. Various existing sources of funding were available for this purpose, whether from USAID's budget or the Department of Defense's International Military Education and Training Program (IMET). Unwillingness to seek to enhance civilian capacities to oversee the military was a decision reflecting the Administration's fear of antagonizing the Egyptian junta.[16] While this reticence could change when the outlines of a new political order are clarified, what remains significant is that at the critical moment when the US might have signaled its interest in supporting civilians against officers, hence democracy over continued military rule, it chose not to do so.[17] In sum, the US sought to make its USAID governance and democracy programs more robust, but backed away when it met resistance. It studiously avoided addressing the most critical issue, which is that of civil-military relations. The Obama Administration, unlike its predecessor, chose not to highlight rebuffs of its efforts to promote democracy, preferring instead to delay USAID disbursements to non-governmental organizations and then to grant the SCAF more control over them than the Bush Administration had to Mubarak's government.

The carrot has been used as sparingly as the stick. The paltry addition to US financial assistance to Tunisia and Egypt has already been noted. The so-called "Middle East Marshall Plan," long called for by those worried by the parlous economic condition of the region, received

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[13]"Egypt Opposes U.S.'s Democracy Funding," *Expat Cairo* (June 14, 2011), http://www.expatcairo.com/2011/06/egypt-opposes-u-s-s-democracy-funding/

[14] Emad el Din Shahin, "The Arab Spring and Western Policy Choices," *Peace Policy* (July 6, 2011) http://peacepolicy.nd.edu/2011/07/06/the-arab-spring-western-policy-choices/#more-1179

[15] Yaroslov Trofimov, "Egypt Opposes U.S.'s Democracy Funding," *The Wall Street Journal* (June 14, 2011), http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB10001424052702304659045763831233015796 68-lMyQjAxMTAxMDEwNTExNDUyWj.html; Abddel-Rahman Hussein, "Foreign Funding of Egyptian Rights Groups Causes Stir in Political Debate," *al Masry al Youm* (July 22, 2011), http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/node/479422.

[16]Tamara Cofman Wittes, recently appointed deputy assistant secretary of state for near east affairs, is a long standing opponent of efforts to reduce US assistance to the Egyptian military or to try to use that assistance to upgrade civilian control over it. In a 2008 publication, for example, she defended continued support for the military and opposed conditionality on assistance to it on the grounds that assistance underpinned "high-value cooperation with American strategic goals." See Tamara Cofman Wittes, *Feedom's Unsteady March: America's Role in Building Arab Democracy.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008, p. 119.

[17]In June two prominent US Senators weighed into the growing dispute between the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and the popular protest movement. They sided with the former. Senators John Kerry and John McCain, on a visit to Cairo, stated that they were confident that the military rulers wanted to transfer powers to an elected government "as soon as possible," and that they were going to recommend back in Washington that there should be "further assistance to Egypt's military." Dina Salah Amer, "Egyptian Leaders Assures McCain and Kerry on Transition," *The New York Times* (June 27, 2011), p. A7.

not a mention from the Administration.[18] Washington further distanced itself from efforts to come to the aid of struggling Tunisia and Egypt by not hosting a donors' conference. In the event, it was convened in Paris, where it necessarily received less attention. Its physical distance from Washington implied the Obama Administration's reticence to assume the role of principal banker of the Arab Spring. And without its direct, benevolent engagement, terms offered by the international financial institutions were likely to be much less favorable than newly energized Arab populations anticipated, or their fragile governments could thus easily accept.[19]

Conspicuous efforts to utilize Arab upheavals to gain leverage for the US within the region or in its broader foreign relations constituted a third notable absence from the Obama Administration's responses. The President's speech on May 19, in which he referred to a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict based on the 1967 border, appeared to suggest that he was hoping to utilize the momentum of Arab democratization to engage Israel in a more serious peace process. But two days later, after a storm of protest from pro-Israeli circles directed at this utterance, President Obama in a speech to the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) backtracked, saying apologetically, "There was nothing particularly original in my proposal." The trial balloon, if indeed it was that, was thus quickly deflated by he who had launched it. Any hope that whatever democracy the Arab Spring was able to bring might provide a new base upon which the US Administration could reinvigorate the peace process, was dashed.

Just as the US Administration showed little interest in trying to mediate between its friends in the region, including the Palestine Authority and the government of Binyamin Netanyahu, so too did it abjure efforts to punish its enemies. As the Tehran—Damascus—Hizbullah axis came under ever greater pressure as a result of the upheaval in Syria, the increasingly bitter conflict between President Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in Iran, and the reaction by the March 14 movement against the new March 8 backed Miqati government in Beirut, so did the Obama Administration appear to become ever more cautious. A wait and see attitude was adopted toward the Hizbullah influenced Miqati government. Allegations of Iranian meddling in Syria, originally made not by the President or Secretary of State, but by UN Ambassador Susan Rice in late April, although in the absence of any details, were reiterated some weeks later by Secretary of State Clinton, but again without specific information.[20] In the meantime Syrians fleeing into Turkey provided eyewitness accounts of what appeared to be direct Iranian involvement, including its distinctive security personnel allegedly firing on protesters.[21] Obviously the Obama Administration was leery of ratcheting up the pressure on Damascus and Tehran and on their satellite in Lebanon, Hizbullah.[22]

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[18]Glenn Hubbard and Bill Duggan, "A Marshall Plan for the Middle East?" *Huffington Post,* (February 28, 2011), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/glenn-hubbard/marshall_plan_mid_east_b_829411.html

[19]Finance Minister Samir Radwan announced on 25 June that Egypt "had dropped plans to seek loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank." He explained this move on the basis that the fiscal deficit would be only 8.6% of GDP in the coming year, not over 11% as originally thought. Commentators suggested the real reason for not taking up the loans at this stage was due to popular reaction against the internationial financial institutions and the limited conditionality they attached to the loan offers. See "Egypt Drops Plans for IMF Loan Amid Popular Distrust," *BBC News (June 25, 2011), http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13914410*

[20]Bill Varner, "Iran Actively Aiding Syrian Repression of Protests, U.S. Says," Bloomberg, (April 26, 2011), http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-04-26/iran-actively-aiding-syria-s-repression-of-protests-u-s-says.html; and Secretary Clinton on Repression in Iran and Syria, US Policy, Embassy of the US, Brussels, Belgium, (June 14, 2011), http://www.uspolicy.be/headline/secretary-clinton-repression-iran-and-syria

[21] "Iran Accused of Role in Syrian Repression," *The Peninsula* (June 10, 2011) http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/middle-east/155220-iran-accused-of-role-in-syrian-repression-.html

[22]A common belief in the Arab world is that the US is seeking to weaken the Assad regime, not to remove it, so that it can be pressured into reaching a peace agreement with Israel. See for example Ali Younes, "Obama's Winning Formula for Syria," *al Ahram Weekly* (July 7-13, 2011), http://weekly.Ahram.org.eg/print/2011/1055/rel142.htm

At the strategic level, the US Administration apparently decided not to use opportunities the Arab Spring provided to enhance transatlantic relations and reinforce the US position at the heart of the NATO alliance. Washington preferred to sit back and let Paris and London take the lead, not only vis a vis Libya, but also in trying to cobble together a Security Council resolution on the Syrian situation. When the air campaign faltered over Libya, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates chastised America's European allies for insufficient spending on defense. The impression conveyed was that the US would look after its own key interests in Egypt and Bahrain, while allowing the Europeans to try to pick up the pieces in less strategic Tunisia and Libya and also to try to organize some sort of international pressure on Damascus. Whether this was leading from the rear, or deserting the field, must have seemed ambiguous in European capitals.

Finally and most importantly, the Arab Spring elicited no overall statement of strategy by the President. The last presidential "doctrine" for the region was declared by President Jimmy Carter in 1980 in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It was a classic statement of US Cold War strategy, drawing a line in the sand beyond which the Soviets could not go without an American military response. The Soviet Union is no more, the Cold war is thankfully over, and drawing lines in sand has little effect on the elusive enemies and asymmetric threats currently faced by the US and the West in general in the Middle East. The range of current challenges and opportunities is entirely different, while the US capacity to "contain" the region singlehandedly, which it more or less accomplished in the first two decades after the Soviet collapse, is much diminished. The Arab Spring exploded the existing Arab order, based as it was primarily on authoritarian regimes propped up by the US.

So from every perspective a new Middle East has to be built. Since the US is the primary external actor for the foreseeable future, but one with reduced capacities and confronted now with regimes that may not be so easily managed, it would seem logical and necessary for the US to take the lead in articulating a vision of the Middle East and specifying what the US will contribute to assist its realization. By not declaring a new doctrine for the region, President Obama has foregone an agenda setting opportunity and left all stakeholders wondering where this vital region is headed and how the US will respond. At the more prosaic level of the day to day management of US interests in and toward the region, whether by CENTCOM, the Department of State, or by USAID, it has become clear over the past few months that the lack of policy directives is rendering the task of such management difficult. Absent explicit policy set against clear objectives, bureaucrats hunker down, fearful of taking initiatives that might prove to run counter to Washington's tactical maneuvering. Being the weakest actor, USAID is particularly impacted by policy ambiguity, just at the time when US assistance for democratization could have the greatest effect.[23]

So what Washington has not done in response to upheavals in the Arab world has at least opportunity costs. This begs the question of why the Obama Administration has been willing to bear them.

Why has it done so little?

[23] That the Cairo USAID Mission Director either resigned in protest against the Department of State caving into demands from the SCAF for control over democratization funding, or was removed from his post so as to serve as the scapegoat for the U.S. Administration, would in either case send a clear and chilling message to his USAID colleagues.

The Middle East is a region where fools rush in, but wise men fear to tread, as Leon Carl Brown noted so elegantly almost thirty years ago.[24] And it is a region where the US is already overextended. It has nearly 200,000 troops in Afghanistan and Iraq alone. It has erected a security umbrella over the Arab states of the Gulf, as part of which it maintains military facilities in five of the six GCC states. It is the primary military partner of numerous other Arab countries, including Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan, not to mention Israel. The Middle East has for some thirty years consumed about half of all US foreign assistance. The returns from these US investments have been mixed, for the Middle East continues to breed terrorism and political violence like no other, while its publics are markedly less pro-American than those in other emerging regions.[25] In addition to provoking yet more terrorism, new US intervention could have other negative, unforeseen consequences. Sudan is the first, but maybe not the last Arab state to fragment, giving rise to new rounds of inter-state warfare. Fears of Libya and Syria splitting are not entirely fanciful, and Iraq's future as a unitary state is not yet secured. Palestine has already virtually split in half, or in fact into three parts if we include Israel as part of the historic mandate area. So while the Middle East has an unenviable record of turmoil and violence, there is nothing to prevent the situation from further deteriorating, including states dissolving into warring fragments. The Arab upheavals of 2011 are themselves signs of chronic and dangerous political and economic malaise. In no country have they yet led to a resolution of the underlying problem of authoritarianism, a pre-requisite for the good governance required for rapid, sustainable economic growth.

Only a fool would anticipate roses being strewn at the feet of a new interventionist force. President Obama is assuredly no such fool. He has learned from the missteps of his predecessor who rushed almost blindly into this difficult region. But is the lesson of caution still the correct one for the new circumstances created by the Arab Spring? Under President Bush the US sought to impose itself on the region. Now the people of the region are themselves initiating changes to established political orders. Many are hoping that the US revise its approach to their particular country and to the region as a whole. So might the US now be out of step with these new realities, standing back, hesitating to engage, when it is being urged and indeed invited to do so? Surely the Obama Administration must have been tempted to place itself more unequivocally on "the right side of history" by providing more tangible support for those protesting against and, in the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, at least partially removing authoritarian governments. What then has held President Obama back?

The factors just mentioned of potential terrorist backlashes and state fragmentation, are but two of several concerns with this volatile region that probably serve as deterrents to bold, innovative US action. Possibly at the top of the list of worries is that Islamism could ride to power on the back of protest movements. The effervescence of that movement in the wake of departures by Presidents Ben Ali and Mubarak is clearly of concern, despite signs of its increasing division into multiple organizations and political parties, particularly in Egypt, hence its weakening in the face of competitive secular political movements. Of still greater concern is radical Islamism in Yemen, in some cases linked to al Qaida, which appears to have gained control in Abyan and other southern areas more or less abandoned by Salih's regime under siege in Sana. Suspicions that the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood provides much of the stiffening for ongoing protests in that country probably constitute a deterrent to the more open embrace of

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[24]Leon Carl Brown, *International Politics and the Middle East: Old Rules, Dangerous Game.* London: I.B. Tauris, 1984.

[25] A Zogby poll released in July, 2011, for example, revealed that a sample of respondents in six Arab countries viewed the U.S. even less favorably than a similar sample had at the end of the Bush Administration. Farah Stockman, "Obama, U.S. Viewed less Favorably in Arab World," *The Boston Globe* (July 13, 2011) http://www.boston.com/Boston/politicalintelligence/2011/07/obama-viewed-less-favorably-arab-world-poll-shows/yIVn6f6PueWbdhZutglhoJ/index.html.

that upheaval by the Obama Administration. Worries about Islamism shade into thoughts of Iranian fifth column activities, especially in Bahrain. In a region deemed to be polarized—rightly or wrongly—between Shi'a and Sunni, with US strategic weight exclusively on the latter, any gains by the former would be deemed to be major setbacks. The primordial strategic interest in Israel also gives rise to apprehension about Arab upheavals. While protesters have focused on domestic issues, the potential for them to begin to challenge existing accommodations with Israel brokered by the US and enforced by Arab authoritarian regimes, is worrisome. Finally, the price of oil is seen as the single greatest impact on the pace and extent of US economic recovery, as witnessed by the Obama Administration's support in late June for tapping into the International Energy Agency's strategic petroleum reserve. Any disruptions to supply that would further aggravate the loss of most of Libya's normal exports of some 1.6 million barrels per day would be most unwelcome. If the upheavals were to spread to the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, the consequences could be globally catastrophic. Any one of these many threats is sufficient to give pause to a US Administration already inclined to a cautious posture toward the Middle East.

Were the downside risks less threatening, domestic constraints might still be sufficient to cause the American president to forswear dramatic reactions to Arab upheavals. Mention has already been made of the overstretched US military. According to then Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, speaking to the Military Academy at West Point, any US president seeking to send an army to Asia, the Middle East or Africa "should have his head examined."26 Four months later President Obama announced the beginning of troop withdrawals from Afghanistan, with many leading Republican politicians not only supporting the drawdown, but urging that it be hastened. So there is next to no US political appetite for new military actions in the Middle East. America's uncharacteristic gun shyness results from straightened economic circumstance. Meeting in June, the Conference of Mayors passed a resolution calling on Congress to hasten the end of US involvement in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, arguing that building bridges in Baghdad and Kandahar made little sense when there were no funds to build them in Baltimore or Kansas City.27 Possibly the only points of consensus in contemporary American politics are that the US economy is woefully weak and that the US cannot afford further military expeditions. Any President who ignored the shared awareness of limits on US capacities and need for them to be redirected to the home front would do so at enormous political peril.

Intrusions from the Middle East into US domestic politics must also give pause to those in the Administration when considering the range of possible alternative responses to Arab upheavals. Israel's apprehensions about the consequences of the upheavals for its own security translate directly into political pressure in Washington. It does not want to see all vestiges of the security states in Egypt and, until the late summer of 2011, even in Syria, with which it has maintained peace for almost forty years, swept away and be replaced by unknown political actors, some or possibly many being Islamists. While democratic Arab states, including Palestine, may ultimately be more willing and able to make peace and conduct normal relations with Israel, that proposition will remain theoretical in the eyes of most Israelis until the character and intentions of any new Arab orders that emerge become clear and irrevocable. In the meantime, the pro-Israel lobby in the US will continue to urge caution and preservation of the status quo of overwhelming Israeli supremacy, which thereby places limits on US reactions to the Arab Spring.

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[26]Cited in Richard McGregor, "US Loses its Appetite for Job as the World's Policeman," *Financial Times* (March 3, 2011), http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b0e2de0c-45d7-11e0-acd8-00144feab49a.html#axzz1QUtx5Byv

[27]"US Mayors Gather in Baltimore," *The Washington Post* (June 17, 2011), http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/us-mayors-gather-in-baltimore-topics-include-redirecting-military-spending-to-home-front/2011/06/17/AGTm94YH_story.html

Saudi influence, less visible in the corridors of power in Washington, is nonetheless substantial and, like Israel's, pushing back against open embrace of the Arab Spring. Saudi displeasure with the turn of events in 2011 was evidenced by its acceptance in exile of Tunisia's Ben Ali, by its criticism of the US "abandoning" Mubarak in his time of need, by its dispatching of troops to Bahrain, by its invitation to Jordan and Morocco to join the GCC, and by its own crackdown at home. Strain in the US-Saudi relationship, clearly manifest as Ben Ali and Mubarak were chased from power and President Obama spoke about the need for other Arab leaders to take note and be "on the right side of history," caused Washington to become more solicitous of a Riyadh whose importance was steadily magnified by rising oil prices and the deteriorating US economy. By June the Administration had foresworn statements that could be deemed even indirectly critical of the Saudis. It was rewarded by the Saudi position in OPEC, which endorsed an increase in production at the fractious meeting in early June, although it was uncharacteristically outmaneuvered by Iran, Venezuela and Libya.28 The Saudis then cooperated behind the scenes with the US to maximize the price impact of the release of oil from the International Energy Agency's (IEA's) strategic reserve, signaling that the negative impact of the Arab Spring on US-Saudi relations had been contained. But it was contained as a result of the US reassuring the Saudis that American support for the Arab Spring had limits and that the Saudis and their monarchial allies were beyond those limits.

Intrusions from the Middle East into Washington's considerations of policies for the region are thus supportive of the status quo. So, too, is the bureaucratic political process by which those policies are made. The persisting securitization of US relations with the region even after the end of the Cold War results in part from the continuing, indeed growing relative importance of the Department of Defense (DOD). Defense spending underpins and reflects the DOD's power. From a high in the mid 1980s, it declined until the end of the millennium, at which time it commenced a rapid and continuing ascent. For 2011 the military was appropriated $671 billion, as compared to $47 billion for the Department of State and USAID combined. This profound and growing disproportion in support for the military as opposed to that for diplomacy and foreign assistance caused Secretary of Defense Gates himself to note "the creeping militarization" of American foreign policy and to plead that, "Diplomatic leaders — be they in ambassadors' suites or on the seventh floor of the State Department — must have the resources and political support needed to fully exercise their statutory responsibilities in leading American foreign policy."29 Gates has been far and away the most important cabinet secretary in the Obama Administration, as he was when he served under President Bush. Possibly because power is concentrated in his person and his Department, Secretary of State Clinton has allied herself and her Department with Gates and the DOD, thereby foreswearing the traditional competition between these two roles and agencies. Since USAID has been incorporated into State, its one time independent voice has been all but snuffed out. Its director, who played a visible, independent role in foreign policy as recently as the Clinton Administration, is now all but unknown even in Washington. So it is the view and voice of the Secretary of Defense and his Department that predominant. Their business is security, so it should not be surprising if they see the insecure Middle East as a primary threat, hence shape policy to counter threats, i.e., to securitize the US approach to the region.

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[28]Terry Macalister and Heather Stewart, "Oil Prices Rise Sharply after OPEC Meeting Ends in Disarray," *The Guardian* (June 8, 2011), http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2011/jun/08/oil-price-rises-after-opec-meeting-collapses-in-disarray

[29]Kate Brannen, "Budet Woes Poised to hit State Department Hard," *Federal Times* (June 2, 2011), http://www.federaltimes.com/article/20110602/DEPARTMENTS08/106020302/

There are no other significant counterbalances to this concentration of power in the military establishment. The intelligence community has been vastly expanded since 9/11, but like State, it allies with and thereby reinforces the centrality of Defense and its security concerns, rather than compete institutionally or conceptually. Moreover, the proliferation of intelligence agencies and bodies has had the impact of reducing the prominence and power of any particular one, including the CIA. The National Security Council (NSC) and its director have similarly lost power during the Obama Administration. As regards the Middle East, the last NSC directors who were major architects of US Middle East policies were probably Kissinger and Scowcroft, the former having served under Nixon and Ford and the latter as his successor under Ford and then Bush. A key function of the NSC traditionally was strategy formulation, so both have declined in tandem. No other agency has the specific responsibility or capacity to engage in long term policy planning, other than the DOD. Strategic thinkers in policy roles are thus now conspicuous in their absence. Figures such as Dulles, Kissinger, Brzezinski, and Baker were products of WWII and then the Cold War, contexts that by their nature required strategic thinking. The combination of an expanding bureaucracy that requires and rewards specialists; a nominally peace-time setting that requires management rather than bold initiatives; and the increasing politicization of the foreign policy establishment such that foreign policy expertise is subordinated to political calculations—especially those deemed by his advisors to impact Presidential power--has undermined the strategic dimension in foreign policy decision making. Neither institutionally, personally, nor conceptually then are there any significant counterbalances to the dominance of the DOD, its Secretary and the security perspective they necessarily adopt in the making of US policy toward the Middle East. In the bureaucratic political world in Washington relevant to this vital region, soft power gives way to hard, strategic thinking to tactical, and national interest falls victim to the political calculations of incumbents, shaped in turn by powerful countries and forces from the region itself. It should not come as any surprise, therefore, that even though the Arab World has witnessed what may be the most cataclysmic event since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the US has, in policy terms, hardly noticed.[30]

What Could the US Response Be?

President Bush tarnished the silver of the magic bullet of democracy. The invasion of Iraq and overblown claims for US democracy promotion discredited these means of achieving democracy and, until the Arab Spring, it appeared that even the concept itself had limited appeal among Arabs. The uprisings that swept across North Africa, into the Levant and on to the Arabian Peninsula should have removed such doubts. Indeed, they seem to have in the Arab world, where remaining autocrats are clearly frightened of being inundated by the democratic wave. Paradoxically, it is in Washington where most doubts seem to remain. As mentioned above, the negative learning experience of the Bush Administration contributed to its successor's wariness of both democracy promotion and embrace of upheavals that appear to be the beginnings of democratic transitions. The Obama Administration has thus been unwilling to try to fire the silver bullet of democracy at the region's two major enemies—economic stagnation and inadequate security.

This reluctance ignores two fundamental propositions of development long embraced by scholars and practitioners. As regards economic growth in the Middle East, a near universal consensus has been reached that the primary cause of its weakness is poor governance, which in turn reflects the lack of "voice and accountability," as the World Bank labels democracy. So now,

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[30]Daniel W. Drezner identifies two "kinds of events" which call for articulation of grand strategies: a major disruption such as a war, revolution or depression that "rejiggers countries' interests across the globe;" or a power transition from a "fading hegemonic power" to a "rising challenger." The Arab Spring and the decline of US power which it has brought into stark relief, would seem to qualify then as circumstances calling out for formulation of grand strategy. Drezner, op. cit.

for the first time in their modern history, Arab states can at least envision the prospect of dramatic improvements in governance, hence of economic growth. The other relevant, fundamental proposition of development is that democracy militates against both intra and inter-state violence, hence promotes the security necessary for stability, peace and development. The Middle East, suffering more from such violence than any other region, thus would reap huge ancillary benefits from an improvement in the security context. While the hypothesized links between democracy and these two components of development are oversimplified and overstated, they are about as well established as most such propositions in social science and the development industry. As guides to policy they could serve as self-fulfilling prophecies.
The opportunity costs of US hesitancy in supporting Arab democratic transitions are especially high at this particular juncture. The US is overextended militarily and economically. The Middle East is the region to which it has committed proportionately the greatest share of resources. Securitization of the region is increasingly counterproductive, not only for the development of the region itself, but for the primary provider of that security, whose capacities to do so are wearing ever thinner. So the region's need for securitization should and maybe now can be reduced, while the provision of what security remains necessary is shared among more stakeholders. Were democracy to spread and take root in much of the region, relations between states within it and between those states and the outside world could become much more normal, focused on trade and development as they are in most other emerging world contexts.[31] As for spreading the security load more broadly and evenly, the Middle East is the most vital region for the US to pursue that objective. It is not only the one in which it is most needed, but the one in which success would have the most profound, beneficial consequences for US security burdens globally.

Appropriate US policies in support of Arab democratization have already been alluded to. Founded on the open embrace of the Arab Spring, US initiatives should seek to mobilize global political and economic support for democratic transitions. Such initiatives can only be convincing though if they are coupled with indications of US willingness to forswear its previous, security based approach to the region. One measure of that is more balance in US support between military and security institutions, on the one hand, and civilian ones on the other. Unless and until the US is seen to value civilian control of armed forces more than it values its privileged security relationships with those armed forces, its democracy promotion will appear hypocritical. Closely related to the need to de-securitize its approach and relationships with "friendly" Arab countries, is the requirement for it to do everything possible to secure a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Its continuation reinforces securitization in the region, undermines US credibility in the Arab world, and provides leverage for hostile actors, including Iran, Hizbullah and various jihadi factions.

The economic dimension is also vitally important. Africa and the Middle East are the two global regions most endangered by poor economic performance coupled with rapid population growth. Nascent Arab democracies will fail if their economies do not grow more rapidly. Such failure would intensify migration pressure, which in turn would stimulate yet louder calls in Europe and elsewhere for relations with sending countries and possibly the entire region, to be even more heavily securitized. Democracy alone is not a sufficient condition for rapid economic growth. The Arab states desperately need to expand and diversify their miniscule industrial bases, which they can only do with foreign investment coupled with technology provided by multi-

[31]Or, as Dalia Dassa Kaye and Frederic Wehrey describe it, "a strategy of relying solely on security relationships with the region's elites will lead the United States to miss out on important opportunities to develop broader relationships with Arab societies." "Arab Spring, Persian Winter: Will Iran Emerge the Winner from the Arab Revolt?" *Foreign Policy*, 90, 4 (July/August 2011), pp. 183-186.

national corporations. Democracy and improved governance will go some of the way to attracting more such investment, but free trade agreements, concessional financing, and other mechanisms will need to be provided by governments if private capital is to be induced to make major commitments to industrial growth in the region. The East Asian experience of Japan as the so-called "lead goose" in the "flying goose model," whereby Japanese investment and technology drove development elsewhere in the region, cannot be replicated exactly, but something like it might be possible. Turkey is already playing a mini-Japanese role in many Arab countries. If Israel were brought in from the cold as a result of settling its conflicts with the Palestinians and Syrians, it could become a yet higher flying goose attracting a formation behind it.

But democracy and rapid economic development, even if they are ultimately established, are not going to obviate the need for security, especially in the precarious transition stage. The Obama Administration's approach of "leading from behind" in response to the Arab Spring has been too subtle an effort to lay foundations for multilateral security provision. To be effective, multilateralism will have to be a clearly stated objective, not the side effect of the US choosing the issues which it wants to handle, leaving others to be dealt with by allies. Moreover, if multilateralism is to replace unilateralism as the standard American approach, the change will have to be justified to an American public imbued of their own country's exceptionalism, its burden of moral leadership, etc.[32] The public would have to be told bluntly that the US simply cannot afford such unilateralism, and that it is in the US's and the world's interest for the transition to multilateral responsibilities for regional and global security to be facilitated. International organizations, including the UN and the International Criminal Court, pushed beyond the pale for many domestic audiences by chauvinist, right-wing US politicians and commentators, need to be rehabilitated in the eyes of Americans. The International Criminal Court's indictment of Qaddafi is a good example of the useful role it can play. It brings credit to the Obama Administration that it lauded that step. With active US support such indictments can serve as major deterrents to the rulers of other Arab countries, thereby broadening the scope for peaceful oppositions.[33] Secretary Gates' blunt message to Europe on the need for burden sharing, especially in their vital Mediterranean neighborhood, needs to be reiterated and connected with both planned reductions in US defense spending and efforts to cut expenses through greater cooperation, particularly in procurement. NATO's role in general, but especially vis a vis the Mediterranean littoral, needs to be made the focus of such efforts. The inevitable review of the Libyan engagement may provide an opportunity to assess shortcomings and lay out ways forward.[34]

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[32] The political magnitude of that task is suggested by former Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty's remarks to the New York Council on Foreign Relations. Campaigning for the Republican nomination for the presidency, he said: "America already has one political party devoted to decline, retrenchment, and withdrawal. It does not need a second one." Presumably the "second one" is a reference to his own Republicans. Daniel Dombey and Anna Fifield, "Senators Back Obama over Libya," *Financial Times* (June 29, 2011), p. 3.

[33] A former US Secretary of State, writing with a retired Jordanian diplomat, has called for Bashar al Assad to be indicted by the ICC, noting that "the international criminal justice system is the best available way of confronting Syria." The writers further argue that "the ICC has already shown the ability to influence official behaviour . . .Initiating an ICC investigation inSyria now would create a powerful incentive for Mr Assad to choose reform over further repression." See Madeleine Albright and Marwan Muasher, "Assad deserves a swift trip to The Hague," *Financial Times* (June 29, 2011),p. 9, cited by Carnegie Endowment Middle East Program, http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/06/28/assad-deserves-swift-trip-to-hague/b53

[34]NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in fact sought to do just this, calling for a "smart defense" approach in "NATO After Libya: The Atlantic Alliance in Austere Times," *Foreign Affairs* 90, 4 (July/August 2011), pp. 2-6.

Conclusion

In sum, leading from behind will not produce the shared leadership that is required to succeed America's "moment in the Middle East." The Arab Spring has provided unique opportunities for the transformation of the region's polities, economies, and security architecture, hence to reduce America's unilateral security approach to the region. To realize these potential gains presidential leadership must be visible, so from the front, not from the rear. The world is not yet accustomed to such American modesty and continues to look to Washington for cues, so they must be given clearly, even if the message is that ultimately they will not be forthcoming. President Obama should employ his eloquence in making the case that the US endorses reforms in the polities of the region and US relations with them because the status quo in the Middle East is unsustainable and dangerous, both to those living there and to others. The Arab Spring should be welcomed as providing the first and possibly the last real opportunity for that region to escape the tragic history of its post-independence period. Rejecting old formulae and taking new risks should be defended as being a wiser course than conducting business as usual in defense of an unsustainable status quo. And it should be explained that de-securitization of the Middle East would provide opportunity for the de-emphasis of security in the US itself, both in the form of reducing its oversized share of the Federal budget and by diminishing the institutional power of those who speak and act in its name. Finally, explicit recognition of the "end of empire," akin to Prime Minister Wilson's 1968 declaration of intent to withdraw from "East of Suez," but differing from it in that it would lay out new coordinating, balancing roles for US forces, would prod the US and others to move with haste to internationalize security responsibilities.

Istituto Affari Internazionali

TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY SYMPOSIUM 2011

Re-thinking Western Policies in Light of the Arab Uprising

ROME, 12 SEPTEMBER 2011

The Arad Spring and the EU's Response

by

Silvia Colombo and Nathalie Tocci

IAI

Introduction

The turmoil that has affected the southern Mediterranean region has taken many observers by surprise. Being accustomed to dealing with an apathetic Mediterranean in which change was just in the direction of increasing securitisation and authoritarian entrenchment, over the past decades the policies of the European Union (EU) and its member states have been predicated upon the need to uphold the status quo in the region in the name of stability. Geographical proximity as well as a number of linkages with the Mediterranean made the European continent highly vulnerable to spill-over effects stemming from trade and energy disruptions, migration and the spread of terrorist networks. Stability and democracy were perceived as incompatible goals and the latter was increasingly sacrificed with a view to securing the former.

All this has been called into question by the uncontrolled spread of popular protests in North Africa and the Middle East, starting with Tunisia, a country once regarded as the most modern and open in the region. While the outcomes of the 'Arab Spring' remain uncertain and frustration increasingly prevails among those who participated in the protests that led to the fall of the Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes, the EU is conducting an evaluation of its medium-to-long term policies towards the Mediterranean region.

This paper looks at the changing configuration of the EU's southern neighbourhood. How has the EU responded to the momentous developments unfolding along its southern borders and how should it respond so as to tailor its policies towards supporting a sustainable southern Mediterranean? The first section illustrates the situation of apparent stability but overall unsustainability that has led to the Arab revolts. The second section sheds light on the EU's approach towards this region prior to the popular revolts and on its partial responsibility for the situation of unsustainability in the region. Finally, the third part discusses the process of revision of the EU's policies towards the Mediterranean, and in particular the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), by highlighting its achievements and its limits. This analysis is conducted starting from the conviction, corroborated by the events that have overwhelmed the Arab world since December 2010, regarding the need to close the gap between stability and genuine democracy. These two goals should not be regarded anymore as mutually exclusive but rather as reinforcing in a virtuous circle that the Mediterranean states should be allowed to take part in with the support of external actors.

The Challenges of State Sustainability in the Mediterranean

Too often sustainability has been erroneously confused with the apparent stability prevailing in the countries of the Mediterranean in policy debates in the region and in the West. Not only are these two concepts distinct, with sustainability being broader and deeper than stability. But also, stability, interpreted with regard to the regimes in the region, has often directly contrasted the underlying conditions that underpin state sustainability. Believing in and thus pursuing regime stability has ultimately acted to the detriment of a more organic understanding of state sustainability.

The situation that has led to the eruption of popular discontent in almost all the countries in the region, albeit with partially different motivations and degrees of intensity, was exactly one of apparent stability masking the continuous deterioration of the living conditions of the population due to the increase of inequality and poverty, high rates of unemployment, especially among the

youth1 and the entrenchment of the authoritarian regimes which increasingly resorted to means of repression against any form of opposition and to the obliteration of the citizens' basic rights.2 Unsustainability was, on the one hand, the result of the process of adjustment of authoritarian rule to the exigencies of a twenty-first century globalised world (Guazzone and Pioppi, 2009). This entailed the pursuit of phoney political reform and an economic liberalisation process that failed to spur political liberalisation as warranted by modernisation theories (Lipset, 1959; Huntington, 1968), entrenching instead regime capture of the economy. On the other hand, external actors, the EU and the US in primis, bought into the logic of the incumbent regimes and strengthened them through their support for piecemeal reforms and stability in the region as a way to obtain the cooperation of the elites in power while pursuing their security goals and interests.

Before addressing the EU's policies towards the Mediterranean before and after the Arab Spring, a few words need to be spent on the revolts that are likely to have a long-lasting effect on the southern shore of the Mediterranean and its relations to its external partners.

The popular revolts that have swept across North Africa and the Middle East at the end of 2010-beginning of 2011 have proved that the stability of the Mediterranean states was a chimera. Before the eyes of the world, watching with a quixotic mix of awe and concern, the so-called Arab street, often derided for its apathy and acquiescence, succeeded in just over a month where no one else had (or had perhaps even tried). Through mass protests (and tacit military support), decade-old dictators of the likes of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak melted away like giants with feet of clay. As their house of cards came tumbling down, the region shook from Morocco to Yemen, making regimes tremble and empowered populations rise in jubilation and despair.

While the situation remains in a profound state of flux and uncertainty, it is possible to identify the specific situation and challenges facing each country. This allows us to point out that the revolts are likely to lead to a far less homogenous and more fragmented region than the one we once (thought we) knew. At the time of writing, some countries are enmeshed in violent conflict between entrenched regimes and a more or less structured opposition movement. Others are in the midst of transition, in which elements of the old power structures cohabit with forces of change and innovation. Others still have embarked on a top-down process of reform, aimed at satisfying popular demands and preventing a radicalisation of counter-regime mobilisation.

More specifically, Tunisia, despite manifold and persisting political, economic and social, holds the promise of moving decidedly away from authoritarianism and towards democracy. The problems remain daunting, and relate to the uncertain transition steps of the interim government, the fragile security situation, the mounting socio-economic problems, the evolution and consolidation of political and civil society actors, including the Islamist al-Nahda, and the absence of a strong and credible external anchor (i.e., the EU). Yet far more than any other southern Mediterranean country, Tunisia offers the realistic hope that the future, at the very least, will not see a return to Ben Ali-styled authoritarianism and, at best, will move towards a veritable

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[1] In Tunisia, for example, unemployment rate among the youth, particularly those with secondary and higher education, increased dramatically between 1999 and 2007. While official figures put the unemployment rate at around 30.2% in 2007 among those aged 20 to 24 and at 23.9% among those aged 25 to 29, new data has revealed a far more dramatic rise, from 22.1% in 1999 to 44.9% in 2009. See Mahjoub, A. (2010), "Labour Markets Performance and Migration Flows in Tunisia", in European Commission Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, *Labour Markets Performance and Migration, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria*, Occasional Papers 60, Vol.2, Brussels, Belgium and Paciello, M.C. (2011), "Tunisia: Changes and Challenges to Political Transition" in Colombo, S. and N. Tocci (2011), *The Challenges of State Sustainability in the Mediterranean*, IAI Research Papers, Rome: Edizioni Nuova Cultura.

[2] For an in-depth analysis of the recent developments brought about by the Arab Spring in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Israel and Palestine and Syria and Lebanon, see Colombo, S. and N. Tocci (2011), *The Challenges of State Sustainability in the Mediterranean*, IAI Research Papers, Rome: Edizioni Nuova Cultura.

democracy. Sustainable development is no certainty in Tunisia. But neither is it a naïve pipedream.

With all its caveats, the optimism regarding Tunisia seems less warranted in Egypt. Like the Jasmine revolution in Tunisia, the Tahrir equivalent in Egypt succeeded in overthrowing a decades-long dictator. This success should not be underestimated. Similar challenges to the ones faced by Tunisia are in store for post-Mubarak Egypt. Egypt has to grapple with public insecurity, an uncertain evolution of civil and political actors, including the Muslim Brotherhood, and mounting socio-economic problems. But unlike Tunisia, Egypt faces additional challenges since as much as a popular revolution, Egypt underwent a military coup (Springborg, 2011). Unlike in Tunisia, where the small military3 enjoyed few organic political links, the Egyptian military is a large and integral element of the regime itself. The armed forces in Egypt have always boasted significant political leverage and considerable economic power. As the Tahrir revolt gathered pace, the Egyptian military recognised that defending the former president was a losing battle not worth fighting for, at the cost of losing popular legitimacy. Following this recognition, it opted to steer the political course of the country away from its set path of succession from Hosni Mubarak to his son Gamal, a path which it had never fully espoused. The military today retains the reins of power, governing Egypt through the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which determines the shape and pace of reforms. Despite having protected the revolution (by not firing on protesters), it is not the driver of a radical overturning of the regime of which it is part. The resumption of youth demonstrations in June and July 2011 has been precisely a reaction to the military's reluctance to proceed with wide-ranging reform. Furthermore, this bastion of the old regime has found a new modus vivendi with the remnants of the former ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) as well as the Muslim Brotherhood, a situation inconceivable in Tunisia where the Islamist al-Nahda is still the antithesis of a legitimate political actor in the eyes of the ancien regime (and others). In the Egyptian case, the military, the Brotherhood and the NDP (and its eventual reincarnations) represent a formidable political and economic force against a radical overturning of the old regime. Alongside this, the foreign policies of Western actors, including the EU, are likely to remain far more securitised towards Egypt than Tunisia, insofar as the former is far more enmeshed in Middle Eastern dynamics than the latter.4 Hence, in Egypt the risk is that of a restructuring of authoritarian rule without a veritable turn towards democracy.

While not having experienced a revolution, the same uncertainty holds for Morocco. In Morocco, civil unrest and the fear of a domino effect across North Africa has led King Muhammed VI to appreciate the difference between stability and sustainability. Unlike fellow rulers in the region, the King had made greater efforts to pursue a bon usage du néo-authoritarisme, which had projected domestic stability and a positive image of the country in the West. His rule had centred on the promotion of economic modernisation and a few tentative steps towards political liberalisation, with reforms related to the family law and the partial opening of the political space to opposition parties being notable cases in point. This, alongside the status and popular legitimacy of the King himself, had highlighted the stability of the regime while concealing its underlying features of unsustainability. The latter have nonetheless come to the fore in the light of the Arab Spring. Demonstrations in Morocco, while not of the magnitude seen in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya or Syria, have taken and continue to take place. The King responded in June 2011 proposing a referendum on constitutional reform which would somewhat reduce the monarchy's power. It remains to be seen whether the reform and its implementation will suffice to save Muhammed VI from the fate of his fellow rulers further East.

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[3] With its 48,000 troops, the Tunisian army is the smallest in the Arab world.

[4] Particularly worrisome are the waves of violent protests against Israel and its killing of five Egyptian policemen on 18 August 2011. In the case of Tunisia, it is above all European migration policies that are likely to remain security focused.

The greatest challenge for the King is to introduce genuine changes in the balance of power, gradually transforming the regime into a constitutional monarchy like the one in the UK and Spain, and proceeding with decentralisation, as well as to pursue the reform of the justice and education systems, which remain among the most underdeveloped in the Mediterranean region. Alongside these political reforms, economic reforms will be needed to combat unemployment, rising food prices and widespread poverty. If the Moroccan regime engages in these reforms promptly, there are good chances that it will avoid reaching the point of no return that has already been crossed in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen. The end point would thus be a gradual transition from a bon usage du néo-authoritarisme towards a more genuine system of sustainable development.

When it comes to Syria, the chances for Bashar al-Assad to pursue the reforms he claims to be willing to introduce in the country are very poor and violence is escalating matched by the rather cautious and slow-motion reaction by the international community. President al-Assad had attempted, far less successfully than Muhammed VI in Morocco, Ben Ali in Tunisia or Mubarak in Egypt, the route of economic modernisation without political liberalisation. Instead, the grave economic situation, coupled with few signs of political opening, attest to the unsustainability of the Syrian state. Yet the Syrian regime had a residue of popular legitimacy not enjoyed by fellow autocrats in the region, which derived from its foreign policy and, in particular, its "resistance" to Israel and the West. Nevertheless, the revolts in Syria have shown both that the actual value of this source of popular legitimacy was artificially inflated and/or that the regime failed to capitalise on it by proceeding genuinely and speedily on the path of reform before the tipping point of instability was reached. At the time of writing, the future of Syria remains uncertain, but a return to the status quo ante seems unlikely. Whether the country will remain enmeshed in political violence, which risks taking on a sectarian character, questioning or perhaps even breaking the fragile equilibrium in Lebanon, or whether it will embark on a new path towards sustainable development, will depend as much on internal dynamics as on the role that regional (e.g., Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia) and international actors (the US, EU, Russia and China) will adopt.

The situation in Libya appears to be on the verge of a major overhaul and the fall of Gaddafi seems far more likely today than a couple of months ago when the confrontation between the former regime and the Transitional National Council (TNC) reached a stalemate. While the final battle for Tripoli is raging, a number of analyses and commentaries underscore the extent to which the EU response in Libya was "too slow, too weak, too divided, and essentially incoherent" (Koenig, 2011: 3). The lack of coherence was particularly striking among some member states, with divisions between Italy and France escalating under the pressure of mounting irregular migration from conflict-torn Libya and neighbouring countries. As claimed by Koenig (2011), perhaps the most blatant manifestation of incoherence inside the EU during the crisis in Libya has regarded the military intervention itself. As opposed to France, the UK and Italy, Germany expressed its scepticism of military involvement by abstaining from participating in the military operations in Libya.

The Libyan case is also a perfect example of the EU's engagement with the southern Mediterranean authoritarian regimes prior to the outbreak of the Arab Spring. Not long ago, Libya's Leader Muammar Gaddafi signed friendship treaties and trade deals with major Western leaders and was praised for his active cooperation with European partners in the fight against terrorism and illegal migration. The EU and Libya were also in the process of negotiating a Framework Agreement aimed at putting an end to years of Libya's international isolation and at launching a fruitful political dialogue on issues of common interest. This attitude by the Western powers and the EU in particular had also characterised, with much greater success, relations with other Mediterranean countries. The next section will provide some insights into the EU's policy towards the southern Mediterranean over the last decade.

The EU's Policies Towards the Mediterranean: an Unbalanced Trade-off Between Democracy and Security

As far as democracy promotion in the Mediterranean is concerned, the EU has been active since the establishment of the Barcelona Process/Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) in the mid-1990s. As a matter of fact, the EU aimed at promoting peace, democracy, human rights, cooperation and development in the countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean, as clearly expressed in the Barcelona Declaration. To pursue this goal, the Union concentrated on three main areas, namely the political/security basket, economic basket, and cultural/social basket. However, high expectations failed to be realised in practice. Indeed, the emphasis was placed on the economic basket, in light of the belief that economic reform and prosperity would spill into political reforms. Security was another major concern behind the establishment of the EMP, so that political reforms (democracy promotion, respect for human rights and the rule of law) were accepted as long as stability in the area was not compromised (Joffè, 2008; Cavatorta et al., 2008; Aliboni, 2010). Thus, the link between security and democracy has always been present in EU policies towards the Mediterranean. As Haddadi (2006) argues, the EMP was characterized by two kinds of discourse: one on security and another on democracy promotion. The two were rhetorically presented as complementary, but they have often diverged or been considered as mutually exclusive in practice. As a matter of fact, "securitization in the region, together with the discourse and practices supporting it, tends to undermine the democratization agenda and ultimately the very security goals it is trying to achieve. This is so largely because of the primacy of security issues in politics but also because of the ambiguity of the discourse on democracy promotion. Democracy promotion has fallen short of its own rhetoric once it has been faced with its own consequences (e.g., the rise of Islamist movements) or conflicts with security interests" (Haddadi, 2006: 179).

Following 9/11 and in light of the little achievements of the EMP, the EU shifted from the multilateral approach of the EMP to bilateral relations with neighbouring countries in the South. In that period the dominant mantra, particularly in the United States, was that the West had mistakenly bet on stability over democracy. By sustaining authoritarian regimes and their human rights violating practices, the West had bred frustration and resentment in the region, which had found political expression in exile, repressed social unrests and Islamic fundamentalism. By emphasizing bilateralism and differentiation, the Action Plans negotiated in the framework of the ENP were able to put visibly higher emphasis on democracy and human rights within individual partner countries compared to its predecessor policy.

The events of 9/11, and the following 'war on terror', had strong repercussions on the link between security and democracy. While in principle the EU stressed the need to eradicate the root causes of terrorism and instability, the new emphasis on hard security issues and the securitisation of terrorism also led to consider authoritarian regimes in the Mediterranean as indispensable partners in the fight against terrorism (Gillespie, 2006). Indeed, cooperation on security matters and police increased over the last years. A further consequence of the new international context after 9/11 was the equation between migration and transnational terrorism (Joffè, 2008).4 As a result, the normative components (democracy and human rights) of the EU Mediterranean policy were hindered to the extent that they became a complementary component of the achievement of security, but not priorities per se.

European policies contributed to perpetuating the features of unsustainability of the Mediterranean states described above. Such perpetuation became even more pronounced after 2005-2006. When, in those years, the marginal increase in political openness in some Middle Eastern countries produced, through electoral processes, unexpected (and undesired by the West) outcomes, the West quickly backtracked on its commitment to political reform. In 2005, the Muslim Brotherhood won a surprising 88 out of 454 seats in the Egyptian parliament, in what was the most open legislative elections in the country. In Lebanon, after the Syrian withdrawal in

2005, the Lebanese general elections resulted in a strong showing of Hizbollah, which successively entered the coalition government. Most resounding of all, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Hamas, having participated in municipal elections in 2004 and 2005 and indicated its willingness to enter the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and accept the Palestinian Authority (PA), unexpectedly won the January 2006 legislative elections. These Islamist inroads through democratic processes triggered the abandonment of what had been a rather superficial and ill-thought out embrace of democracy by the West in the post-9/11 world, and a return to the comfortable notion of cooperation with authoritarian (but pro-Western) regimes.

This abandonment had immediate repercussions on EU policy towards the region. Almost diametrically opposed to the logic underpinning the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) which, at least in theory, was committed to the promotion of a "well governed ring of friends" in the EU's neighbourhood, in 2007, French President Nicolas Sarkozy launched with much fanfare his idea of a Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) (Bicchi and Gillespie, 2011). The underlying logic of the UfM was that of compartmentalizing Euro-Med relations by sidelining political questions and proceeding unabated with economic cooperation through the promotion of specific projects. Sidelined was thus EU attention both to conflicts in the region – i.e., the Israeli-Arab and Western Sahara conflicts – and also democracy and human rights issues within the southern partners. Far from the logic of the ENP, theoretically premised on conditional cooperation determined by the domestic reform credentials of the neighbours, the UfM promoted commercially sponsored cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean, irrespective of political developments. High amongst the UfM's list of priority projects were energy, infrastructure, transport, environment, research and SME development. This is not the place to review the content, desirability and viability of these projects, many of which have yet to see the light of day. Suffice it to say here that the logic of these projects and of the UfM as a whole was that of promoting cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean, without questioning the political context in which such cooperation was embedded.

The initiative was initially met with scepticism both within and outside the EU. Central and northern member states, first and foremost Germany, as well as the Commission, protested against the intergovernmentalisation of EU policy that the UfM entailed, shifting EU decision-making to the southern Mediterranean coastal states. Southern member states, notably Spain and Italy, were equally concerned, fearing French designs to supplant their leadership role in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP). Outside the EU, Ankara shunned Sarkozy's attempt to relegate Turkey to the Mediterranean – rather than European – Union. Israel also had little sympathy for what appeared to be a re-multilateralisation of Euro-Med policies. And the Arab world watched with caution an initiative which purportedly aimed at transforming the much-celebrated "joint ownership" of EuroMed policies from rhetoric into reality, but which in practice smacked of an all-French affair.

Interestingly however, neither within nor outside the EU was there a strong lobby against the UfM's sidelining of the political reform agenda. Despite all the grumblings, the UfM ultimately came into being in the summer of 2008, oddly merging with the EMP and giving rise to the unwieldy UfM-EMP (Aliboni and Ammor, 2009). Since then, commitment has been low all around and the UfM has struggled to resolve its institutional problems. Above all, securing the private sector funds needed to materialise its ambitious projects has proved an uphill battle. Its six priority projects – de-pollution of the Mediterranean, maritime and land highways, civil protection, alternative energy and the Mediterranean Solar Plan, higher education and research, and SME support – remain more in the domain of ambition than reality. What the UfM however did succeed in doing was placing on the backburner EU aims to spur the domestic transformation of its southern Mediterranean partners. Epitomising this "success" was the very fact that heralded as co-chair of the UfM, alongside French President Sarkozy, was no less than

his Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak, certainly not a shining example of a Mediterranean reformer.

The EU and the Arab Spring: A (missed?) opportunity to revamp the EU's Mediterranean Policies

When the dust of the Arab revolts settles, how should EU policy towards the southern Mediterranean be reframed to support sustainable development in the region? The EU's Mediterranean policies rest on two pillars: the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). Whereas the ENP deals with the bilateral dimension of the EU's Mediterranean policy, that is, the EU's hub-and-spoke relations with individual southern Mediterranean countries, the UfM, building on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), provides the broader multilateral framework of such relations. The Arab Spring has led, so far, to a rethink of the former rather than the latter. Although EU documents have made references to the multilateral dimensions of the EU's policies towards the neighbourhood (the Eastern Partnership in the East and the UfM in the South), the bulk of attention is devoted to the bilateral ENP.

The rationales underpinning the ENP review

Three are the rationales underpinning this choice. First, a bureaucratic rationale has pressed EU institutions to proceed, full speed, with a review of the ENP. A review of the ENP has been underway since March 2010. Caught off guard by the Arab Spring, the Union, not known for its rapidity of action, was thus fortunate to have already been engaged in a major mid-term review of its ENP for several months. Indeed, when the revolt broke out in Tunisia in December 2010, the Commission had just finished compiling the contributions of the 27 member states and the neighbouring countries, along with numerous inputs from academia and civil society. On the basis of these contributions, in October 2010 European Commissioner for Enlargement and the ENP Stefan Füle (2010) acknowledged that the ENP ought to be revised so as to pay greater attention to political reform, while being ready to commit to deepened political and economic relations with the neighbouring countries. The Arab spring made this fundamental intuition an all-too evident imperative, summed up in what has since then become the slogan: "more for more".

Second, an internal political-institutional rationale has induced the Commission to "use" the Arab Spring to reassert itself on the throne of the EU's Mediterranean policies. When, under French-push, the UfM came into being in 2008, the Commission bemoaned its sidelining. It fought back, alongside Germany and several northern member states, achieving some French backtracking. But the unwieldy UfM-EMP never fully reversed the French drive for the intergovernmentalisation of EuroMed relations. The Arab Spring has provided the Commission with an opportunity to sideline the UfM, which has been delegitimised by its neglect for political reform (epitomised by former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's role as co-chair of the UfM, alongside his French counterpart Nicolas Sarkozy). Through its focus on the ENP (of which it is in charge), the Commission (and the newly established External Action Service) have striven to retake the mantle of the EU's Med policies.

Third, an external political rationale has induced a focus on the ENP. The revolts in the Arab world have demonstrated the weakness of EU policy towards the region, particularly of what the policy had become in recent years, through its lopsided emphasis on economic cooperation and migration management at the expense of sustainable development. Indeed, the EU had increasingly turned a blind eye to the underlying fragility of the regimes it cooperated with, mistakenly equating their short-term stability with their deeper and long-term sustainability, while pursuing its interests in the commercial, energy, migratory or anti-terrorism domains. As recognized by Stefan Füle (2011): "We must show humility about the past. Europe was not vocal enough in defending human rights and local democratic forces in the region. Too many of us fell

prey to the assumption that authoritarian regimes were a guarantee of stability in the region. This was not even Realpolitik. It was, at best, short-termism – and the kind of short-termism that makes the long-term ever more difficult to build". As put by High Representative/Vice President Catherine Ashton (2011), the EU ought to promote instead "sustainable stability", i.e., stability achieved through change, rather than immobilism, towards sustainable political, social and economic development. It is essentially through the theoretically transformative ENP rather than the status quo-oriented UfM that the EU has debated how to induce sustainable stability in the South. The Arab Spring has highlighted the need for the EU to press more for domestic reform in the south, a promise that was made but never kept by the ENP (as opposed to the UfM, which never boasted a transformative ambition). Alongside this and as argued above, the Arab Spring is likely to lead to greater polarisation and heterogeneity in the South. This heterogeneity in the region has strengthened the logic of EU bilateralism and differentiation, which marks the ENP, while complicating further the search for a workable multilateral framework, be it the UfM or the EMP before it. In other words, in view of the greater emphasis both on domestic reform and on differentiation in a post Arab Spring context, concentrating EU efforts on reviewing the ENP appeared the logical route to take.

The steps forward in the review

The first outcomes of the ENP review were revealed in the Commission's March 2011 "Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity" (Commission 2011a). These were complemented by the Commission's "New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood", disclosed in May 2011 (Commission 2011b). From these two Communications, we can outline a number of new or revised positive features of a revamped ENP.

First, the EU recognizes the need to offer more benefits to its neighbours. Aid in the current financial cycle (up to 2013) is expected to rise by €1.2bn, to be complemented by an increase of €1bn in European Investment Bank loans, as well as by a proposed opening of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's operations in the Mediterranean for an initial value of €1bn. Aid is intended to support economic and social development by improving business environments, supporting SMEs and microcredit, tackling economic disparities, and conducting pilot projects on agriculture and rural development. Alongside this, political reform is to represent a guiding light of the EU's aid policies. Greater resources are to be committed to political reform through the Governance Facility, the Comprehensive Institution Building (CIBs) programme,5 and the new Civil Society Facility within the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). In addition, under pressure from Poland, the EU will establish an Endowment for Democracy, aimed, inter alia, at political party development. More benefits are not limited to aid. They include the offer to the South (as has already been done for the East) of "Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements" (DCFTAs), which supposedly open the way to delivering on the ENP's unkept promise of a "stake in the single market" for its neighbours. More benefits also include mobility partnerships and visa liberalisation, both things that have already been contemplated for the East but not, until recently, for the South. Mobility partnerships, launched in 2007 and so far signed only with Cape Verde, Moldova and Georgia, foresee the circular migration of semi-skilled workers to one or more EU member states, in return for the respect by third countries of EU conditions related both to domestic reform and, above all, to readmission agreements and border controls. In return for similar conditions, the EU would also offer visa facilitation for students, researchers and business people beginning with Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.

Second, the EU acknowledges the imperative of engaging in conditionality. The "more for more" slogan means precisely this: the EU is willing to offer more benefits, in return for more progress on reform by the neighbours. Specifically, the Commission refers to the fact that its aid,

[5] CIBs are aimed at providing technical and financial assistance to support the capacity of administrative bodies in the neighbourhood.

including both the remaining ENPI funds until 2013 and the new funding cycle in 2014 and beyond, will be conditioned to the reform performance of the neighbours. More reform is interpreted in terms of "deep democracy", meaning, the kind of democracy that lasts because, alongside elections, it foresees the protection of rights and freedoms, functioning institutions, good governance, rule of law, checks and balances, the fight against corruption, effective law enforcement and security sector reform. Reform is also interpreted in economic and social terms: promoting inclusive economic development, tackling inequalities, creating jobs and ensuring higher living standards. The Commission has not limited itself to positing the need for positive conditionality. It has also accepted that a logical corollary of "more for more" is "less for less": negative conditionality. The EU's recent use of restrictive measures towards countries such as Syria, Libya and Belarus seem to have induced the Commission to shed its instinctive allergy to negative conditionality towards (some of) its neighbours. Effective conditionality requires not only setting rules and conditions, but also putting in place adequate monitoring mechanisms to ensure that such rules and conditions are respected and fulfilled. Such effective monitoring mechanisms are key to buttressing the credibility of the EU and its financial assistance.

Third and finally, the Commission stresses the need to engage more deeply with the civil societies of the neighbourhood supporting their capacities in advocacy, monitoring and implementing and evaluating EU programmes. Insofar as the neighbours are not expected to enter the EU, the Union's demands on them (and thus the degree of conditionality towards them) will continue to be dampened by the imperative of pursuing "partnerships" with these countries. Yet the Commission now recognizes that the notion of partnership ought not to be interpreted exclusively in relation to authoritarian regimes, but also to civil societies in third countries. Hence, the EU proposes to provide both greater financial support for civil society, and to engage in deepened and more structured dialogue with civil society actors, both in Brussels and on the ground through EU delegations in the neighbourhood. The rationale underpinning the promotion of this engagement with the civil societies, but also with private socio-economic actors, such as entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and youth and women's groups, lies in the realisation that in a context of transition from authoritarian rule, engaging with the broadest possible spectrum of societal actors is of the essence. One of the characteristics of authoritarian regimes was precisely the scarcity of a genuine political opposition. Often the political opposition was either banned, harassed and repressed, or, alternatively, it was co-opted by regime, whereby co-option was viewed as the only strategy for political survival (Colombo and Tocci, 2011). This holds true also for some Islamist parties and movements across the Middle East, such as the Moroccan Justice and Development Party (JDP) or the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which have been increasingly tempted to pursue the strategy of co-option.

The limits

More benefits, more conditionality and more partnership with civil society is good news. It is certainly a step forward in tailoring the EU's policies towards the southern Mediterranean to the promotion of sustainable development. But alongside these pluses are a number of minuses, which, alas, can only be expected to increase as the ENP review translates from paper into practice.

First, the ENP remains trapped in the logic of enlargement and of security, hindering the actual value of the benefits on offer. The Commission has proposed DCFTAs to the neighbours. Working towards and then implementing DCFTAs entail the harmonization of trade standards and practices to those of the EU. Such harmonization is a heavy price to pay for the eastern neighbours, with slim chances of EU membership. It is simply not worth the bargain for the southern neighbours, which have neither the prospect nor the desire to enter the EU. Rather than DCFTAs, premised on the logic of enlargement, the EU ought to seriously consider

liberalizing its markets, particularly in the realm of agriculture,6 without demanding compliance with the highly regulated features of the single market, if it truly wants to put more appetizing carrots on the table. As stressed by Tocci and Cassarino (2011: 16): "the EU is currently negotiating liberalization measures on agricultural and fisheries products with Tunisia and Morocco, and has already reached agriculture agreements with Israel. Only if the EU overcomes its inbuilt resistance to move in this direction with all southern Mediterranean countries, facilitating access to their fruit, vegetable, oil and wine, it stands a chance of inducing its southern partners to scale down their exceptionally high tariff barriers. Reducing such barriers vis-à-vis WTO members is critical to dismantling the monopolistic privileges enjoyed by ruling elites and their entourages".

Likewise, the EU has proposed mobility partnerships as a valuable offer to the neighbours. Yet the logic of mobility partnerships remains highly security driven and its overall value questionable. The neighbours are offered limited mobility7 only if they comply with a host of strict security requirements regarding readmission and border controls. On the one hand, if and when the third countries acquire the capability to enforce such requirements, their level of internal development and stability is often such that their potential for emigration has been largely depleted.8 On the other hand, the cost of implementing the EU's requirements is such that the reward of temporary mobility for a limited category of citizens is often simply not worth it. This is all the more true in a country like Tunisia, which may be tentatively moving towards greater sustainability and therefore in which authorities will become more accountable to citizens and less willing to play along with the EU's securitized migration policy tune. Thus, if the EU is genuinely willing to offer more appealing incentives to the southern neighbours, readmission and reinforced border controls should no longer be the main (and often only) priorities guiding cooperation on temporary labour migration schemes. Rather it should promote new initiatives based on skills portability schemes9, vocational training and the reintegration of labour migrants in countries of origins (Tocci and Cassarino, 2011: 16-17).

Second, the ENP remains trapped in the logic of vagueness, hindering the prospects of effective conditionality. While asserting the principles of conditionality and "more for more", very little guidance has been provided regarding how to make these notions operational. True, the Commission has referred to the need for a smaller number of more focussed reform priorities and for more precise benchmarks and a clear sequencing of actions. But little indications are provided as to how this would be done. How precisely is the EU to benchmark and monitor its conditions? How will new instruments such as the Endowment for Democracy provide added value rather than duplicate existing EU's instruments such as the Governance Facility and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)? How will the new Endowment work synergetically with established non-state actors in the field, such as the German political foundations or the American National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute? Little guidance is provided to answer these crucial questions.

Third, the EU remains trapped in a logic of insularity, making its newfound emphasis on civil society welcome but insufficient. Gone are the days of the Barcelona Process, in which the EU acted in the hope (or illusion) of creating a common Euro-Med home. Not only are both the EU and the southern Mediterranean countries more divided than in the 1990s, but the region is permeated by the presence of new (and old) external actors, which the EU cannot ignore. These include both traditional allies, such as the United States, as well as other regional (Turkey and the

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[6] Southern Mediterranean countries face tariff quotas on 60 basic agricultural products including fruit and vegetables. See Booth, Scarpetta and Swidlicki (2011).

[7] It should be noted that the bulk of circular migration takes place spontaneously and not through regulated schemes of mobility partnerships. Remarks by Anna Triandafyllidou, European University Institute, 22 June 2011.

[8] Remarks by Anna Triandafyllidou, European University Institute, 22 June 2011.

[9] Skills portability means the transferability and recognition of skills acquired by migrants, in the context of the global economy.

Gulf Cooperation Council) and global (China) actors, which are increasingly active in the Mediterranean. The EU, in its ENP review, continues to think it acts in a vacuum, failing to seize the synergies and contrast the eventual countermoves of the multiple actors involved in the region. In particular, the US and Turkey are key partners in this respect. Although the US' response to the Arab Spring has been primarily cautious and indirect, showing a certain anxiety not to become sucked into the tumultuous events triggered by the Arab streets and shunning a visible leadership role, most evidently in the case of Libya, it remains the dominant actor in the Middle East and a fundamental partner for the EU particularly in Egypt and in the Gulf. Suffice it to say here that, particularly in Egypt, where the military remains firmly in charge, an effective ENP strategy towards supporting genuine transition must account for the intimate American-Egyptian dynamics at play. Turning to Turkey, this country has been heralded as a model for the transition of the Arab world. This idea has become part of the lexicon, not only in the West and in Turkey, but also in the Arab world, following the Arab Spring. However, this idea needs to be substantiated by concrete actions. A stronger cooperation between the EU and Turkey in the Mediterranean in light of the Arab Spring could be beneficial for both partners, and for the Mediterranean itself, in many respects, first of all in terms of making good use of the renewed Turkish foreign policy dynamism in the Mediterranean (Tocci, Altunisik and Kirisci, 2011).

Finally, the review of the EU's Mediterranean policies focuses predominantly on the bilateral ENP rather than the multilateral UfM. As argued above, the internal bureaucratic and institutional/political logic why this is the case is clear. Equally clear is the strong external logic underpinning the ENP's review, which points to our premises: a) that the EU ought to focus more on the sustainable development of Mediterranean countries and b) that the region is likely to be marked by greater polarisation. The bilateral and transformative nature of the ENP responds to both these realities. This, however, leaves unresolved what to do about the multilateral dimension of the EU's Mediterranean policies. Whereas the bulk of the EU's transformative agenda can and should be tackled through the EU's bilateral relations with individual countries, there remain a number of key policy questions, ranging from infrastructure and communications to non-proliferation, combating organised crime and maritime security which continue to warrant multilateral solutions. The question that is still pending, therefore, is what the appropriate multilateral framework is to tackle such questions? The increased degree of heterogeneity of the region suggests that a working multilateral framework should probably not be as rigid and institutionalised as the EMP or the UfM. Rigidity and institutionalisation have been a recipe for deadlock in Mediterranean multilateralism and are likely to be so even more in the future. A pragmatic, ad hoc and probably more sub-regional approach (e.g., building on existing sub-regional groupings such as the 5 + 5 and the Arab League) to EU multilateral policies would thus seem a more appropriate approach to dealing with regional problems in a post-Arab Spring Mediterranean.10 A grand multilateral strategy for the Mediterranean might hinder rather than help the search for solutions to the region's multilateral problems.

Conclusions

The Arab Spring has completely tilted the balance in the Mediterranean in favour of increased sustainability and democracy. While the way ahead to attain these goals appears to be long and the challenges facing the countries in the region make it difficult to anticipate the outcomes of this process, the EU seems to have eventually realised that its policies towards the region, putting a premium on stability and sacrificing democracy, have been detrimental to its own security and, above all, to the overall development of the Mediterranean region. As aptly underscored by

[10] Remarks made by Eduard Soler y Lecha and Jordi Vaquer y Fanes at an EU4Seas seminar held in Torino 6-7 June 2011.

Olivier Roy, "from a number of vantage points any government but the ones still in power now, although major changes are introduced, would be more effective also in providing security for the EU".11

This paper has attempted to highlight the advancement and the pitfalls in the current process of revision of the EU's policies towards the Mediterranean. Such a revision – still to qualify as a major strategic revision – responds to a twofold challenge. On the one hand, the Arab revolts call for EU policies that can sustain a veritable process of change in the southern Mediterranean. On the other hand, assuming that such change is set in motion and that future regimes will be more democratic (or less authoritarian) than those of the past, EU policies must also be adjusted to account for these new realities. Specifically, assuming future regimes will be at least marginally more accountable to their populations, the content and packaging of several EU policies, including the hierarchy of priorities based on the control of irregular migration, energy and trade, will inevitably have to be reviewed (Cassarino and Tocci 2011). The EU has acknowledged the imperative of reviewing its offers to the South, envisaging liberalization measures in the domains of trade and the movement of persons (European Commission 2011). Yet far more should be done to put valuable new incentives on the table with a view to ensuring the sustainability in the distribution of wealth, in the job markets and in the development of an independent and performing private sector.

[11] Remarks made by Olivier Roy, European University Institute, 25 February 2011.

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Istituto Affari Internazionali

TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY SYMPOSIUM 2011

Re-thinking Western Policies in Light of the Arab Uprising

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The EU political response to the Arab upheaval

by

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The Arab world is experiencing historic moments. It is still too early to judge whether the changes will lead to a sustainable democratic development, but the dynamics of the movement point into that direction. The peoples of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, and also in other countries such as Yemen, Bahrain and Algeria are revolting against encrusted structures. Which direction the movement will take is still open, but one thing has become clear during the last few weeks: Neither the EU nor the EU Member States can claim that the current transition process in Tunisia or Egypt is a direct result of the European democratisation policy, although for more than fifteen years, through various policy instruments and approaches (such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and European Neighbourhood Policy) the EU has made a lot of efforts and has invested not only in economic cooperation, but also in democratisation projects. The success of the Arab revolution up to now – the overthrow of the despots - is due above all to the courage of the people. Now, the EU must ask itself why it has continued to cooperate with these rulers for so long, and why it has not been more consistent in demanding democratic reforms.

Did Europe have a role in fostering the Arab upheaval?

For the region of the Mediterranean we can say that the European promotion of democracy and respect for human rights did not find its way. It did not find, for some reason, the best ground for its implementation, neither within the framework of the euro-Mediterranean Partnership, nor of the Neighbourhood Policy, nor of the Union for the Mediterranean,.

It is obvious that the promotion of the democracy and the respect for human rights and human dignity represented one of the major common objectives of the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, establishing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. It is true as well that the legal instruments set up to implement this Partnership, namely the Association Agreements concluded by the European Union with each partner country; established a "democratic clause"; a kind of political conditionality. In these agreements it was stipulated that "The respect of the democratic principles and fundamental rights, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, inspire the internal and international policies of the all parties and constitute an essential element of the Agreement". But it was always difficult to find a common ground on this subject; the values which the European party defends as universal values, are not considered as such by the south-Mediterranean party, which moreover considered them as an "neo-colonialist" argument allowing interference in the internal affairs of states. On the other hand, sometimes in front of the European pressure, the Arab Mediterranean states also accused the European Union of practicing a policy of "double standards" as regards the position of the Union towards the schemes of Israel in the occupied territories and towards the Palestinians, which are totally in opposition to the democratic principles and human rights and which nevertheless did not lead to the suspension of the association agreement between the European Union and Israel.

This contributed to surround with a lot of doubt the sincerity of the European Union in implementing its strategy for the promotion of democracy. The Union, which does certainly not miss a chance to release declarations and condemnations every time it notices violations of human rights, is disappointing when it comes to noting and acting firmly against these violations. This double attitude strongly handicapped its action towards the Mediterranean Arab countries, which thus took advantage to base better their authoritarian and anti-democratic character.

In fact, by this double attitude, the European Union was almost the accomplice of these regimes; by its silence and sometimes even by its direct support, it was only consolidating the leaders of these countries in their positions. Paradoxically, the Arab leaders which only tried to perpetuate their reigns, found their best allies in the leaders of the European Union.

This paradox can be explained in practice by the scale of the priorities established at the level of the European Union. Indeed, in the choice between (seriously) promoting democracy

and assuring security, the priority goes to the latter. This tendency towards securitasation of regional issues (both domestic and international), in spite of showing little respectful of human rights, may have contributed to meeting Europe's most pressing security concerns such as irregular migration and terrorism, but it has above contributed to strengthening the authoritarian regimes themselves.

There is no doubt that the Arab uprisings questioned the dominant European perception of the Arab populations, which considered them as populations little inclined to changes, favouring tyranny and accepting injustice. The debates on this question were indeed very *culturalistes*. It has nevertheless turned out that these Arab societies are so thirsty for freedom, for justice and for democracy as any other society in the world, and that they share with the other societies all the universal values.

Besides, "The Arab spring" as has become common to refer to the wave of revolt that has been sweeping through the Arab world since December 2010, has proved at least that a change from inside and from the bottom is possible. It also proved that the "efforts of democratisation" proposed from the outside remained weak and without significant incidence.

For the all these reasons, the European policy of democratisation performed below all the expectations. In a sense, the European Union favoured stability, economic development and the status quo over the requirements of democratisation and (uncertain) political changes. But if the prosperity of the region is among the main objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, it is not enough to focus on the question of knowing how authoritarian regimes can assure an economic growth able to generate that prosperity. Some in the European Union closed the eye on the lack of receptivity of these regimes of the necessities of change and political reform.

Exclusive priority was granted to the efforts of securitisation: the EU thought rather to barricade itself against possible plagues coming from the South, with fears being spearheaded by immigration and extremism. On this matter the eternal debate between securitisation and democratisation is not closed yet. It risks to continue for a while as the wave of change in certain Arab Mediterranean countries also comes along - regrettably – with a wave of illegal migration and with an increased risk of terrorist actions against Western interests. The fragility of the post-revolutionary security situation and the sudden permeability of the borders increase the European anxieties and let some fear that the advent of democracy among the Southern neighbours is just an additional source of insecurity.

Indeed, it seems that these concerns for European security are advanced to explain the hesitation of the European Union and its members towards the changes that are taking place in its Southern neighbourhood, its hesitation to fully support the processes of current transition and put enough means to guarantee their success. These all over the world greeted events, were it in Europe in a less steady way, and especially only stage by stage. The fear of seeing destabilisation settling down in the region pressed on the European position; with the risk of seeing extremism, or simply Islamism, increasing and taking over the power everywhere, by engendering as in the past in Algeria, waves of violence. On the other hand, the European Union was afraid that instability would touch a larger number of countries, so giving birth to a bigger movement of persons, refugees or illegal migrants, who would look for safety on the European territory; and finally the European Union was also worried about its energy security. Fears certainly exaggerated for us, but very objective in the eyes of the European leaders.

In addition, the European position was neither uniform nor correctly concerted: several members of the Union had their own positions, contributing to make the European foreign policy more vague and therefore less readable for the Southern Mediterranean with regard to what is taking place at home. A vagueness which does not help to improve the image of the European Union, which has for a long time been very criticised for its attitude of double standards. Its mitigated reaction to the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions was interpreted as an attachment to the autocrats of the region. It is true that until their fall, Ben Ali in Tunisia and Moubarak in Egypt, were considered by the European Union as and by several European

countries as "friends" working for the interest of Europe and of its security. Such autocrats were considered as guarantors against the rise of an Islamic fundamentalism that was considered on both shores of the Mediterranean as a major source of threat for the security and stability in the region. Being an internal factor of political destabilisation, fundamentalism was fought by the southern-Mediterranean regimes with the encouragements of Westerners, European in head.

What response had been done?

Before addressing the issue of the EU's response to the new reality on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, it is advisable to recall how much the position of the EU was initially marked by wavering and uncertainty; and how much it was characterized by contradictions, due to the fact that the Union's various members did not share a homogeneous point of view on the question.

Indeed, with the start of the first wave of protest in Tunisia, the European Union was confronted with a dilemma: support the protesters calling for freedoms that the EU boasts to be promoting around the world, or support the well-known and reliable dictatorship in power? The position of the European Union in this respect was very disappointing, as the Union shone with its absence and some of its members, France for example, made so that no condemnation of the violence towards the demonstrators was adopted. Contrary to the United States that had given a frank and immediate support, the EU delayed its overdue support for the popular movement, it was criticized for that and tried then to be more reactive in the Egyptian case.

Immediately after the fall of the Tunisian dictatorship, EU moves were again lacking real substance, as the bloc had still to demonstrate concrete support to the changes that had taken place on the southern bank of the Mediterranean. It is true that EU officials such as the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the commissioner in charge of enlargement and the neighbourhood policy expressed their congratulations to the Tunisian people after 14 January (when President Zine Abidine Ben Ali left the country), and some weeks later to the Egyptian people, but these words were not followed at once by acts.

The EU should accompany the transition process in North Africa constructively on two levels: first, it has to send clear signals of political support to the democratic forces; second, it has to offer financial and material aid.

It took a few long weeks for the EU to show the first interesting signals: first, the signs of political support, with the ballet of visits in Tunis by the highest representatives of the EU (the High Representative in February, the president of the European Parliament in March, and the president of the Commission in April), who reiterated the EU's firm will to contribute to the success of the transition towards the democracy; then came the financial offer of help and support to the economy.

Unfortunately, the offer of financial aid did not match the expression of political support. In fact, the EU's offer appeared to the eyes of Tunisia's new rulers as totally derisory, insufficient and not answering the real needs and challenges with which the country will be confronted.

On the top of this came the crisis on the illegal migrants. Taking advantage of the general slackening of border controls, thousands of Tunisians were able to reach the Italian island of Lampedusa. The affair showed convergences between European States concerning the limits to external immigration imposed by the Schengen Agreement. France, which had to expect an increase of the arrivals of migrants deemed "illegal" in spite of but the fact that they carried a document of stay issued by Italy, reacted very badly, according to the Tunisian point of view.

An increase in emigration flows is a natural process whenever authoritarian regimes fall. And yet, instead of receiving help and solidarity, these immigrants have been criminalized by the Italian and French police and coast guard.

Some in Tunisia maintain that the EU should react differently with regard to immigration issues, and build a more humane border policy. Others consider that with regard to the immigration issue, the EU should now to set new benchmarks and improve its credibility again by showing solidarity, accepting the refugees, and offering help. Instead, sensationalist media and populist politicians are, with their mode of thinking, building the menacing image of millions of "boat people" flocking across the Mediterranean to Europe. As it happens the reality is that the majority of refugees, including thousands of workers coming from Libya, head to Tunisia and Egypt, and are in all probability going to stay there. But Tunisia and Egypt find themselves in the midst of radical political changes, and have no capacity to deal with the Libyan crisis by themselves alone, and the EU should change its attitude and to offer aid and assistance to both countries and the refugees.

The EU should offer support especially for those who were living below the poverty level already before the regime change, and who are now left with nothing. The EU can stand up for comprehensive freedom of opinion, freedom of the press and freedom of information, free and fair elections under the presence of international observers, and for a complete investigation of the crimes committed by the repressive regimes, but it must refrain from any direct interference. European North Africa policy must be a balancing act: it must be innovative, and it must find new instruments and ways between non-interference, clear political positioning, consistent demands, and solidarity.

The necessity of revisiting the EU policy towards the region

The political changes occurred in the South Mediterranean region are to weigh heavily on Euro-Mediterranean relations. They impose the necessity for the EU to revisit its policy towards the region.

Indeed, the level of cooperation cannot but be influenced by the political turnovers in some of the southern Mediterranean countries. So the various actors, in the North as in the South of the Mediterranean Basin, should rethink the foundations of their relations and cooperation according to the new picture.

In light of the Arab uprisings, the EU and its members should try henceforth to give a new basis to their Mediterranean policy . The European Commission has already taken some steps in this regard. At the beginning of March 2011, it presented a Communication entitled "A partnership for Democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean" (COM (2011) 200 final, Brussels, 08/03/2011); followed, in May 2011, by a revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy in the communication entitled "A new response to a changing neighbourhood" (COM (2011) 303, Brussels, 25/05/2011). The communication of the Commission on the European migration policy of May, 2011 (COM (2011) 248 final, Brussels, 04/05/2011) should also be included in this context.

1/ first element of response: The Partnership for Democracy

With the "Partnership for the democracy and a shared prosperity with the South of the Mediterranean" the European Union tried to give a first response to the so called "Arab Spring". This Partnership for the Democracy, put forward on 8 March 2011, indicates three essential courses of action, namely:

· a democratic intensification and a transformation of institutions, with the emphasis put in particular on fundamental liberties, constitutional reforms, reform of the judicial system and the fight against corruption;

· a strengthened partnership with the populations, by insisting especially on the support for civil society and on the increase of the possibilities of exchanges and interpersonal relations, particularly between the young people;

· economic growth and sustainable development

As a first step, this partnership seems to bring up some elements to answer certain expectations from those Southern Mediterranean countries that are in a phase of transition, and to draw the lines for a new era of cooperation in the region.

However, one element seems problematic: the security preoccupations seem again to be given preference over the democratic transition. Indeed, the communication evokes joint operations within the framework of FRONTEX, the EU's border control agency. Insisting on security issues within a partnership for democracy is ambiguous (to say the least).One cannot but note that the point on the joint cooperation within the framework of FRONTEX has been put above the one on the EU's support for the democratic transition, what gives a worrisome idea of the European scale of priorities.

2/ second element of response: the new European Neighbourhood Policy

The recent events in North Africa have shown that the EU's support for the political reforms launched in the countries of the neighbourhood has produced only limited results since the launch of the ENP in 2004.

A new approach thus is necessary to strengthen the partnership between the EU and the countries and societies of its southern neighbourhood to establish and strengthen the new democracies, take measures in favour of a sustainable economic growth and manage cross-border relations.

The new ENP articulates around a certain number of objectives, which are:

(1) Provide increased support to the partners who strive to reinforce democracy and guarantee human rights, including the freedom of thought, conscience and religion;

(2) support inclusive economic development so that EU neighbours can trade, invest and grow in a sustainable way, reducing social and regional inequalities, creating jobs for their workers and higher standards of living for their people;

(3) strengthen both regional dimensions of the ENP, the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Mediterranean.

Besides, the new ENP offers an ostensibly significant incentive, as it states that it will be possible to increase access to the EU internal market for the partners who wish to go farther in their effort of aligning their rules and policies with those of the Union.

The new ENP seems to have a multitude of ambitions: the first one it is to go beyond the contradictions that European states have shown concerning their attitude towards the "Arab Spring" and so to serve as a solid common base for EU policies as well as bilateral actions of member states.

The second goal is to serve as a catalyst so that the international community in the broader sense can bring its support for the democratic change and for the economic and social development in the region.

The third goal of the new ENP is to favour a better approach to managing the movement of people which can only have a positive effects on the whole neighbourhood. There is no doubt that active cooperation between the EU and its neighbours, in particular on education, the intensification and modernization of the social welfare systems, as well as the promotion of women's rights, will contribute appreciably to the realisation of the common objectives of inclusive growth and job creation.

According to the communication, the new approach must be defined on the basis of mutual responsibility and a common attachment to the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This means that, on the one hand, the ENP in its new version will once again insist on the principle of co-ownership, and on the other hand it intends to make best use of the incentive conditionality. It so presupposes a much higher level of differentiation,

according to the principle of "more for more" to allow every country partner to deepen its relations with the EU as according to its own aspiration, specific needs and capacities.

The intensification of the support from the EU for its neighbours will thus be conditional. It will depend on progress achieved as regards the establishment and consolidation of democratic institutions, as well as the respect for the rule of law. The EU promises substantial aid, which is meant to be an important spur to rapid and effective progress on internal reform. And to be in keeping with this logic the communication threatens, but timidly, to reduce the volume of the support, and cooperation, with those partners who do not achieve any progress on the way of the reforms.

The communication states, of course, that the EU does not intend to impose a model of political reform or rapid solutions to existing problems. The EU will however insist that the process of reform of every partner country testifies to a clear commitment to the universal values on which the new approach is based. It is worth underlining in this respect that this assertion is very important from the point of view of the new actors in the countries of the neighbourhood, which are very sensitive to potential interferences from abroad.

On principle, we can only welcome the new ENP, while noting at the same time that although it is said to be new, it is not really a novelty concerning its objectives and the means devised to reach those objectives. Formulated in a positive way, it means that the EU is betting from the beginning that the combination of various policies can actually support the transformation of the South Mediterranean countries. These objectives were already largely present in the 1995 Mediterranean policy documents, and later in the neighbourhood policy communication of 2004. The problem, which remains as acute today as it was then, concerns implementation – on this point, the EU will again have to prove that this new start represents a real change compared to the practices of the past.

There where the new ENP innovates, it is when it makes a commitment to direct cooperation with the populations and to establishing partnerships with the civil society, as well as to making the EU support more accessible to potential civil society beneficiaries (the creation of a supporting facility is evoked on this matter). All this seems very important and actually satisfies, at least in theory, the requirements formulated long time ago by southern Mediterranean civil society's actors.

The new ENP also tries to innovate by proposing a partnership for the mobility, for a better access to the circuits of legal immigration and by offering a framework for a good management of the circulation of people.

This good intention comes regrettably after the communication of the EU Commission of 24 May 2011 on immigration and asylum, which also comes in the context of the European response to the "Arab Spring", in which the good purposes of the new ENP concerning the circulation of people seem to get lost in favour of the more restrictive trends emerged in the European debate on migration policy.

3/third element of response: facing the migration's challenge

The migratory question , and set apart the problem of illegal migrants, remains one of the main challenges that the European response has to take into account.

The European debate on the management of the migrants' arrival from the South of the Mediterranean reflect an excessive securitised view of the migratory issue, a lack of European solidarity and a reflex towards fortressing on the part of certain EU member states.

The Justice and Home Affairs Council of 12 April 2011 adopted without any difficulty the propositions of the first action plan of the Commission concerning the increase of the aid to the most concerned member states, via a reinforcement of FRONTEX means, and an increase in the European relevant funds and a greater employment of teams from the European Asylum Support Office. The adoption of these measures, which will increase the capacities of

FRONTEX, was delayed because member states refused certain guarantees, in particular on the fundamental rights, that the European Parliament had asked to supervise the operations of the agency.

Member states also approved a strengthened cooperation with the Mediterranean countries: an accelerated negotiation of operational agreements between FRONTEX and the authorities of Egypt, Morocco and Turkey, a special operational project with Tunisia to strengthen its capacities of border control and facilitate the return of the repatriated persons, and a program of regional protection for the refugees covering Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.

In this frame, the dialogue on the migrations with the Mediterranean countries remains under the sign of the one-way conditionality. The uprising of the southern populations for democracy and for a much firmer control of their own destiny has therefore not led the EU to change approach towards a more balanced partnership.

The Council accepted, in spite of the reservations of certain member states, the proposition of French President Nicolas Sarkozy, according to which European support for the transition regimes in the South of the Mediterranean should be conditioned on the implementation of an effective cooperation in the fight against illegal migration, readmission and border control.

The Commission has gone to the same direction by placing the principle of conditionality in the heart of the "Dialogue on migrations, mobility and security with the Southern Mediterranean", proposed in its communication of 24 May. Conditionality is considered as an indispensable motivation principle to obtain results, without any apparent contradiction with the notion of "well-balanced partnership" and "mutually advantageous cooperation". The Commission has nevertheless noted that the conclusion of readmission agreements with several countries, in the absence of incentives in the visa domain or greater financial assistance, is very difficult. The signing of readmission agreements as well as the commitment to taking measures against irregular migration will thus subordinate henceforth the negotiation of mobility agreements with post-revolution South Mediterranean countries. The availability of the partners to cooperate on these matter will be a condition for more support and greater mobility of their nationals.

Recommendations:

Announcing a "Partnership for Democracy" or a" new Neighbourhood Policy", the EU seems willing to engage itself on a way of change. It is trying to convince its southern partners that it is sincerely working on a new approach.

In its elements of response, the EU insists a lot on highlighting the role of civil society, granting it an important place both in the communication on the Partnership for Democracy and the communication on the renewed ENP. But in neither communication does the EU give indications on how this new support to civil society shall be implemented. The communications of the European Commission evoke the support for civil society and non-state actors, but they do not explain how to integrate these actors in the whole process and how they can be involved in the mechanisms of decision, or at least, in the orientation of policy choices.

The civil society which will be supported should also play a mediating role to foster a better understanding of the EU's action in Euro-Mediterranean relations. In this respect it is recommended to set up a formal mechanism of consultation with the civil society, which shall allow it to integrate in the decision-making process. To achieve such an integration, the involvement of civil society representatives in the various frameworks and meetings of the association council, subcommittees and working groups that manage the Association Agreements or the Action Plans between the EU and every partner country is an option worth pursuing.

The EU has also insisted a lot on the necessity of conditioning its support to the pursuit of a real democratisation. Here we find once again the theme of political conditionality, which has for a very long time perturbed the relations between the southern Mediterranean rulers and certain structures of the EU. This return of conditionality does raise some criticism towards the EU, criticism which comes at the same time from the North and from the South. However, it is in my opinion desirable to maintain the level of requirement regarding reforms and democratisation. The new authorities of post-revolutionary countries have to show much more interest for these subjects, an effective conditionality can contribute to avoid a backfall. Therefore the EU will have to maintain this requirement, even if it seems disagreeable.

Finally, as regards the migration problem, the implementation of the comprehensive approach on this issue must be rebalanced. Instead of organising regular migration and maximising its mutual advantages for development, states are focusing on the intensification of the fight against illegal migration. The Europeans have for that purpose to pursue a rights-based migratory approach instead of a security-based approach. This debate in the Council reflects the excessive securitisation of migration that began in the 1980s with the extension of the notion of "security", a concept until then confined to the geopolitical and military sphere. This evolution was fed by European citizens' fears of a loss of identity and social benefits, and today by amalgamating migrants and threats as terrorism and criminality.

The political impact of this evolution is very heavy for the European Union. Europe has more and more difficulty to be credible in its discourse on human rights because of the grave shortcomings of its migration and asylum policy. It is urgent that the Union returns to a rights-and-freedom-based approach in its migration policy. Its demands in regulation will be then more acceptable.

The tendency towards fortressinghas also to leave place to a logic of opportunity, conceiving migration as a factor of cultural and economic enrichment and not as a burden.

Istituto Affari Internazionali

TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY SYMPOSIUM 2011

Re-thinking Western Policies in Light of the Arab Uprising

ROME, 12 SEPTEMBER 2011

Coordinating Transatlantic Responses to the Arab Spring: Lessons from the Middle East Quartet

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Preliminary Considerations

The experience of the Middle East Quartet, a contact group comprised of the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations, provides a useful case study regarding the potential for transatlantic coordination in the context of the Arab Spring.

A. Rationale

The experiences of the Quartet are relevant to transatlantic coordination in the context of the Arab Spring for several reasons. Since its creation almost exactly a decade ago, the Quartet has served as the principal means of transatlantic coordination on one of the most central pillars of both U.S. and EU policy in the region: the Middle East peace process (MEPP). Although the two powers technically comprise only half of the group's membership, as the two most influential political actors and the two largest economic donors to the peace process, the U.S. and the EU are far and away the most important actors within the Quartet. As a result, the internal dynamics within the Quartet are to great extent dictated by the actions and interactions of these two key players. In fact, former UN Envoy Alvaro de Soto has argued that the Quartet itself is a "side show" in that "it is as much about managing trans-Atlantic relations as anything else..."[1] Furthermore, since transatlantic coordination in the context of the Arab Spring has taken many forms, including the emergence of new contact groups, the experiences of the Quartet may be directly relevant to groups like the Libya Contact Group and possibly others in the future.[2]

There is an extremely high degree of consensus between the U.S. and EU (as well as the Quartet's other two members and even internationally) with regard to the desired outcome, namely a negotiated settlement between Israelis and Palestinians based on "two states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side within secure and recognized borders."[3] This shared support for a two-state solution was codified in the Quartet's signature plan, the 2003 Roadmap in which the U.S. and EU (along with the UN and Russia) agreed to work collaboratively toward a comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians based on a negotiated settlement aimed at "the emergence of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbors."[4] Theoretically, the convergence in American and European goals vastly increased the possibility of successful collaboration.[5]

Another factor arguing for a closer look at the Quartet is the growing recognition of the association between the MEPP and the Arab Spring more broadly. Indeed, for much of the Arab world, there is an *organic* connection between the Palestine Question and the broader struggle for

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[1] Alvaro de Soto, End of Mission Report (May 2007), at 32.

[2] Despite being an informal group, the Quartet is nonetheless a more structured form of coordination than were its members to interact on a purely ad hoc basis, and in fact tends to be more formal than other groups of its kind.

[3] Quartet Statement, April 10, 2002 (first official communiqué following their formal establishment in Madrid, Spain). See "Remarks with Foreign Minister of Spain Josep Pique,United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan Foreign Minister of Russia Igor Ivanov, and European Union Senior Official Javier Solana" (Available at: http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2002/9232.htm).

[4] For the full text of the plan, known officially as "Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," see *http://www.un.org/media/main/roadmap122002.pdf*.

[5] The fact there was little or no conflict between perceived U.S. and EU interests and ideals also helped increase the likelihood of success. Unlike, say, in Bahrain or Yemen, where American and European commitments to democratic ideals and human rights conflicted with the need to safeguard more tangible interests like maintaining good relations with the Saudis and other Gulf states, the U.S. and the EU both view the pursuit of a durable peace based on a two-state solution as both an interest and an ideal.

"freedom, dignity, and opportunity".[6] This view is particularly strong among the revolutionary youth of the Arab world, most notably in Egypt, where there is a widespread belief that "the road to Jerusalem goes through Cairo." Such sentiments are likely to intensify in light of a moribund peace process and escalating Israeli-Palestinian tensions, as demonstrated by the recent Israeli raids on Gaza and the killing of 5 Egyptian border police on August 19. Although Egypt's interim military rulers did not heed popular demands to expel the Israeli ambassador, they—along with any future civilian government—will undoubtedly be more responsive to popular demands to take a much tougher line with Israel. Even among western policymakers, there is a growing sense that the upheaval and turmoil of the Arab Spring has lent new urgency to the need to resolve the long-standing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, although in Europe the sense of urgency is considerably greater than in the United States.

B. Background

The Quartet is an informal group comprised of the United States, European Union, United Nations, and Russia. It was created a decade ago in response to the intense violence and turmoil surrounding the Palestinian uprising (Al-Aqsa Intifada) that began in late 2000.[7] The emergence of the Quartet was a direct response to two concurrent developments at the time: the rapidly deteriorating security and humanitarian conditions on the ground in the context of the Intifada and the political vacuum created by the Bush administration's decision to disengage from the MEPP. Consequently, since its formation, the Quartet has focused on three primary objectives: (1) ending (or preventing) violence and improving conditions on the ground (2) laying out a plan for returning the parties to political negotiations aimed at ending the conflict, (3) ensuring continued American engagement in the process. These aims are embodied in the Quartet's signature peace plan, the Roadmap, first published in April 2003.

Like other contact groups, the Quartet has no official mandate and, apart from holding meetings at two distinct levels, a Ministerial ("Principals") level and a Special Envoys level, no formal structure. In relative terms, however, the Quartet tends to be more formal than other informal groups, similar to the Balkans Group.[8] Quartet meetings are convened on an *ad hoc* basis, almost always ancillary to other international gatherings, such as the opening of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) or G-8 summits, and often by conference call.[9] It has no secretariat or administration of any kind, and meeting agendas are likewise *ad hoc*. Although its formation was in many ways accidental, the Quartet's membership reflected a deliberate desire to bring the four biggest international actors in the MEPP under one diplomatic roof. Former UN Envoy Terje Rød-Larsen, who was the driving force behind the Quartet's creation, often described it as the perfect "marriage" of U.S. power, EU money and UN legitimacy.[10]

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[6] Interestingly, this view in many ways parallels the thinking of many U.S. and Israeli officials after 9/11 in relation to the Al-Aqsa Intifada, the response to which was seen an extension of the global "war on terror".

[7] Although not formally announced until April 2002, the group actually came into being on October 25, 2001. See "Statement Read by Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen," United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO), October 25, 2001 (Available at: *http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/fc33d890b2b968a785256af100662c08?OpenDocument*)

[8] Interview with Teresa Whitfield (December 2010).

[9] The March 21, 2010 Quartet meeting in Moscow, called at the behest of the Russians, remains the first and only time the Quartet met in "special session" rather than ancillary to other international gatherings.

[10] Teresa Whitfield, *Friends Indeed? The United Nations, Groups of Friends, and the Resolution of Conflict* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2007), 238.

The Quartet as Case Study

A. Why the Quartet Doesn't Work

Before we can understand what lessons the Quartet may provide with regard to transatlantic coordination, we must first understand the reasons behind its failure. The Quartet's failings stem from three main factors: (1) its loose, informal structure (2) its gross imbalance in its membership, and (3) its tendency to espouse artificial (and often illusory) consensuses in the interest of maintaining group cohesion. As a result, the Quartet has been effectively transformed in both form and function.

1. Loose, Informal Structure

While the Quartet's shortcomings are not solely a result of its lack of structure, it has provided an enabling environment for other, more serious problems. The absence of an institutional structure was seen as essential to the Quartet's proper functioning, maximizing the collective impact of its members while maintaining their individual freedom of action. As an informal group, Quartet members would come together only when collective action was warranted, and were neither bound by decisions nor restricted from pursuing their own independent policies. Thus, while the U.S. remains the group's undisputed political leader, the need for consensus forces it to consult with its international partners, allowing other actors like the EU and UN to play a greater political role than they would have otherwise. While this may seem reasonable, it is not how the Quartet has operated for most of its history.

Since internal decisions are based on consensus, Quartet positions necessarily reflect the *lowest common denominator.* This typically has led to formulations that are vaguely worded and open to multiple (and often conflicting) interpretations—to say nothing of how or whether such decision may or may not be implemented later on. Moreover, since the value of the Quartet (or any group) lay in the supposition that "the whole is greater than sum of its parts," the collective utterances of the group took on a considerable degree of authority and international legitimacy. As such, a Quartet statement carried more weight than that of any one of its members—including the United States. The group's perceived authority was enhanced further by the Security Council itself, which had formally endorsed both the Quartet's mandate and its official plan, the Roadmap. [11] Ironically, while informal groups are typically more effective when they work in tandem with the UN system,[12] the Quartet has for all intents and purposes become a substitute for the Security Council as the international address for all matters related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This was particularly advantageous for the United States and Israel, both of whom are averse to UN involvement in the MEPP, especially by the Security Council.

This has given rise to a fundamental contradiction within the Quartet. On the one hand, it had sufficient legitimacy to serve as an authoritative reference for the peace process when such authority was useful—as in the case of the "Quartet Principles," which established conditions for

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[11] The Security Council conferred official recognition on the Quartet's role in September 2002, with the passage of UNSC Resolution 1435, which expressed "full support for the efforts of the Quartet..." and called on all parties "to cooperate with these efforts..." In November 2003, the Security Council formally endorsed the Quartet Roadmap in UNSC Resolution 1515. See UN Security Council Resolution 1435, (S/RES/1435) September 24, 2002. (Available at: *http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/601/58/PDF/N0260158.pdf?OpenElement*) and UN Security Council Resolution 1515, (S/RES/1515) November 19, 2003. (Available at: *http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N03/621/85/PDF/N0362185.pdf?OpenElement*).

[12] See Jochen Prantl, "Informal Groups of States and the UN Security Council," *International Organization* 59, Summer 2005, at 585.

international dealings with Hamas. At the same time, it remained informal and flexible enough to allow its members to ignore those aspects considered to be politically inconvenient—as happened with the Roadmap. This contradiction, for all its dysfunction has nevertheless served its members well, by allowing the Quartet to become all things to all people.

2. *Imbalance in Power & Interests*

Unsurprisingly, determinations about which aspects of the Quartet's operations were observed and which were ignored were a function of the internal power dynamics within the group. More often than not, this meant that Quartet decisions (or interpretations thereof) reflected those of the United States. This is an inevitable consequence of the Quartet's composition, which is fairly unique among contact groups in both size and membership. The Quartet includes two permanent members of the Security Council (P-5), the United States and Russia, and two multi-state organizations, the European Union and the United Nations, each with its own unique history of involvement in the conflict and distinct relations with the parties.

This rather top-heavy configuration reflects the peculiar demands that existed at the time of its formation. Given the intense violence and turmoil at the time, the focus was on assembling the most powerful actors in the most efficient configuration in the shortest amount of time. That its members were so few in number and yet so great in power would ensure more streamlined decision-making and a more authoritative stature. At the same time, the mechanism was also a means for the EU, UN, and Russia to influence the United States, initially by convincing it to reengage in the process and later by trying to bring U.S. positions in line with their own. In either case, the result was to reaffirm the status of the United States as *the* dominant force within the Quartet.

That the United States should come to dominate the Quartet is not surprising, given its superpower status and its role as the chief mediator, sponsor and guarantor of the MEPP for nearly four decades. America's centrality is also readily acknowledged by the EU, UN and Russia—even as they often bemoan the same. But while this asymmetry within the Quartet may be natural, it is not neutral. American dominance is more than just a function of its raw power, however. It is equally a function of the depth and breadth of U.S. interests with regard to the conflict and in the broader Middle East in general.

Even as the U.S., EU, UN and Russia were, on the surface, bound by a common desire to end the conflict, they each had their own motivations for joining the effort. For all four actors, the Quartet offered a useful platform on which to play out their respective long-term interests in the region and vis-à-vis one another, as well as their own internal political dynamics and rivalries. For the United States in particular, the Quartet served a number of distinct but overlapping purposes. In addition to allowing for more concerted pressure on the Palestinians and channeling the interventions of what was often considered an unruly group of international actors, the Quartet proved a useful tool by which to pursue other regional objectives, most notably the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. Internal rivalries within the administration also helped propel U.S. involvement in the Quartet, particularly in light of Powell's waning influence, which began shortly after 9/11 and culminated with the decisive "vision" speech of June 2002.

As the most powerful actor in the Quartet and the one with the greatest stake in the conflict, the United States, unlike the other three, had both the ability and the will to undertake decisive unilateral action. Consequently, the Quartet's role has to a great extent become a function of broader U.S. policy priorities in the region, including its bilateral relations with Israel. The implications of this have not been lost on other Quartet members, many of whom note the

high degree of coordination between the U.S. and Israel before, during and after taking major initiatives, particularly in the early years of the Quartet.[13] Nor was this exclusive to the previous administration. The Obama administration's decision not to invite the other Quartet members to the launching of direct negotiations in September 2010 was as a reminder that it was not entirely free of unilateralist tendencies, which sparked considerable anger among Quartet members, particularly in Europe.[14] Thus, not only were determinations about how (or whether) Quartet decisions were implemented left to the United States, but even when (or if) the group itself would be relevant. This has earned the group the unflattering nickname of the "Quartet *sans trios*," first coined by former Arab League Secretary-General Amre Moussa.[15]

Ironically, it is this desire to be "relevant" that has helped consolidate American dominance of the Quartet, particularly since no other single member, or perhaps in their collectivity, has both the power and the will to undertake decisive unilateral action. The European Union, which had its own external and internal reasons for joining the Quartet, may come closest in terms of its combined influence, but remains a very distant second. As the largest single donor to the Palestinian Authority and Israel's second largest trading partner (until recently its largest), the EU had long sought to translate its substantial economic clout into a meaningful political role. With 27 member states and multiple diplomatic and security institutions, however, its ability to do so has been hampered by a lack of internal cohesion, as exemplified by its tripartite representation within the Quartet itself.[16] The EU's influence was further impaired by Israel's longstanding mistrust of Europe's perceived bias toward the Palestinians. Thus, in addition to providing it with a forum by which to check U.S. supremacy and improve its standing with Israel,[17] EU involvement in the Quartet was a way to institutionalize its involvement in the peace process and promote internal cohesion "by compelling EU member states to regularly forge a common position".[18]

The UN was even more marginal and had an even less credibility with Israel than the EU. It had not played a serious political role in Arab-Israeli affairs since the 1968 Jarring Mission and its role was mainly technical, mostly in the humanitarian realm.[19] Consequently, the creation of the Quartet, which was spearheaded by UN Envoy Terje Rød-Larsen, was seen as an opportunity

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[13] Interview with former Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn (July 2010)

[14] In fact, in her remarks at the Washington launch, Secretary Clinton expressly thanked Egypt and Jordan, along with Quartet Representative Tony Blair, but failed to mention the EU, UN, Russia or the Quartet itself. See Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State, "Remarks With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas," September 2, 2010 (Available at: *http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/09/146701.htm*.)

[15] Chris Patten, *Not Quite the Diplomat: Home Truths about World Affairs* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 109.

[16] Until recently, the EU had been represented at the "principals" level by as many as three individuals: (1) the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, (2) the Commissioner for External Relations, and (3) the Foreign Minister of the country holding the EU Presidency.

[17] Costanza Musu, "The Madrid Quartet: An Effective Instrument of Multilateralism?" Paper presented at "Globalization, Security and the Legitimacy of the G8" (conference sponsored by the Royal Institute for International Relations, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and G8 Research Group, Brussels, May 24-25, 2007), at 6.

[18] Costanza Musu, *European Union Policy Towards the Arab-Israeli Peace Process: The Quicksands of Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 79.

[19] In the Israeli-Palestinian context, this has centered on providing services to Palestinians, for example through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other UN agencies. In the broader Arab-Israeli context, the UN was also involved in various peacekeeping operations in the region such as the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), established following the 1949 Armistice Agreement between Israel and her immediate Arab neighbors, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), created after the October War of 1973, as well as the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

to expand the UN's role beyond purely operational matters.[20] Russia's involvement in the group is perhaps the most curious of all. Apart from having inherited the mantle of the former Soviet Union as an original co-sponsor of the peace process, Russia has not played significant role in the peace process, either on the ground or at the negotiating table. Its membership in the Quartet, therefore, reflects a desire to enhanced its stature in the region while serving as a check on western, particularly American, hegemony over the peace process.[21] Thus, while none of the other members could compete with U.S. power and interests, they had little to lose and much to gain from being part of even an ineffective group.[22]

Moussa's disparaging reference to the "Quartet *sans trois*" is at once an indictment of the United States and the other members of the group. American dominance would not be possible without the attendant tendency of the EU, UN, and Russia to acquiesce to the United States—even when faced with serious disagreements and inordinately high stakes. This tendency often took the form of relenting to U.S. demands and actions directly or, as is more often the case, by their willingness to accept vague or malleable formulations that in effect allow for the same result. This stems partly from a desire on the part of all three to avoid damaging relations with the United States, which could complicate their interests elsewhere, as well their own often muddled or competing interests, ambivalence, or internal divisions. Regardless of the source, it has seriously undercut the Quartet's credibility and individual members like the EU and UN.

This is particularly true of the EU, as the second most influential actor in the peace process and the one with the most overlapping interests with the United States. Former EU Commissioner Chris Patten summed up the critique of the EU's role as follows:

> It is true that the US has the primary external role in the region, and that any peace settlement will require Israel's willing agreement. But none of this justifies the EU's nervous self-effacement. This removes much of the political price the US should pay when it does nothing or too little. It gives Israel carte blanche. It damages Europe's relationship with its alleged partners in the Union for the Mediterranean, and makes Europe complicit in outrageous and illegal acts.[23]

Former UN envoy Alvaro de Soto similarly bemoaned the UN's role, which he believes only "gives the UN the illusion of having seat at the table."[24]

Among the greatest ironies of the Quartet is that while the United States did not initiate (or initially even welcome) its creation, it is the only actor that could operate wholly outside of it. However, whereas the U.S. could—and often did—act independently of the other three, the reverse was decidedly not the case. Although the U.S. saw a clear advantage in having the EU and the UN sign on to its positions, it could afford to act on its own when it felt it needed to. This was particularly true under the Bush administration but has persisted under Obama as well. The other three members by contrast were not in a position to act independently of the U.S., partly because they did not have anything close to the kind of influence the U.S. wielded with both Israelis and Palestinians and partly because doing so risked freezing them out of the process.

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[20] Teresa Whitfield, "A Crowded Field: Groups of Friends, the United Nations and the Resolution of Conflict," Center on International Cooperation: Studies in Security Institutions (Vol. 1), at 7.

[21] Geoffrey Kemp and Paul Saunders, "America, Russia, and the Greater Middle East: Challenges and Opportunities," The Nixon Center (November 2003), at 45.

[22] Teresa Whitfield, "A Crowded Field: Groups of Friends, the United Nations and the Resolution of Conflict," Center on International Cooperation: Studies in Security Institutions (Vol. 1), at 6.

[23] Chris Patten, "Time for real EU courage," *The Guardian*, June 11, 2010.

[24] Alvaro de Soto, End of Mission Report (May 2007), at 32.

This effectively gives the United States a *double advantage*, first by virtue of its inherent power and disproportionate influence with the parties, and second through the legitimization of its positions by way of Quartet endorsement. In other words, the power-interests imbalance within the Quartet does more than just reflect the disparity between the U.S. and the other three members in objective terms; it actually deepens it. This is the ultimate Achilles' heel of the Quartet, by which it allowed the U.S. to act "multilaterally" when it was useful, mainly to gain international buy-in for its policies, and unilaterally when it ran counter to its perceived interests. This dynamic led former Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn to describe the Quartet as little more than a "fig leaf" for U.S. policies.[25] That characterization is generally not disputed by U.S. officials, for whom the value of the mechanism rests in the fact that a Quartet action or statement "was more significant than just an American position.[26]

Consequently, the "lowest common denominator" applied not just to the nature of the consensus within the Quartet but to its effectiveness as well, which would always be limited by the ability of key actors, whether inside or outside the group, to act independently of it. The two obvious examples in this regard are the United States and Israel, both of which have the capacity, and quite often the inclination, to sidestep the Quartet. By contrast, the three weaker members of the Quartet have considerably less flexibility to act independently, while the Palestinians have virtually none. Ironically, then, the two parties that seem to have derived the most benefit from the Quartet are also the ones who were least bound by it.

3. Lack of Genuine Consensus

The Quartet's greatest strength—and the one most frequently cited by U.S., EU, UN and Russian officials alike—has always been its ability to speak to the parties with a single, authoritative voice. The most prominent example of this is the publication of its official plan, the 2003 Roadmap. Beyond the superficial vision articulated in the Roadmap, there is very little common understanding among Quartet members regarding its objectives, means of operation, or overall role in the peace process. As with any informal group, a shared commitment to resolving the conflict is an essential prerequisite to its success.[27] As noted earlier, however, Quartet members often place their own interests above those of the common goal. What should have been the Quartet's greatest asset, therefore, has in fact been a serious liability.

The perpetual quest for "consensus" combined with the need of the EU, UN and Russia to be "at the table" led to an equally compelling desire to maintain the unity of the Quartet at all costs, even in the face of serious internal divisions and irrespective of its impact or effectiveness. The problem is not that differences in opinion exist among the Quartet's members or that they may have conflicting interpretations over some decision or another—these are to be expected in any group—but that whatever nominal consensus may exist at a given moment was then to used to paper over much deeper and more consequential divisions. There is little value in speaking with "one voice" if the actors themselves do not agree on what that voice is saying, or if their words bear no resemblance to their actions.

Nowhere has the Quartet's lack of alignment been more evident—or more damaging—than in the cases of the Roadmap and the Quartet Principles, the two most important and most

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[25] Interview with former Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn (July 2010). See also James D. Wolfensohn, *A Global Life: My Journey among Rich and Poor, from Sydney to Wall Street to the World Bank* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010).
[26] Interview with former Deputy National Security Advisor Elliott Abrams, September 2010.
[27] Teresa Whitfield, *Working with Groups of Friends* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2010), at 9.

consequential actions taken by the Quartet. The Roadmap, the Quartet's most celebrated achievement, began as a European initiative in mid-2002 before being taken over by the United States. The plan, which was painstakingly negotiated over a six-month period, sought to correct several fundamental shortcomings that plagued the Oslo process in the 1990s, namely the need for parallel (rather than conditional) implementation, the centrality of monitoring and accountability, and a clearly defined end game. Thus, while its drafting was primarily U.S.-led, the Roadmap bore the unmistakable imprint of the EU and the UN, particularly in its emphasis on these three normative principles. Whatever potential benefits the Roadmap might have offered, however, were ultimately negated by the fact that it was abandoned almost immediately upon its release. Initially, the Roadmap was held up by disagreements with the United States over how and whether the plan should be implemented, and then later dropped altogether following the announcement of Sharon's Gaza "disengagement" plan.

The adoption of the Quartet Principles after Hamas's election victory in January 2006 demonstrates even more dramatically the perils of such an illusory "consensus." No sooner had the group affirmed the need for any Palestinian government to conform "to the principles of nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations"[28] than deep fissures emerged among the Quartet's members. The United States understood the three principles represented as clear conditions on the continuation of both aid and contact with the PA. The EU espoused a similar though ultimately more muddled position, attempting to cast its suspension of aid to the PA as neither a "boycott" nor "sanctions" on the Palestinians.[29] The UN position was equally fluid; although Annan had tried to avoid aid conditionality on PA compliance with the Principles, his successor, Ban Ki-moon "accepted it unreservedly".[30] The Russian position was the least coherent of all, attaching their name to a statement that declared it "inevitable" for future assistance to "be reviewed by donors against that government's commitment to the principles..."[31] while at the same time rejecting any aid conditionality and while maintaining open relations with Hamas itself.[32]

In both cases, a consensus was painstakingly negotiated among all four members and established as official Quartet policy. And yet, in both cases, differences over how its members understood that consensus were substantial enough that they nearly caused the breakup of the Quartet. In the case of the Roadmap, disagreements over the lack of implementation were papered over and eventually overtaken by a new "consensus"—namely the need to get behind Israel's planned withdrawal from Gaza (a plan which not coincidentally was expressly designed to subvert the Roadmap). When it came to the far more formidable divisions over the Quartet Principals, however, the lack of genuine consensus was simply subordinated to the desire to maintain unity at all costs. More striking still is the enormous disparity in how these two documents were treated. Even as the Quartet allowed implementation of Roadmap to fall by the way side, it held scrupulously to the letter of the Quartet Principles. Although only the former was officially enshrined in a Security Council resolution (UNSCR 1515), it was the latter that has assumed a quasi-legal status.

As the International Crisis Group's Gareth Evans astutely observed with regard to the EU's own lack of consensus, "Maybe speaking with a divided voice is better than speaking with

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[28] Quartet Statement, January 30, 2006.
[29] See, for example, Javier Solana, "Middle East Peace is a Priority," *Palestine Times*, November 30, 2006.
[30] Interview with Alvaro de Soto (June 2010). According to de Soto, it was Ban's acceptance of conditionality that prompted the former's resignation as UN Special Coordinator in May 2007.
[31] Quartet Statement, January 30, 2006.
[32] *The Frontrunner*, February 1, 2006.

one voice and getting it wrong."[33] This applies equally to the Quartet. Most of the damage inflicted by the abandonment of the Roadmap was to the group's own credibility, both individually and collectively. However, one could also argue that the failure to implement the plan helped prolong the conflict either by causing a further breakdown in trust between the two sides or by fostering a false sense of hope among them. Even so, had it been only a matter of its inability to implement the Roadmap or prevent outbursts in violence, one might have considered the Quartet a diplomatic and political wash. In light of the Quartet Principles and their many negative diplomatic, political, and humanitarian consequences, however, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the Quartet has done more harm than good. The direct and indirect impact of the Principles can still be seen today in the ongoing blockade of Gaza, the split between Hamas and Fatah, and the erosion of PA governance and legitimacy.

The combination of the Quartet's highly malleable structure and lopsided membership led to a tendency of the group to paper over genuine and sometimes far-reaching differences in the interest of maintaining group cohesion. The fact that the Quartet could be all things to all people allowed its most powerful and vested member, the United States, not only to dominate the institution itself but to effectively transform it into something other than what it was originally intended to be. As a result, the Quartet was transformed from a multilateral framework for resolving the conflict to a tool of American foreign policy. This point was acknowledged rather explicitly by a former senior U.S. government official, who observed, ""The reality is that it's a vehicle for U.S. policy, to allow us to keep everybody—to herd the cats so we're all heading in the same direction. The Quartet is not really an independent actor."[34] While European and UN officials may dispute this characterization, their frequent grumblings about America's preference for unilateralism, as well as the oft-heard complaint that the U.S. has not "used the Quartet properly", basically affirm the essence of this official's assertion.

At the same time, the original, normative understanding of the Quartet as a vehicle for mediating between *two* conflicting parties has been effectively replaced by a focus on managing (or micromanaging) the affairs of *one* of them—the Palestinians. This type of "microlateralism" stems mainly from a U.S. and Israeli desire to deemphasize the Quartet's political mediation role, which necessarily entails parallelism and mutual acountability. This is exemplified *par excellence* by the subversion of the Roadmap, whereby Israeli and Palestinian obligations were, as a matter of policy, applied in a highly selective and unequal manner. In its place, meanwhile, came the inordinate emphasis on Palestinian "reform" and "state-building," as exemplified by the creation of the OQR, which has virtually elevated Tony Blair to the status of a *de facto* Quartet member. However crucial it may be, any attempt at Palestinian "state-building" that occurs absent a parallel process of de-occupation and de-colonization remains a highly limited—if not futile—exercise.

The Quartet underwent a parallel shift from what was initially a strategic, comprehensive and integrated vision aimed at conflict resolution to one that is decidedly reactive and compartmentalized even in its attempts at conflict management. The fragmented, ad hoc nature of the U.S/Quartet approach is evident in the prevailing view that a meaningful political process can be pursued independently of the current Hamas-Fateh split within the PA or that progress toward a two-state solution can be made in the West Bank irrespective of conditions in Gaza. It

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[33] "Towards Peace in the Middle East: Lessons for European Policymakers," Address by Gareth Evans, President, International Crisis Group, to Closing Session, PSE/Socialist Group in the European Parliament Conference on Moving Toward an International Peace Conference for the Middle East, European Parliament, Brussels, July 3, 2007. (Available at: *http://www.gevans.org/speeches/speech229.html*).

[34] Interview with Former Senior Government Official, July 2010.

is also reflected in the compartmentalization of the process into discrete, though largely artificial spheres of political, security, economic, and humanitarian components.

B. Lessons Learned

Based on the experiences of the Quartet, we can draw several key lessons with regard to the potential for successful EU-US coordination: the structure and format of coordination matters; and the balance of interests is at least as important (if not more so) as the balance of power. And from these we can extrapolate a third lesson, which is that the potential for coordination will also be hindered by the proximity of the issue/country to the Arab-Israeli arena.

1. *The format and/or structure of coordination matters.* The more structured and formal the coordination (i.e., via a 'contact group' or other mechanism rather than on a purely *ad hoc* or case-by-case basis), the greater the pressure on the group to present a "unified front," even when there may be none.

2. *The 'balance of interests' is at least as important as the balance of power.* The greater the power-interests disparity, the more likely coordination efforts will be either ignored or manipulated by its most powerful/staked actor. As corollaries to this principle, we can also say:

    a. *Proximity to the Arab-Israeli arena (in political and not just geographic terms) can hinder the potential for coordination.* The closer a country or issue is to the Arab-Israeli arena, the more likely it is to become (*i*) a domestic U.S. political issue and (*ii*) a potential source of tension between U.S. and EU. (e.g., relatively easy to get consensus on NATO action in Libya, but much harder to develop consensus on Syria.)
    b. *Transatlantic coordination may be more effective when undertaken by individual European states rather than the EU, as such.* The lack of cohesion among the EU's diverse membership puts it a permanent disadvantage vis-à-vis the U.S. while reducing its representation to that of a single actor, when in fact it represents the often varied interests of many.

3. *No consensus is better than a false consensus.* The combination of the above two factors increases the risk of overlooking fundamental differences in favor of some artificial or illusory "consensus," which in turn increases the likelihood of veering away from the initial goal(s). Perhaps the most important lesson one can draw from the Quartet is the seemingly paradoxical notion that collective (or joint) action may not always be more effective and, in some cases, may even prove more harmful than were individual actors to operate on their own.

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Re-thinking Western Policies in Light of the Arab Uprising

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Coordinating the Transatlantic Response to the Arab Spring

by
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The Arab Spring marks a historical turning point. Its implications go well beyond the countries in which we have witnessed the fall of decades-old rulers, violent power struggles or mass demonstrations and uprisings. In the end, none of the countries in the region will remain unaffected. This might not only entail regime change and a process of political and economic transformation, but in some cases also mid- to long-term instability, civil war or even secession of territories. It will also have geo-political implications – affecting regional alliances and power balances as well as "the old conflicts," such as the Arab-Israeli one. It is of imminent interest for the transatlantic community to grasp the opportunity and try to support change towards more open, more representative, more just political and economic systems – and thus sustainable and dynamic stability. Still, the situation for the US and the Europeans differs. Above all, because these changes take place in Europe's immediate neighbourhood, EU member states are directly affected by spill-over effects of instability and conflict and at the same time have a chance of more direct involvement and exchange. They also have comprehensive policy frameworks in place, such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Union for the Mediterranean, on which to build. Last but not least, popular perception in the Arab world of the US and the Europeans remains to be quite different. As a general rule, therefore, the European and the US response should be closely coordinated and should follow a division of labour rather than embarking on a cooperative approach. In addition, not too much energy should be spent in constructing new transatlantic (or international) frameworks of coordination. The limited impact and lifespan that the 2005 Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) initiative supports this point. Close coordination should also include Turkey.

Challenges for transatlantic policies

The Western stance towards the Arab Spring will be particularly decisive for the development of relations between the West and the Arab world. To date US and European reactions have been rather hesitant, at times contradictory and, at least partially, defensive and guided by fear. Indeed, the credibility of Western democracies is at stake here and hence the US and European response to developments in the region should not only correspond to the interest of a sustainable stabilization of the Mediterranean – in the sense of what Europeans have termed a "ring of well-governed countries." Rather, it needs to do justice to the overwhelming importance of developments in the Arab world. Therefore, Europeans and Americans should also be wary of pursuing a "business as usual" approach. It will just not be sufficient to continue or extend existing programmes and projects. Rather, these need to be critically evaluated and lessons from hitherto cooperation within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, European Neighbourhood Policy, and the Union for the Mediterranean need to be taken into account. It is therefore essential that an intensive debate on the aims and means of a future policy towards the region occurs – nationally, among Europeans as well as on a transatlantic level.

In the short run, US and European policies should move to take short-term measures offering support for the remodelling of those countries which have recently embarked on a path of transformation, i.e., Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. Also, urgent steps are required that contribute to boosting the national economies there after the upheaval-related breakdown and making up for losses sustained following the collapse, e.g., of the tourism sector. In addition, transatlantic partners should be on hand with comprehensive and generous offers of mid- to long-term support to help foster political and economic transformation. Such a support could and should be symbolically reaffirmed by a high-ranking meeting. On the European side that could be a European Council meeting with representatives of all three countries. On such an occasion a "pact for labour, education and energy" could be adopted.

Country-specific challenges – country-specific support

Rather than trying to devise a new overall approach to the region (similar to the BMENA initiative) the US and the Europeans should develop specific approaches for each of the countries of the Mediterranean as well as other Arab states. Not only in the current phase of upheaval is it evident that the situation differs greatly from country to country, but the future challenges will also be quite different. Moreover, the chances for successful transition to a system of representative, free and just rule are quite different between countries such as Tunisia and Yemen, for example. They depend on a number of factors, including the stage of development, integration into the world economy, availability of resources, societal fragmentation, the degree of institutionalisation as well as the method of change (largely non-violent vs. military) from the previous regime. At the same time, the willingness of Arab elites to accept external support will vary considerably. This means that offers of support need to be tailored to the specific conditions in each of the countries in a much stronger fashion than has so far been the case. By contrast, a "one size fits all" approach with complicated grading and classification procedures – as proposed by the European Commission and the High Representative in March 2011 with the project of a "Mediterranean Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity" and included in the revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) – seems to be rather out of place.

Certainly, a framework is also needed for regional cooperation, and for the Europeans to situate such a framework in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership would seem logical. In practice, however, this form of cooperation has not proven very effective, not least due to the obstacles resulting from the Arab-Israeli conflict. Therefore, the projects of the Mediterranean Union (such as the solar plan, Euro-Med university, depollution of the Mediterranean Sea, etc.) should be pushed forward with new impetus according to the principle of "variable geometry" – i.e. the approach that a certain number of EMP partners can cooperate on projects in which they have a particular interest rather than all having to join in and approve of each and every activity. Still, issues of representation and disputes concerning cooperation need to be resolved for the Union to work effectively. Here, lack of progress with regards to the Arab-Israeli conflict will remain an impediment – as it will, in more general terms, keep on reflecting negatively on Western-Arab relations.

Setting priorities

In reaction towards the changes in the region clear policy priorities should be set. In this sense, the US and Europeans should concentrate their cooperation in particular on those states that have already set in motion a process of transformation. If political and economic transition in Tunisia and Egypt succeed – which is by no means guaranteed – this will surely have a strong impact on other Arab countries and populations and encourage emulation.

Such a role model effect would be a much more effective driving force for reform in the region than policies of positive or negative conditioning, such as are propagated in the joint communications of European Commission and High Representative, or in the revision of the ENP for instance – the reason being that it is very unlikely that regimes can be persuaded to undertake reforms that contradict their main aims. Certainly, reform projects can have a transformative effect, if to a limited degree, and there should be clear benchmarks for cooperation. However, experience from the last fifteen years in the context of the EMP and the ENP show clearly: political, economic and administrative reforms can only have a tangible effect if they are owned and supported by partner countries' regimes, meaning that they see such reforms as being in their interests. Most reforms aiming at political and economic opening, more inclusive policies, making administrations more effective, etc., however, have shown not to fall into this category. In order to make the proposed conditioning actually effective in such cases, incentives would have to be strong (or sanctions hurting) enough so that the cost-benefit

calculation of rulers would be affected decisively. Up until now, however, this has not been the case, as the experience with the ENP's governance facility exemplifies. Incentives and sanctions have been negligible – and policies rather contradictory. And even if the ENP revision now builds on the concept "more for more", this factor looks hardly set to change in the future – not least due to geopolitical interests of EU member states, path dependencies of cooperation, unconditional aid from other sources (or aid with different, at times contradictory conditions attached from other sources), as well as the resource wealth of some of the partner countries.

Considering lessons learned in democracy promotion

The Europeans have offered to support transition in Tunisia and Egypt through comprehensive and context-specific "transformation partnerships;" the G8 has also pledged support. The announced aid for judicial reforms, support for political parties, media training and the holding of elections is indeed useful. The same is true for plans to increase development cooperation and extend the activities of political foundations (in the German case) as well as to establish a European Endowment for Democracy. In the context of democracy promotion though, lessons learned should be taken into account. In the past, democracy promotion concentrated all too often on formal institutions and processes that had little to do with the political reality of the respective country. In the future, more attention therefore needs to be paid to what measures are suitable to not only transform formal institutions but rather to make actual decision-making more accountable and inclusive.

This is true, for instance, when it comes to election support. In general, too strong a focus on ballots should be avoided. In the beginning, it is more important for transition to succeed to offer political education (particularly in rural areas), as well as to foster the development of a consensus on basic values and state-society relations. It is also important to help the political formation and capacity building of new actors as well as alliance building among them in order to compete with status quo forces. Amongst others, German political foundations are particularly well equipped in order to implement measures that can take effect way beyond the capitals. However, this will only succeed if additional funding is made available in the mid-term to ensure sufficient staff for such programmes. Indeed, election support only makes sense if comprehensive political freedoms are guaranteed, the formation of parties is facilitated and equal opportunities exist, i.e., if all social and political forces have the chance to participate in the political process. Moreover, the decision making power should in effect lie with the elected parliament and an accountable government for elections to be of value. Only if these conditions are fulfilled is it reasonable to offer support for elections and election monitoring with international observers. In this context, an idea circulated some years ago in the EMP could be revived: rather than Europeans and the US deploying election monitors to give their stamp of approval to elections in the region, election monitoring should be on a mutual basis – as in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Particularly important, but at the same time very delicate, are measures in the field of security sector reform. In Tunisia and Egypt, for example, civil security forces have been largely discredited. The army, in turn, cannot – and should not – permanently assume the task of providing domestic order and security. Moreover, there is the danger that dismissed employees of, for instance, the state security services contribute to disorder and chaos. Accordingly, it is sensible to support security sector reform (SSR) in both countries. However, experience shows that international support in this field is most often limited to training and equipment provision, while the aspect of political reform gets neglected. SSR has to be unequivocally geared towards establishing security organs that are democratically controlled, work on the basis of the rule of law and are aimed at the protection of human rights. This also means that SSR needs to be accompanied by a process that deals with former regime injustices, by comprehensive

constitutional and judicial reform as well as a profound restructuring of the security apparatus, in particular of the intelligence services.

In countries in which authoritarian regimes continue to rule – or where the direction and path of reform remain unclear – the international community should refrain from SSR cooperation and from training measures for security forces. In such cases, there is a considerable danger that external help could stabilise repressive structures instead of opening them to democratic reform. Human rights training for security forces does nothing to alter this, as long as hierarchies, competencies and responsibilities in the security sector remain ambiguous and as long as the security apparatus is not subject to democratic control. Rather, it would be consistent and rational for EU states to agree upon an EU Code of Conduct which would prohibit providing authoritarian regimes with weaponry (small arms in particular) and equipment for counter-insurgency or corresponding training. If such a code of conduct would be adhered to by other players in the international community as well that would, of course, be even better.

Priority for economic and social reform

The measures undertaken by many regimes in the region to calm down protests – such as wage increases and employment assurances in the public sector, raises in subsidies for basic commodities and even large-scale cash handouts – cannot be financed in the long run, in particular by resource-poor states. Rather, comprehensive economic and social reforms are of decisive importance for the success of transition. In many countries, far-reaching reforms are needed that aim at establishing the mechanisms of a market economy and that are geared towards improving life-perspectives of the population, rather than focusing on privatisation and harmonisation with EU standards and regulations. Reform steps should thus be aimed in particular at employment-oriented growth, country-wide balanced development and sustainable social security systems. This implies also socially absorbing the restructuring of subsidy and support systems whilst at the same time only gradually reducing the public sector (especially in Egypt) in order to avoid mass dismissals and a de-industrialisation.

For donor countries this might also imply temporarily funding subsidies and social services under the condition that local governments present corresponding reform programmes. This is especially pressing against the backdrop of a continuing trend of globally increasing food prices which threaten to further impoverish lower income classes. Furthermore, Europeans should offer a contribution to modernise labour laws and aid the formation of collective bargaining parties in the countries undergoing transformation. The importance of independent employee and employer unions and associations with democratic structures and corresponding competencies is paramount here. The private sector, in turn, can play an important role regarding the promotion of new standards of good corporate governance. US and European companies should set an example by speaking out against corruption in business life, adhering to transparency in their dealings with host states and applying social norms in an exemplary manner. Aside from this, support for human development should be at the forefront of any policy. Special consideration should lie with the support of women, education and development in the countries' peripheries. Among other things it is necessary to support the public education sector which has been neglected for decades. The fashionable term "Generation Facebook" should not belie the high degree of illiteracy in many states in the region, the low share of women with secondary education, and the extent of poverty, especially in rural areas. Moreover, the EU should extend the Erasmus student exchange programme to Tunisia, Egypt and Libya in order to support higher education in these countries. This would also contribute to an intensification of exchange between European and Arab populations. Corresponding programmes should also be enhanced by the US.

A pact for labour, education and energy

The High Representative for EU Foreign and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, announced that Europeans would react to the changes in the region with three "Ms": "money, market access and mobility". In the papers presented since then by the EU these three elements have been lost in the details. In the fields of mobility and market access in particular, the concrete measures pledged by EU member states have been more than hesitant. So far, Europe has neither made generous offers nor has it set strong incentives. Rather it has focused on expanding its capabilities in fighting irregular migration by reinforcing FRONTEX, its migration control agency. However, it would be an important symbolic signal if the EU were to ease market access, especially for agricultural and processed agricultural products from transformation countries, by reducing non-tariff trade barriers as well as subsidies for competing European products. Still, the immediate employment effects in countries such as Tunisia and Egypt would actually be minimal. More important therefore would be a "pact for labour, education and energy", which would be aimed at cooperation based on mutual interests between the EU, Tunisia, Egypt and Libya (and in the future possibly additional transformation countries). Such a pact should be at the forefront of future EU policy.

It should, first, contribute to the creation of vocational training positions and jobs on the ground – as announced by German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the G8 meeting in May this year.

Second, graduates and new jobseekers in particular should have the chance to acquire practical experience through traineeships and working residencies of several years in Europe. As part of this, mid-term "mobility-partnerships" should be realized as proposed in a common paper by the High Representative and the EU Commission. Mobility should thereby not only be regulated but rather be actively promoted. In the short run this should be done by visa relaxations for trainees, students and business people. Moreover, measures are required that support the host and origin countries in facilitating the conditions for circular migration – in the sense of a development-oriented promotion of international mobility. This includes temporary tax exemption for returning entrepreneurs, an eased portability and recognition of qualifications and skills, and investments in education of migrant children. All this, however, does not replace a long-term strategically oriented migration policy which actually deserves such name. Both national and Europe-wide debate is urgently needed about a future-oriented immigration and education policy by which a win-win situation between the EU and the Mediterranean can be created.

Third, energy cooperation between Europe and those counties undergoing transformation should be expanded as a priority issue. In this field again cooperation is of mutual interest. A basis has already been established in the context of the solar plan of the Mediterranean Union and with the so-called "Desertec Initiative". However, the expansion of renewable energy supplies in the countries south to the Mediterranean should also benefit the power supply of southern partner countries themselves on a larger scale than previously planned. And in order to make the private sector involvement pay off it needs to be better politically supported than it has been to date. After its nuclear phase-out, Germany seems to be particularly well positioned to assume a leadership role in this regard.

Dealing with states which have not yet embarked on a path of transformation

The possibilities of inducing comprehensive change from outside are limited. For the time being, transatlantic partners should thus opt for two approaches towards those countries in which the old regimes remain in power. First, they should continue or rather expand their efforts to promote exchange and cooperation on the societal level. The Civil Society Facility and the

European Endowment for Democracy that are both to be established in the framework of the ENP can contribute to this objective. It is however important that Europeans and Americans not only cooperate with organized civil society or those actors that are clearly pro-Western. Rather they should be as inclusive as possible and involve representatives of all relevant political and societal forces in their activities.

Second, the US and EU member states should take a firm stand against human rights violations. By contrast, military interventions, as in Libya, have to remain the exception. Moreover, human rights dialogue in the context of the Mediterranean Union should not be degraded to subcommittees, but rather be held on the highest political level. This is an area where coordination is of the utmost importance. Above all Europeans and Americans can achieve the greatest effect if identical signals come from Washington D.C., Brussels, EU capitals and Ankara.