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Towards a New Southern Mediterranean Region?

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Special Issue Editors
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Towards a New Southern Mediterranean Region?

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FOREWORD

by Dr. Joe Borg, MEDAC Chairman

This publication seeks to highlight the major historical developments taking place across the Southern Mediterranean in 2011 and some of the implications these developments are having on geo-strategic relations across the Mediterranean.

The sea-change that has taken place in the Mediterranean will influence national, regional and international relations for decades to come. This historic moment in the contemporary history of the Mediterranean offers us the possibility to create a more secure, stable and peaceful Mediterranean as enshrined in the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995.

This collection of essays by MEDAC academics focuses on a number of important themes that will influence the future course of pan-Mediterranean relations. MEDAC is actively engaged to continue to provide a platform where dialogue and open exchange between the main stakeholders of society, namely government representatives, academics, business officials and civil society at large, is nurtured and strengthened.

The winds of change that have swept across the Southern Mediterranean in 2011 have unleashed an irreversible process of democratic transition. Democratic transition brings with it numerous challenges and difficulties which need to be managed simultaneously by a range of actors. It is essential that a collective approach by all sectors of society is adopted to establish a framework where these actors, such as the judiciary, media and civil society, are allowed to function and serve as guarantors of democracy.

If the Arab Spring of 2011 is to succeed in the creation of a more open and transparent grouping of Arab states across the southern shore of the Mediterranean it is essential that a free flow of ideas at a people to people level takes place. Everyone has to have the opportunity to listen, learn and understand what is being proposed so that the foundation of a democratic decision-making process is established. The ultimate objective must be the creation of a more prosperous Mediterranean region where all citizens are able to participate and benefit on an equitable basis from the changes being introduced.

Security Dynamics in the Euro-Mediterranean Area: Towards a New Era of Relations

Professor Stephen C. Calleya

The winds of change that have swept across the southern shores of the Mediterranean in 2011, have resulted in a fundamental geopolitical paradigm shift, that will result in a completely different political landscape in this region of the world.

The grass roots revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria to date, as well as rumblings elsewhere in the Arab world, offer us a glimpse of the immediate urgency to address the challenge of political paralysis and economic deprivation, common throughout the southern shore of the Mediterranean. The Arab street has spoken. Either their legitimate demands are gradually met by serious action, or an orderly transition will soon give way to a more chaotic, if not anarchic, future.

As we navigate through the uncharted waters of Euro-Mediterranean regional dynamics in the weeks and months ahead, it is essential that we bear in mind what larger picture is at stake. If the process of democratic reform, based on the rule of law and inclusion of all legitimate political movements is not successful, it will create a power vacuum where the failed state syndrome experienced in other parts of the world will be able to emerge.

When contacted in August 2010, to comment on calls demanding a moratorium on deepwater drilling as a result of British Petroleum's (BP) decision to start deep sea drilling off the coast of Libya, following the human and environmental disaster that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico, a BP spokesperson shrugged off such a call answering "who is the authority for the Mediterranean?" [1]

The absence of a security arrangement in the Mediterranean has resulted in a security vacuum in this geo-strategically sensitive part of the world, as highlighted by the BP's attitude towards efforts to suppress its operations in the Mediterranean, immediately after being responsible for one of the world's most serious environmental disasters, when the Macondo well exploded on April 20th 2010.

The security vacuum that exists in the Mediterranean is further highlighted by the actions of Col Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, during his military campaign against revolutionaries throughout the spring of 2011. Despite numerous resolutions by different international organizations including the United Nations, the European Union and the League of Arab States, no Mediterranean security mechanism exists to enforce such resolutions. It was thus left to a coalition of the willing, that has been extremely difficult to coordinate, to enforce UN Security Council Resolution 1973.

As Henry Kissinger pointed out during an international lecture, nature is against vacuums and will seek to correct such a situation. A **security vacuum** in the Mediterranean provides a conducive context, within which forces of instability can upset co-operative relations and enhance power shifts, that could trigger further rounds of arms races in an area where military procurement is already one of the highest in the world.[2]

The heterogeneous nature of the Mediterranean represents a great challenge, when it comes to managing the security challenges present in contemporary international relations. The Mediterranean Sea connects three continents. In the words of Fernand Braudel: The Mediterranean is not even a single sea, it is a complex of seas; and these seas are broken up by islands, interrupted by peninsulas, ringed by intricate coastlines.[3] The Mediterranean has also often been referred to as the sea 'between the lands, and goes by many names: 'Our Sea' for the Romans, the 'White Sea' (Akdeniz) for the Turks, the Great Sea' (Yam gadol) for the Jews, the 'Middle Sea' (Mittelmeer) for the Germans, and more doubtfully the 'Great Green' of the ancient Egyptians. [4]

From a strategic perspective one notes at least four different "seas": the western Mediterranean from Gibraltar to the Gulf of Sirte, linking southern Europe to the Maghreb; the Adriatic Sea, linking Italy to the Balkans; the Aegean Sea connecting Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus; and the eastern Mediterranean basin also in the vicinity of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

An analysis of the pattern of relations in the different sub regions of the Mediterranean a decade into the new millennium reveals that while Southern Europe states have become more deeply integrated into the European sphere of influence, similar to their counterparts in Eastern Europe since the end of the Cold War, no similar pattern of unity was noticeable across the other Mediterranean sub regions until the Arab Spring of 2011, that ushered in a period of seeking to

embrace the global trends of democracy and liberal values by Arab states in the Maghreb and the Mahreq.

The struggle of radical Islamists against the powerful forces of modernization, capitalism and globalisation is not a new phenomenon. Resistance to change has taken place at regular intervals. However, even the Chinese have understood that while it is possible to have capitalism without political liberalisation, it is much more difficult to have capitalism without cultural liberalisation.[5] This is a lesson that all southern shore Mediterranean states would be wise to grasp.

The main reason why political movements, such as Al Qaeda, will not succeed in their mission state to reject modernity and democracy across the Maghreb and Mashreq, is because their societies do not want to go back to the way of life of 1,400 years before. The Arab Spring of 2011 provides clear evidence of this reality! Most Arab states remain allied to the United States. Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the GCC states, and now also Iraq – all Maghreb and Mashreq states are also aligned to the European Union through its numerous regional initiatives including the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Euro-Med Partnership and the more recent Union for the Mediterranean.

The very fluid nature of Mediterranean international relations during 2011 has resulted in an ever-changing global security landscape. Perceptual changes taking place in the Euro-Mediterranean security environment demand a strategic re-think, when it comes to addressing and managing sources of instability more effectively. The continuous emergence of different sources of insecurity demands a more flexible modality of security management, as states in the international system seek to limit the ramifications from the permanent insecurity landscape we find ourselves in.

The Mediterranean is already a geo-strategic area, where numerous sources of insecurity threaten to escalate and put regional and international stability at risk. Regional dynamics that need to be urgently addressed include the collapse of failed states, the increase of terrorist activities, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the proliferation of all types of weapons, energy security, environmental degradation and the ever-increasing state of economic disparity between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Given the fluid nature of security after the first decade of the new millennium, one needs to consider the type of strategic policy that needs to be implemented, in order to minimize the level of turbulence between different states across the

Mediterranean area. Can a regional Mediterranean security arrangement be established to address security challenges in a more consistent and coherent manner? Given the heterogeneous nature of the Mediterranean system of states, is it more feasible to address security challenges through smaller sub-regional groupings of states? Does the diversity of security interests, especially along the north-south axis of Mediterranean relations, dictate that security issues can only be contained effectively through the active engagement of extra-regional actors such as the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and the Group of 20?

In the post-Cold War period the main actor that has sought to increase its influence in the security agenda of the Mediterranean is the European Union. Since the launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in November 1995, the participating European and Mediterranean states have consistently agreed to introduce and develop confidence building measures, in an effort to reduce already existing tensions and especially as a mechanism to prevent additional clashes from emerging. While recognizing the different perceptions that exist due to ongoing conflicts in the region, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the process of Euro-Mediterranean dialogue has resulted in the emergence of a common security culture that focuses on preventing an escalation of hostilities.

The historic turn of events across the southern shores of the Mediterranean, starting with the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia in February 2011 and the overthrowing of the Mubarak regime in Egypt in March 2011, followed by subsequent protests in other countries clamouring for change, offers an opportunity to again champion a common Mediterranean security culture, built upon the principles of democracy and the rule of law. This is an opportunity that the European Union must seize, if its Euro-Mediterranean vocation is to be perceived as credible in the years to come.

The most advanced security model blueprint, developed through the process of Euro-Mediterranean interaction, to date has been the Security Guidelines document, found in the Annex to the Chairman's Formal Conclusion at the Third Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministerial meeting in Stuttgart in April 1999. The Guidelines provide a specific framework for elaborating the Barcelona Declaration headline goal of a Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability.

Ongoing conflicts in the Mediterranean, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, have not allowed the political will necessary to advance such a security blueprint from being nurtured. In the absence of a dramatic breakthrough in the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rather unlikely given the hardening of extreme positions over the past decade, a more short-term Mediterranean security management framework should be sought. A decade since this Euro-Mediterranean Security Guidelines document was announced, the time has come to revisit the strategic objectives highlighted and explore ways to commence implementation of such measures. even on an incremental basis.[6]

The Security Guidelines Annex stipulates that the establishment of an enhanced political dialogue, in an appropriate institutional framework and on adequate levels, will have priority. It also states that the dispositions regarding partnership building measures, good neighbourly relations, sub-regional co-operation and preventive diplomacy, will be developed in an evolutionary manner and progressively strengthened.

The absence of a security arrangement, to address the long list of security challenges in the Mediterranean, is certainly a recipe for an increase of sources of insecurity, as this strategic waterway becomes further identified as a zone where illicit activity can take place unchecked. It is quite ironic that the more interdependent the global security theatre of operations has become, the less connected security mechanisms in the Mediterranean have become. If such a trend continues it is clear that the Mediterranean will become an area where a security vacuum is dominant.

The setting up of a regional security network will dispel perceptions, that the Mediterranean has largely been neglected by the international community since the end of the Cold War. The risk that such a perception becomes further entrenched, is particularly high at the start of the second decade of the twenty-first century, given that post-Cold war great powers have continued to upgrade their attention towards other regions adjacent to the Mediterranean such as the Balkans, the Arabian Gulf and sub-Sahara Africa, but not the Mediterranean basin itself.

One of the post-Cold War lessons that is already clear, is that it is a strategic error to concentrate your security forces in one region, at the expense of securing stability in others. International attention on the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe during the past decades, seems to have taken place at the expense of developing a comprehensive security structure in the Mediterranean. The resultant security vacuum has witnessed a multiplication of sources of insecurity thrive across the Mediterranean including illegal migration, drug trafficking and other types of organized crime.

Foreign policy strategists that are seeking to establish peace and security around the Euro-Mediterranean area, should introduce policies that seek to balance sub-regional interests and not turn regional security into a zero-sum game, where sub-regions compete for attention.

When addressing the plethora of security issues in the Mediterranean, international actors such as the European Union and NATO, must guard against promising more than they can deliver. The post- EU Lisbon Treaty implementation process, the management of the global recession's impact on the Euro, and the continuation of the EU enlargement process mean that the EU's plate will remain very full for most of the decade leading to 2020. The EU must therefore be prepared to work closely with other security institutions and states, such as NATO, the OSCE, the United States and China, to develop a functioning security framework in the Mediterranean.

If such an exercise is to be successful, it is essential that all Euro-Mediterranean countries become more vocal, transparent and engaged in the post-Cold War security environment that is evolving around them. Otherwise, they will have no one to blame but themselves for becoming further marginalized from the wider security framework that is emerging globally.

A decade since the new millennium commenced, a more interdependent international system has developed. Given their geographic proximity and commonality of security interests, it is thus in both the EU's and the Mediterranean countries interest to strengthen security relations between themselves. Measures that can be taken to realize this include, proceeding with the next round of enlargement in the Western Balkans in the shortest time frame possible, speeding up the processing of Turkey's application to join the EU, and ensuring a dynamic and consistent implementation of a more tangible Euro-Mediterranean Partnership agenda.

It is, however, also of paramount importance that a common political and security agenda be subscribed to, along the lines identified in the political and security basket of the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995. The absence of a comprehensive political and security agenda and a socio-cultural framework, as the Union for the Mediterranean focus seems to suggest, cannot create the necessary holistic security agenda to attract a collective Mediterranean approach to security challenges.

Such an approach will assist in the complex task of identifying and acting upon Euro-Mediterranean common interests; a prerequisite to enable the nurturing of a common Euro-Mediterranean political will. This is the strategy that must emerge, if the current security vacuum in the Mediterranean is to be reversed and replaced by an effective trans-Mediterranean security mechanism.

Political will must, of course, be coupled with further economic cooperation between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, including a sustained effort to strengthen further south-south cooperation. The establishment of a free trade area between the so-called Agadir Group of countries, namely Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan provides a common ground upon which further south-south cooperation can be encouraged. All four countries are also members of NATO's Mediterranean Partnership. The Agadir initiative should facilitate the task of enhancing further integration between North African states and provide a conducive context to eventually reactivate the moribund Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) that was created in 1989, as well as seek to create a common market between Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Libya.[7]

Throughout history the Mediterranean has continuously been at the centre of international relations. The end of the Cold War led some pundits to believe that the Mediterranean would be marginalized in global relations. The enlargement of the European Union towards the east, the rise of China in Asia and the emergence of India and Brazil, as leading economic developing countries, further cemented this perception.

Yet, the process of globalization has not shifted international attention away from the Mediterranean. Two decades since the end of the Cold War, it is clear that the Mediterranean remains an essential strategic theatre of operation linking Europe, North Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East and the Black Sea together.

Anyone questioning the strategic relevance of the Mediterranean in contemporary international relations, must be careful not to confuse the rise of China and the Asia Pacific in general, with a diminishment of the Euro-Mediterranean sphere of influence. While the East-West dynamic pattern of relations and the North-South dynamic pattern of relations continue to shift in different directions, the physical importance of the Mediterranean as a geo-strategic waterway remains a constant.

The post-Cold War Mediterranean is a geographical area where the majority of contemporary soft and hard security challenges are present, including ongoing

conflicts in each sub region of the basin primarily over territorial claims, the proliferation of weapons, terrorist activities, illegal migration, ethnic tensions, human rights abuses, climate change, natural resources disputes especially concerning energy and water, and environmental degradation.

The long list of threats and risks, that need to be addressed and managed in a coherent manner, requires an institutional design to cope with such serious demands. The absence of a regional security arrangement in the Mediterranean that includes all riparian states, continues to be a major handicap prohibiting the effective management of contemporary security challenges. With no Mediterranean regional security arrangement on the horizon, better coordination between the multitude of sub regional groupings across the basin, is a prerequisite to achieving a more stable security situation across the Mediterranean.

Since the end of the Cold War and especially after the September 11 2001 attacks, there has been a continuous perception in Europe of a threat from the Middle East. Alarming headlines in the international media, focusing on instability in the Middle East and the regular arrival of hundreds of illegal migrants from the southern shores of the Mediterranean to Europe, highlight such a trend.

The flow of news reports coming from the Middle East predominantly feature threatening images, such as extremists preaching hatred against the West, or terrorists displaying contempt for human rights, or brutal dictators seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

Such images portray the Middle East as an alien, hostile and backward region. They also help focus attention on the large migrant communities across Europe from these countries. Xenophobia towards migrant communities across Europe has strengthened and given rise to large right-wing political movements in France, Britain and the Netherlands.

Addressing the issue of illegal migration, through increased cooperation and information exchanges on policing, visa controls and asylum policies through the Schengen framework and the Frontex mechanism, has so far only had limited positive results. It is clear that both Schengen and Frontex need to be better structured, to be able to address effectively the crisis management nature of human trafficking across the Mediterranean.

In reality, the economic affluence that Europe enjoys together with its military supremacy, especially when compared to its southern neighbours, makes the

suggestion that the Middle East is a threat to Europe seem nonsensical. Yet, since the end of the Cold War, there has been an increasing perception in Europe and North America that the new enemy after communism would come from the Middle East. Alarmist propaganda fuelled by the media, has focused on the emergence of an Islamic jihad against the West, particularly following the 9/11 attacks against the United States.

This perception has been further bolstered by the ever increasing number of illegal migrants, that have sought to seek a better life in Europe by crossing the Mediterranean. A "migration invasion" syndrome gained ground throughout the 1990s, when tens of thousands of migrants from North and sub-Sahara Africa opted for maritime trafficking, that more often than not, ended up in a futile attempt to arrive in Europe.

The European Union's inadequate response, to the flow of a large number of people seeking political asylum or refugee status, also underlined the hollow commitment advanced countries have when it comes to humanitarian policies and welfare resources. Falling birth-rates in Europe, coupled with the large number of arrivals from the southern shores of the Mediterranean, led many pundits to question what impact such a phenomenon would have on the future identity of the different nation states of Europe.

Economic stagnation across much of Africa and the lack of any serious political reform throughout the continent, has served as a major push factor leading millions of young Africans to pursue a different lifestyle elsewhere. The international economic downturn since 2008 is, however, certain to lead to the introduction of more stringent criteria, when it comes to administrative procedures dealing with applicants of political asylum. This is even more the case, given the clear evidence available, to prove that such would-be asylum seekers are economic migrants seeking a better standard of living.

Despite widespread critique, there is little choice other than pressing ahead with the Barcelona Declaration agenda. The quality of the economic and political dialogue within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership can make a real difference on the shape of events in the region. What can be done to improve the Euro-Mediterranean track record of relations?

First, one must keep pushing economic reforms. Economic adjustment is not a one-time affair. Difficult adjustments and arbitrages still remain to be decided in many countries and in many sectors. This is not an easy proposition, as economic

adjustment displaces vested interests and economic and political power. But the world keeps changing and those countries that do not adapt to the changes taking place, will not be able to compete in the 21st century.

Second, one must find a way to improve the "economic governance" in the Euro-Mediterranean region. When we think of it, it is only in 2005 that the economic and finance ministers of the region met collectively for the first time in Morocco. It took nine years to have such an essential meeting. Now the issue of a "Euro-Med Bank" is being debated. The issue, perhaps, is not so much the bank in itself than the collective economic governance body that it would offer. Many issues need collective thinking in the region and many sectors including infrastructure, social housing, and private sector development. Two countries in the region also have massive resources, that can be reinvested on a much larger scale than to date throughout the Maghreb, namely Algeria and Libya.

Third, political reform must remain a priority on the agenda. Governments in the region have to tackle the immense challenge of a now vastly educated population and few political freedoms. This population no longer believes in the black and white choice of "us or chaos" that they have long been offered by their governments. Islamic extremism is no longer an excuse. Terrorism needs to be fought at the same time that governance is improved, not at the expense of good governance. Political reform in the region is a strategic goal for the EU, because the lack of it opens the door for many forms of instability. Political reforms must not go down the priority list of EU countries in the region.

Fourth, finding a role for the civil society will remain important in the Mediterranean countries. The countries of the southern shores of the Mediterranean need to find a proper role for the unions, the people of culture, the citizens at large, and not just for the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly or the Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures. These are institutions, but people-to-people involvement is something different.

Fifth, illegal migration will remain a major security issue for quite some time to come. This migration originates mostly from Sub-Saharan Africa and Egypt. Recently, the common assessment of the issue has evolved. It is now considered a common issue, not Europe against the Mediterranean Partners, and an issue where we collectively have to fight criminal networks of major importance. Therefore, there is a need for a dialogue at a political level, between the EU and the South of the Mediterranean, and between them and Sub-Saharan Africa._

Although the economies of more than thirty African states registered growth at a rate of 4% or more in the 2006/2007 period, many of the sub-Saharan African states are not succeeding in creating sustainable economic growth strategies.[8]

What is necessary, but is largely lacking in the Mediterranean when it comes to addressing security challenges, is a more creative approach to diplomacy. Institutional mandates seeking to resolve ongoing conflicts, such as those of Cyprus or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, must be more proactive and flexible in their approach, if they are to stand a chance of improving the situation on the ground.

Since 1995, the EU has been implementing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) which despite modest results, has succeeded in achieving closer political, economic and cultural ties between Europe and the Mediterranean countries of North Africa and the Mashreq. More recently the EU launched the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which complements the EMP, and offers participating EU neighbours from the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe direct access to the EU's single market. The launching of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008 has sought to boost the economic dimension of the partnership and widen the geographic remit of the EU's neighbourhood policy.

Given the indivisibility of security in Europe and the Mediterranean, the EU must realise that it is in its strategic interest to continue to adopt a more proactive stance, when it comes to influencing and managing the international relations of the Mediterranean area.

Geographical proximity and stability in the Mediterranean, dictates that the EU needs to try and influence regional dynamics in the Middle East more systematically than it has been in recent years. Failure to do so, will continue to stifle attempts to strengthen Euro-Mediterranean relations through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and also have a negative impact on the EU's Neighbourhood Policy and UfM agenda, that is currently being implemented.

Sustainability of the new era of democratic reform, across the southern shores of the Mediterranean, will require economic development on a major scale for decades. In order to attract the billions of euros, necessary to spur job creation and improve Mediterranean competitiveness, the international community needs to provide political and economic support that assists in creating the conducive type of environment needed to attract international investors to the region.[9]

The main indicator to monitor, between now and 2025, is the extent to which countries along the southern shores of the Mediterranean and beyond, along the Horn of Africa, are able to meet the expectations of their populations when conducting economic and political reforms. If such expectations are not satisfied, the failed state syndrome will take hold and prove to be a major negative force in the international relations of the Mediterranean.

A ring of failed states in this part of the Mediterranean area would severely undermine the stability, necessary to ensure the safe passage of commodities through the global supply routes of the Red Sea and the Straits of Hormuz. It will, ultimately, impinge upon all states across the Mediterranean that are dependent on stability, to strengthen their position in the global political economy of the twenty-first century. Needless to say, foreign direct investment will not be forthcoming to this part of the world if instability becomes more rampant.

The turbulent forces at play, in so many of these states, dictate the necessity to dedicate all diplomatic resources towards addressing and hopefully resolving regional conflicts. and to develop a security arrangement that would help to stabilize the region. Failure to introduce such a process is certain to negatively influence Middle Eastern states' chances to implement political and economic reform.

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He is author of Evaluating Euro-Mediterranean Relations, Routledge 2005, and his forthcoming book is Security Challenges in the Euro-Med Area in the 21st Century: Mare Nostrum, Routledge, 2012.

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Arab Revolutions and Armed Forces: Between Openness and Resistance

Dr. Derek Lutterbeck

As popular uprisings, demanding greater political freedoms and in several countries even regime change, swept across much of the Arab world, a crucial role has been played by the armed forces of these countries in confronting the pro-reform movements. Practically all Arab countries can be described as military-based regimes, where the armed forces have been at the core of the political system, even though the status of the armed forces has varied significantly from one country to the next. Moreover, powerful militaries, as well as a robust security apparatus more generally, have been seen by many, as one, if not the main, obstacle to political reform and democratization in the region.[1]

However, military forces have responded quite differently across the region to pro-democracy movements, ranging from openness to protest movements, to internal fracturing, to firm support for the regime in power. These different responses, in turn, have been crucial in determining the outcome of the popular uprisings. The aim of this paper is to discuss the role the armed forces have played in four Middle Eastern countries, which have experienced large-scale pro-reform movements: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Bahrain. In the first two countries, long-standing autocrats have been toppled after several weeks of massive protests. In Libya, as of mid-2011, the country's leader, Muammar Qaddafi although still in power, lost control over large parts of Libya's territory to rebel forces. In Bahrain, finally, while facing severe challenges to its rule, the regime still seems relatively secure. The paper also offers some initial reflections on the reasons behind the armed forces' different responses to the popular uprisings.

Tunisia

The largest degree of openness, and indeed, even support for pro-democracy movements has been shown by the Armed Forces of Tunisia. When pro-reform movements erupted in Tunisia in December 2010, following the self-immolation of the fruit vendor Mohamed Bouazizi, the Tunisian Armed Forces, from the outset, seemed to side with the protesters. In January 2011, the armed forces

were called out to confront the rapidly swelling demonstrations, which were increasingly demanding, not only, economic and political reforms, but also the departure of the country's long-standing ruler, Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali. However, when the army was deployed in different parts of Tunis, the soldiers, according to media reports, immediately fraternized with the demonstrators—in sharp contrast to the police, which by that time had already shot dead a significant number of protesters. Moreover, the army Chief of Staff, General Rachid Ammar, forbade his men from firing on the demonstrators, and in the streets of Tunis, many demonstrators are said to have sought shelter from police gunshots behind the military's tanks and armoured vehicles.[2] Ben Ali, in turn, dissatisfied with the behaviour of the army, reportedly tried to sack General Ammar for insubordination.

The Tunisian Armed Forces and its leadership, not only refrained from using force against the demonstrators, but even seem to have played a key role in ultimately pushing Ben Ali from power. While the exact role the army and its leaders played, in the final days of the Ben Ali regime, has not yet been fully clarified, there seems to have been a growing rift between the Armed Forces and the regime in the final days before Ben Ali's downfall. In the end, it was said to have been General Ammar himself who pressed Ben Ali to leave the country, personally telling him that "he was finished" [3].

Egypt

A somewhat different response to anti-regime uprisings was shown by the Egyptian military. Even though the Egyptian Armed Forces ultimately also sided with the protesters against the country's ruler, compared to their Tunisian counterparts, the Egyptian armed forces have generally been less open to the protest movements. When in late January 2011 the Egyptian armed forces were called out in different parts of the country, not unlike the Tunisian army, they declared that the demands of the protesters were "legitimate", and pledged to "not use force against the Egyptian people".[4] As in Tunisia, there was fraternization between the soldiers and the protestors, and some military officers even joined the demonstrations on Cairo's Tahrir square.[5]

Nevertheless, compared to the Tunisian military, the Egyptian armed forces have overall been less firmly behind the protesters, and have shown more support for the country's ruler, Hosni Mubarak. The International Crisis Group has summarized the role of the Armed Forces during the Egyptian uprisings as follows: 'Throughout the protests, the army played a consistently ambiguous role,

purportedly standing with the people while at the same time being an integral part of the regime they were confronting. It found itself almost literally on both sides of the barricades'.[6] The Egyptian Armed Forces' more limited openness to, or support for, pro-reform movements was evidenced, for example, when after the first week of protests, armed Mubarak supporters riding on camels and horses charged into Tahrir square and attacked the pro-democracy protesters there. Even though several demonstrators were reportedly killed by pro-Mubarak thugs, the army units present on the square did not intervene, instead calling upon the protesters to leave the square and go home.[7]

Moreover, even though throughout the demonstrations, the Egyptian Armed Forces consistently acknowledged the legitimacy of the protesters' demands, the position of the military seemed to swing more strongly in Mubarak's favour when, in a series of televised speeches from early February onwards, the President offered some concessions to the demonstrators, including a pledge not to stand in the next presidential elections, and a transfer of some of his powers to the recently appointed Vice-president. While the protesters were not satisfied with these concessions, and the demonstrations only continued to grow in size, the army repeatedly called upon the protesters to go home and resume a normal life.[8]

Whereas the Egyptian Armed Forces, compared to the Tunisian military, have thus shown a more ambivalent attitude towards the protesters, and have been more reluctant to clearly distance themselves from the country's leader, it seems that, as in Tunisia, it was the military leadership which in the end convinced the President to step down. In Egypt, as well, according to many accounts, there was a growing rift between the army and the president in the final days before his resignation, and top military commanders are said to have urged the president to leave office. [9] On February 11th, only one day after Mubarak had publicly vowed to serve out his current term of office, he resigned and handed power to the "Higher Council of the Armed Forces".

Libya

Again a different response to pro-reform movements was shown by the armed forces of Libya, where the popular uprisings have resulted in a fracturing of the military apparatus, and practically to a civil war-type of situation. On the one hand, when the protests began in February 2011, parts of the Libyan army defected relatively quickly to the opposition. In the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi, which has become the stronghold of the rebels, defecting army units are said to have overpowered pro-regime forces and driven them out of

the city.[10] On the other hand, other elements of the Libyan military apparatus, and in particular its most elite units, have fought the anti-regime movements with little if any restraint. The so-called Khamis Brigade, which is commonly considered the country's best equipped and trained military force, and which is commanded by the Libyan leaders youngest son, Khamis Qaddafi, has been at the forefront in fighting the opposition. After rebel forces initially succeed in moving westwards from Benghazi, bringing a number of towns under their control, they were subsequently thrown back by the Khamis Brigade.[11] Indeed, it is often argued that without the western air strikes, which began on 19th March 2011, Qaddafi's much better trained and equipped troops may well have succeeded in re-capturing even the city of Benghazi.

It is worth noting that pro-Qaddafi forces have not refrained from using even their heaviest weaponry, such as aircraft and tanks, against the rebels as well as civilians. Certainly, this explains the high death toll which the unrest in Libya has thus far exacted, compared to the uprisings in Tunisia or Egypt: as of mid-2011, the number of deaths was estimated at some 10,000. Moreover, Qaddafi reportedly also unleashed foreign mercenaries from sub-Saharan African countries such as Mali, Niger and Chad against the uprising.

Bahrain

When pro-reform movements spread to the Gulf state of Bahrain, they were met with yet another type of response from the country's armed forces. In Bahrain, demonstrators have come mainly from the country's Shiite majority population, which has called not only for democratic reforms and respect for human rights, but also for an end to the discrimination suffered by Shias in all sectors of public life. [12] However, Bahrain's security forces have shown fierce opposition to pro-reform movements, and have forcefully suppressed the pro-democracy uprisings. The government crackdown on protesters began in mid-February, when security forces surrounded the demonstrators on "Pearl Roundabout", which had become the centre of the protests. Many of the demonstrators were reportedly still asleep when the security forces started firing rubber bullets and tear gas at them, killing at least four protesters.[13]

Protests subsequently escalated, as did the regime's response to them. In the following days, demonstrators blocked the entry of parliament as well as Manama's main financial district. In order to contain the growing unrest, Bahrain's leadership requested support from the Gulf Cooperation Council. In response, Saudi Arabia dispatched some 1,000 soldiers and the UAE 500 police

officers to suppress the protests. Reinforced by these additional troops, Bahraini security forces have been successful in clearing the square, however at the costs of further deaths.[14]

Explaining the Armed Forces' responses to the popular uprisings

In the four countries under analysis, the armed forces have thus played a key not only in confronting the pro-reform movements, but ultimately also in determining the outcome of these popular uprisings: in those countries where the armed forces (ultimately) sided with the protesters, seemingly well entrenched regimes, or at least their leaders, have been forced from power, whereas in those countries in which the armed forces, or at least their most important elements, have stayed loyal to the regime, the rulers have remained in charge.

How can the different responses by military forces to the pro-democracy uprisings as described above be explained? Without attempting to offer a comprehensive explanatory framework, it seems that at least two factors seem crucial: first, the relationship between the armed forces and the regime in power; and second the relationship between the armed forces and society at large.

In those countries where there has been a close link between the armed forces and the regime, the military has been more likely to oppose the protest movements, whereas in countries with a weak relationship between the armed forces and the regime, the former have shown more openness to, or even support for, anti-regime movements. Similarly, in countries where there has been a strong organic link between the armed forces and society, the military has been less likely to oppose and use force against protest movements, whereas a weak connection between the military apparatus and the population has resulted in a stronger response against anti-regime uprisings.

The four cases discussed above, seem to confirm the relevance of these two factors. Beginning with Tunisia, it can be argued that there has traditionally been a rather weak link between the regime and the armed forces. Indeed, in contrast to practically all other Arab countries, Tunisia can hardly be described as a military-based regime. Already at the moment of independence, the military played a much less significant role in Tunisia compared to other Arab countries, as its first leader after independence, Habib Bourgiba, was not a military officer but rather a lawyer who did not allow for a prominent political role of the army. Even Bourgiba's successor, Ben Ali, although having the rank of a general and coming to power through a (bloodless) coup, once in power sought to limit

the political influence of the armed forces as much as possible, not least out of fear of a (further) military takeover. Whereas the armed forces have been kept away from political power, Ben Ali relied on the country's internal security and intelligence agencies as his power base and instrument for suppressing internal dissent.[15] Having been relatively sidelined by the country's leadership, it is thus hardly surprising that the Tunisian Armed Forces were quick to side with the protesters against the regime once the protests erupted. In addition, the fact that the Tunisian army is a conscript army where the majority of conscripts are drawn from economically disaffected areas, certainly contributed to its identification with the grievances of the protesters, and made it unlikely that it would use force against the demonstrators.[16]

Turning to the Egyptian case, the Armed Forces have traditionally maintained a much stronger relationship to the regime. All Egyptian presidents since the overthrow of the monarchy in 1952 have come from the armed forces, which has de facto played the role of the "kingmaker" in Egypt. Even though the political role of the army has been reduced in the aftermath of Egypt's defeat in the six-day war, it has remained the backbone of the regime, in particular through its intimate relationship with the all-powerful presidency. Moreover, the Egyptian Armed Forces are also an extremely important economic actor, controlling a vast array of enterprises ranging from arms production, to infrastructure development, consumer goods and tourism.[17] Given its stronger relationship to the regime, compared to the Tunisian Armed Forces, the Egyptian military has thus also been somewhat less open to the pro-reform movements, even though it too ultimately sided with protesters against the president. Moreover, the army in Egypt is also a conscript army, which certainly acted as a restraining factor when it came to the potential use of force against the demonstrators.

Libya represents a more complex picture, given the highly fragmented nature of the Libyan security apparatus. A distinctive feature of the Libyan armed forces is the presence, in addition to the regular military, of a multitude of highly ideological security forces, which are intimately tied to the Libyan regime.[18] Libya's most elite security force, which is also considered the main military instrument of the regime, as already mentioned above, is commanded by Qaddafi's youngest son, Khamis. On the other hand, Libya too has conscription based forces, the so-called People's Militia, although their military effectiveness might be largely symbolic. Having thus both military forces, which are very closely tied to the Qaddafi regime as well as forces based on conscription with—presumably—a certain anchoring in Libyan society has led to a fracturing of the Libyan military apparatus when confronted with the popular uprisings.

Finally, in Bahrain the Armed Forces are also very strongly connected to the country's regime. Indeed all of the most important positions within the Armed Forces are held by members of the ruling Khalifa family. In addition, the relationship between Bahrain's Armed Forces and Bahraini society can be described as weak, as the country's Shiite majority population is totally excluded from the Armed Forces, and only Sunnis may serve in the military. Moreover, in Bahrain the share of foreigners in the country's security forces is reportedly very high—according to some reports the regime has deliberately recruited Sunni foreigners into the country's security forces in order to change the demographic balance in Bahrain.[19] The intervention of foreign security forces, as mentioned above, has also played an important part in suppressing the popular uprisings in Bahrain.

Overall, the two factors mentioned above—the armed forces' relationship to the regime, and their relationship to society at large—offer at least some insight into the responses of military forces to pro-reform movements. In the four countries discussed above, these two factors seem to have played an important role in shaping the armed forces' responses to the popular uprisings—i.e. their degree of openness or resistance to the pro-democracy movements—whereby in some cases, in Libya in particular, they have "pulled" the military in opposite directions. Needless to say that a more comprehensive analysis would require the consideration of additional factors, such as for example external pressure on the military, as well as further cases. What seems clear, however, that the armed forces have played, and will continue to play, a key role in the dramatic transformations which are currently taking place in the Arab world.

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Human Rights and the Arab Spring: Some Preliminary Reflections

Dr. Omar Grech

The Mediterranean and "received wisdom" on human rights

The human rights situation on the southern Mediterranean littoral was for the past forty years characterized by paralysis and the received wisdom has been that there could be no change. This aura of stasis was defined by a number of factors including:

(i) a perception that human rights were a Western concept, a perception fortified by the presentation of the human rights agenda as 'foreign interference' by certain secular and religious authorities;

(ii) a suggestion that, in some ways, a number of human rights principles were incompatible with the dominant religion in the region;

(iii) seemingly unassailable authoritarian leaders whose power was rooted in control of the military, the power of patronage as well as tacit or explicit support from the USA, the EU or, in the case of certain countries in the Levantine rim of the Mediterranean, Iran; and

(iv) a general climate of instability due to the perpetuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and related tensions.

The dominant narrative in the context of human rights in the Mediterranean region has been one which presented the human rights agenda (and the linked notion of democratization) as an alternative to stability and security. The authoritarian regimes tended to conflate stability with authoritarianism and human rights, with potential chaos and radicalization of politics (particularly in the context of political Islam).

The immediate neighbours of the southern Mediterranean states in Europe, to some degree, acquiesced in the construction of this narrative. While the EU pontificated on human rights and democratization, it never fully utilized its potential for promoting human rights and democratization through, for example, Association Agreements. Most of the southern Mediterranean states concluded

Association Agreements with the EU in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with provision for the protection of human rights included in these agreements. In fact, article 2 of these agreements provides that relations between the parties shall be based on the respect of democratic principles and fundamental human rights, which constitutes an essential element of the agreements. Notwithstanding this clear legal basis, none of the Association Agreements have been suspended or downgraded due to human rights abuses.

Human rights civil society organizations in the region, operated within a difficult context of restrictive legal frameworks and were hampered in pursuing their activities, through a mixture of legal obstacles and physical harassment. Apart from these strong governmental impediments, civil society seemed somewhat fossilized. Meetings and conferences of human rights organizations from the region presented a picture of organizations dominated, to some extent, by an older generation and by left-wing ideologues. In this context, the most active and effective organizations appeared to be women's rights movements, which also had a number of successes in their lobbying efforts.

The human rights situation until the Arab spring

The constitutions of the southern Mediterranean states all guaranteed, to a greater or lesser degree, fundamental human rights and freedoms. For example, the Constitution of Tunisia of 1959 asserts in its Preamble, that the republican regime established therein is 'the best guarantee for the respect of human rights.'[1] In Chapter One, which outlines the general provisions that should govern the Tunisian state, articles 5 to 14 establish a number of human rights and freedoms including the right to freedom of expression and the freedom of association (article 8). However, these rights and freedoms were subject to limitations contained in other laws and thus what the Constitution provided for, other laws (including emergency laws) removed. This approach is prevalent in most of the states of the Maghreb and Mashrek, where what the constitution guarantees, the ordinary law takes away.

Emergency laws have had a particularly robust effect in negating human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Egyptian emergency law is illustrative of this point. Adopted in 1958, the emergency law has been in operation from 1967 almost uninterruptedly and amongst its provisions are rules restricting public meetings; the control of media, including newspapers and any other publications, as well as, arbitrary arrest and detention[2]. These provisions together with the lack of an independent and impartial judiciary, which hampered access to justice

for individuals whose rights are abused, rendered the enforcement of human rights norms virtually impossible.

Apart from abuses of political and civil rights, the southern Mediterranean shores also witnessed problems associated with social and economic rights. Unemployment and underemployment, specifically youth unemployment, is a key challenge that the demographic profiles of these states accentuated. In Tunisia for instance, the young represent by far the largest section of the unemployed. Furthermore, unemployment over the past 15 years has started to impact very heavily on graduates with 23% of young graduates unemployed.[3] In Egypt, the percentage of the population living under $2 a day was 18.5% in 2005[4]. These indicators of social and economic malaise, were further reinforced by a perception of corruption at all levels of society, but particularly at the highest levels. Following the fall of Ben-Ali in Tunisia, the scale of corruption and embezzlement became even more apparent. The Arab Human Development Report of 2004, which also includes the southern Mediterranean, referred to the issue of corruption and commented that:

> "Aspects of corruption are also clearly visible to citizens, particularly those in the business sector who complain that the people in power monopolize the main areas of the economy, either directly or as 'partners' of successful businessmen. Moreover, persons in power and their close circle receive huge commissions for contracts concluded between the state and international or local companies, including armament contracts.[5] "

The issue of corruption should be examined not only in the context of corrupted leaders or elites in North Africa, but also in the context of involvement by European companies and other entities in such corruption. In 2006, for example, a considerable controversy was created when the United Kingdom's Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith, announced that the UK Serious Fraud Office would be dropping its investigation into a BAE Systems' arms deal with Saudi Arabia. In order to give a tangible contribution to the elimination of corruption, the European Union and its member states should strengthen their own anti-corruption mechanisms. Such a concerted effort would send a message to the European and North African citizenry, that European countries are serious about combating corruption.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has impacted the human rights situation in the Mediterranean region in several ways. First and foremost, it has had a direct and grave impact on the human rights of the Palestinian people, who are denied

basic rights through the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. These human rights violations have become especially egregious during the sporadic intense conflicts, such as Operation Cast Lead of December 2008. Secondly, the conflict has a direct and continuing impact on Israeli civilians, who are threatened by suicide bombings and rocket attacks from organizations, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, as well as other entities. Thirdly, the conflict has been used by a number of North African regimes as an excuse to maintain emergency legislation and more generally to silence dissent within their respective societies. Overall, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the associated human rights abuses, gradually assumed an aura of inevitability, which further distanced the Arab people of the Mediterranean from European governments. The conflict also augmented the sense of instability in the region, which allowed governments to impose limitations on human rights with impunity.

Within the context outlined above which reads like a veritable catalogue of woes, it is unsurprising that few people were anticipating immediate and drastic changes. In fact, the possibility of change was always debated in academic and civil society circles. Some even forecast that the situation in the various North African states would at some point boil over. The Egyptian journalist Ayman El-Amir, in April 2010, predicted a crisis and claimed such crisis was a matter of 'when' rather than 'if'. However, even this veteran journalist did not predict such a swift or dramatic upheaval.[6]

Challenging the "received wisdom": the Arab spring

Within the context outlined above, dramatic changes in governance within the southern Mediterranean littoral seemed unlikely in the short-term. Debates on the future of Egypt and Tunisia, for instance, focused on the succession to Hosni Mubarak and Zinedine Ben-Ali, with speculation growing that Mubarak's son Gamal was being groomed for the Presidency. Voices predicting revolution or fundamental change in the region were, as noted previously, scarce. So what were the triggers that brought about these changes?

The first point worth highlighting is that the Arab spring was not brought about by external pressure, but was an authentically autochthonous movement. In recent years, there were efforts at democratization in the Middle East and North Africa: the European initiative for democracy and human rights (EIDHR) and the Bush freedom doctrine. The two approaches were relatively unlike each other and one can classify them crudely – albeit, I believe, accurately – as follows: the European initiative being based on a 'carrot approach', while the

US approach of the Bush administration shaped by the 'stick', in the form of strong conditionalities. Whatever the differences between the two efforts, they certainly had one similarity: they failed to bring democracy and human rights to the region.

The narrative of these revolutions is already being constructed. The Arab spring commenced with a young unemployed Tunisian man, Mohamed Bouazizi, who set himself on fire in sheer desperation and frustration in the town of Sidi Bouzid. This act of self-immolation occurred when the authorities confiscated his vegetable and fruit cart, through which he was attempting to eke out a living. His frustration and desperation were compounded, when his attempts to make his complaint heard by the relevant authorities were ignored. Protests against the regime started in Sidi Bouzid, later spread throughout the region and eventually reached Tunis. Mohamed Bouazizi's act of desperation occurred on December 17th. The protests reached Tunis by 27th December, while by 14th January Ben Ali has left Tunis on his way to Saudi Arabia. In the period between 17th December and 14th January protesters were arrested and beaten, while some were killed by police shooting at the unarmed protesters. The narrative thus focuses on two principal themes: (i) marginalization and frustration and (ii) repression and revolt. There are also sub-plots revolving around who actually carried out the revolt and how.

These sub-plots point to some of the most discussed elements of these revolutions. The risings were not instigated by traditional civil society organizations, but by a "different" type of civil society. They were popular uprisings that acquired a life and dynamism of their own. The traditional 'opposition parties' and civil society organizations jumped on the 'protest bandwagon' after the initial successes of the protests, but they were not the instigators of these movements in any meaningful sense. In this context, the "institutionalized" and "professionalized" NGOs, to use Mary Kaldor's terminology[7], were not the leaders of the protests. The comment that was most often heard, on the various news channels during the protests, was that there were no discernible leaders of the revolution. It has been suggested that the protesters 'included people from all sectors of society, but at the forefront have been young, tech-savvy Egyptians, who have never known another ruler of their country.'[8]

This brings us to another sub-plot in this narrative, which refers to the use of technology and particularly, the new social media in organizing the protests. Phrases such as the *Twitter Revolution* or the *Facebook Revolution* appeared frequently on newspapers and are heard often in news debates. The role of the

new media in the protests can certainly be over-stated. After all, there was very little technology involved in Mohammed Bouazizi's self-immolation, which triggered the protests in Tunisia.

That is not to say that the new media was irrelevant. It was used to good effect by the protesters to mobilize and inform. Thus, it became an additional weapon in the arsenal of civil society, to be effectively organized and to render feasible their right to freedom of association. The new media also provides a novel outlet for another human right: freedom of expression. Governments used to censoring newspapers or closing news channels, are faced with a different vehicle for freedom of expression. Within this context, the skill of tech-savvy young Arabs in using social media, far outstripped the regime's abilities in this sphere of communication. Thus, the new media is proving useful in expanding the tools used to mobilize groups and is also adding another 'channel', through which individuals can air their views freely (both in terms of expense and in terms of liberty).

From a human rights perspective, the developments in North Africa are significant for a number of reasons. The first and most obvious reason is that the prospects for democracy and human rights in the region are better than at any time since decolonization. Civil and political rights seem to be within the grasp of, at least, the populations of Tunisia and Egypt. The possibility also exists for other countries to follow suit.

Secondly, the emphasis on socio-economic rights, which gave the whole process its initial dynamism, served to reiterate the indivisibility of human rights. In the various UN human rights conferences, that at regular intervals reconsider the notion of human rights and how best to promote them, we witness periodic re-statements of the importance of the concept of the indivisibility of human rights. For example, at the 1993 UN Vienna Conference on Human Rights, the participating states declared that "All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated."[9] The events in Tunisia and Egypt illustrated in practice that human rights are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated as the demands of the protesters were for more political freedom and more economic opportunity in equal measure. As the revolution unfolded in Tunis, The Economist stated that the protesters 'are demanding big changes for Tunisia. But their demands—sorting out unemployment, providing freedom of speech and human rights, bringing real democracy to Tunisia—are tough ones'.[10]

The call, first made in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, for a conception of human rights that brought together civil and political rights with social and economic rights was heard vibrantly in the streets of Tunis and, soon after, of Cairo too. The reference to socio-economic rights also provides a further important perspective, which has already been alluded to: that of marginalization and marginalized groups. The protests in Egypt and Tunisia mobilized a vast portion of society. The poor, the unemployed and the 'forgotten' contributed to the revolution and it is important, that whatever new dispensations emerge in these countries, they include the marginalized communities and give them a voice in the political stage and access to social and economic opportunities.

Another factor that clearly emerged in Egypt and Tunisia, was the lack of public trust in the police forces of these countries. Not only was public trust lacking, but evidence of public contempt of the police forces was also very apparent. This mistrust and contempt are easily explained, as the police and secret police in these countries were tools used by the regimes to suppress dissent by, *inter alia*, practicing torture and creating a climate of fear and intimidation. In both these countries, journalists on the spot commented regularly on the contrast between public perceptions of the police forces and perception of the armed forces. Whereas the army was considered as a guarantor of the state and in both cases emerged with its reputation enhanced, the police forces were viewed as tools of oppression before, during and after the protests. In this context, the challenge is clearly that of rebuilding police forces that carry out their duties effectively, fairly and according to human rights standards. Equally importantly, these police forces must not only do so but be seen to be doing so.

It is certainly too early to draw any definite conclusions from the events of the Arab spring. The continuing conflict in Libya, the military repression of protests in Syria and the rumblings elsewhere, are daily reminders that this is unfinished business. However, one may discern, in what has happened so far, some threads that may develop into fully-knit conclusions, when the proper temporal perspective works all the events into a coherent whole. Among these threads, the following appear to have emerged quite clearly:

(i) human rights have, once again, proven to have an enduring appeal to the human spirit, as people in Tunisia and Egypt dared repressive regimes to do their worst, while they claimed their rights to freedom of association and expression, their right to political participation based on democratic ideals and their rights to work, social security and a dignified life.

(ii) the Arab spring has hammered another nail in the coffin of cultural relativism, as a concept that attempts to reduce human rights to a Western idea imposed by force on the rest of the world. The desire for a dignified life based on human rights, is what the protesters around the Arab world are expressing. One 35 year old protester, participating in the protests in Tahrir Square, was quoted as saying: 'Everyone thought that the Egyptians were about to die, but after the recent events, we've proven that we are alive and that we are getting our rights and that we will prevail'.[11] This desire for dignity and rights looks increasingly identical whether expressed by people in Copenhagen, Cairo or Rangoon.

(iii) the European Union and the USA, tacitly or publicly, supported authoritarian regimes that were held in contempt by the citizens over whom they governed. As the protests unfolded it was noted that:

> The anger of the protesters is largely directed inwards – at a bankrupt Arab order – rather than outwards at Israel, the United States or the West… Largely, but not entirely. The West is complicit in Arab autocracy. For decades, American and European leaders chose stability over democracy. Now the chickens are coming home to roost.[12]

Thus, both Europe and the USA need to re-examine their policies with respect to how they deal with states, which regularly abuse human rights. They need to do so, not for any categorical moral imperative (although that would be a welcome change), but because their policies so far have sown distrust and suspicion towards them, amongst the people whose rights are abused. Distrust and suspicion hardly seem to be adequate results for any foreign policy and cannot be in the national interests of the USA or EU states.

(iv) the term 'Arab spring' is, in one sense, very appropriate as it indicates a new beginning. But this is precisely what it is: just a beginning. Whether the spring fulfils its promise and moves into a serene summer, or whether it reverts to a stormy winter, remains to be seen. One may suggest that there are two separate tests to determine the overall success, or otherwise, of this new beginning. The first test refers to the internal dynamics of the countries where the revolutions have taken place: Tunisia and Egypt. Will functioning democracies, based on the separation of powers and the rule of law, develop? Will citizens have access to impartial and independent courts that freely and fairly administer justice? Will the police forces manage to acquire a reputation for fairness and proper conduct? Will strong anti-corruption institutions be put into place? Will the socio-economic system, based on patronage and 'clientilism', be replaced with a system based on merit? Will access to health and education be improved for those most in need?

These, and many other such challenges, will determine whether the revolutions truly succeed in answering the demands of the protesters.

The second test refers to how widespread these revolutions will be. A number of questions emerge. Will Tunisia and Egypt remain isolated cases? Will Libya emerge soon from the current conflict and embark on answering the questions outlined above? How will Syria and Algeria develop? And, most importantly, will the occupation of Palestine be perpetrated? The future of the Mediterranean as a stable, democratic and rights-based region, hangs in the balance.

(v) whatever the answer to the questions posed above, there seems to be one fact which gives rise to a well-founded optimism. This fact is that the Arab spring has unequivocally established the people of the southern Mediterranean as having a voice that needs to be heard. In one sense, they have claimed their voice and shown the world (and, maybe, themselves too), that it is a strong, dignified voice that cannot be ignored. Those who ignore it, be they the new governments of Tunisia or Egypt or their European neighbours to the north, do so at their peril. Ben Ali and Mubarak can vouch for this.

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From Regime Security to Human Security: Arab Spring and Security Sector Reform

Dr. Monika Wohlfeld

Introduction

On 17th June 2011, in response to the Arab Spring events in neighbouring countries, King Mohamed VI of Morocco presented in a speech[1], reform proposals focusing on constitutional changes. Significantly, in his speech the King insisted that appointments in the military 'remain an exclusive, sovereign prerogative of the King, Supreme Commander and Chief-of-Staff of the Royal Armed Forces', while officials in charge of *inter alia* domestic security agencies will be appointed by him on a proposal of the Head of Government and at the initiative of the ministers concerned. Thus, Morocco's ruler, who has pursued domestic reforms in the past, and has been hailed for his response to the unrest, stopped short of establishing democratic control of the security sector. This lack of willingness to touch upon the role and powers of the security sector is symptomatic of the regimes of countries in North Africa, that have traditionally relied on the security sector, in particular the military, the police and secret and intelligence services, to shore up their authoritarian or semi-authoritarian rule, and that have focused on regime security rather than human security.

This paper argues that Western partners would do well to push for quick security sector reform (SSR) on the one hand, and support intellectual change towards the concept of human security, starting in Tunisia, but also in other states in North Africa, on the other. It suggests that the two concepts, SSR and human security, are linked to each other through their understanding of the respective roles of the armies and security forces. Human security could also be a useful concept, in the process of establishing local ownership of reform processes related to the security sector. The paper explains that civil society in North Africa is the right entry point for SSR efforts. Thus, in order for the transformation and democratization processes to be successful, both goals, SSR and human security, need to be pursued in parallel in the region.

Concepts of Regime Security versus Human Security

It has been argued that in weak states, in particular, ruling elites tend to opt for short-term strategies of survival, rather than long–term state-building policies or policies focused on the well-being of citizens. The goal of regime survival is thus reflected on both external strategies and foreign policies and internal strategies. The latter tends to be a variety of carrot and stick approaches to challengers of any kind, including coercive power and state intimidation. 'This entails creating or expanding the security forces, spending large sums of the national income on military supplies, and using violence and intimidation against real and perceived opponents of the regime.'[2] The human rights records of regimes using such tactics are consequently appalling.

Of course, strong instruments of coercion, especially the armed forces, can themselves become a threat to the survival of a regime. Strategies are available to rulers to prevent such turn of events: controlling appointments, creating competition among the services, establishing elite units such as presidential guards, employing foreign mercenaries or private military companies. This has been done for example in Libya but also in other states of North Africa. But other strategies, such as providing generous defense budgets or economic opportunities for militaries, have been used, for example in Egypt. Consequently, in basically all cases, the defense and military spending is not at all, or not entirely, transparent.

Arguably, all of the autocratic regimes in North Africa employed such tactics; relying on military and security forces for their survival, and committing grave human rights abuses, such as unlawful imprisonment, forced disappearances, extra-judicial killings, torture, and violent suppression of political expression. Military and security forces were often the instrument of choice for such abuses of power.

The concept of human security has been developed in the policy-world, rather than academia, in order to broaden traditional conceptions of security, and, as such, builds on other notions with that pedigree (such as for example common security, co-operative security, comprehensive security). Significantly, human security suggests that the focus should be placed on the individual, rather than on the state. Human security is a concept that has been adopted by a variety of governments, international organizations and NGOs, which have developed on its basis some quite important foreign

and security policy approaches and practical initiatives. It is however not accepted universally, mainly because with its focus on the human being, it is seen as standing in tension with state-centric concepts of security.[3] Some analysts point out, however, that the state is vital in providing human security and, furthermore, that by focusing on human security, governance is enhanced and thus the state strengthened.[4]

The concept was first used in a significant way by the United Nations Development Programme 'Human Development Report' in 1994, and it was aimed at linking the notion of development and security, by broadening the notion of security to include economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security.[5] The Commission on Global Governance, in its 1995 report, also advocated a very broad understanding of human security that included safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression, as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life.[6] Significantly, the UNDP report of 1994 noted *inter alia*, that countries with military governments and those with high military spending were not likely to be politically secure. It noted that 'one of the most helpful indicators of political insecurity in a country is the priority the government accords military strength – since governments sometimes use armies to repress their own people.'[7]

Two different understandings of human security emerged. The very broad notion of human security, which focused on 'freedom from want' was aimed at ensuring basic human needs in economic, health, food, social and environmental terms. That included issues such as access to health care, access to education, food security and so on. The more focused vision was linked to the notion of 'freedom from fear', that is about removing the use of or threat of force and violence from people's lives. The proponents of the more narrow definition argued, that a very broad notion of human security made the term all-encompassing and therefore meaningless. As Keith Krause argues, 'at this point, the concept no longer has any utility for policy-makers nor, incidentally, to analysts – since it does not facilitate priority – setting or policy coherence and it obscures the distinctive entailments of the idea of "security", inextricably linked to existential threats, conflicts and the potential or actual use of violence.'[8] On the other hand, a very narrow understanding of human security may also not be appropriate, as it may limit the usefulness of the concept to the people that it focuses on.[9]

Whether in its narrow or broad definition though, it is quite clear that the governments of North African states did not have a good record of pursuing human security[10], nor in most cases indeed, any stated policy objectives of pursuing the goal of ensuring human security. Indeed, the notion of human security, if it has been put on the political agenda at all, was introduced mostly by the civil society and NGOs, through a bottom-up approach, and appears, to some observers, as more promising than programmes of reform that rely on state institutions.[11]

In 2009, the UNDP, in its Arab Human Development Report, argued that 'the trend in the region has been to focus more on the security of the state than on the security of the people. While this adherence to the traditional conception of security has in many cases ensured the continuity of the state, it has also led to missed opportunities to ensure the security of the human person, and has left the bond between state and citizen less strong than it might otherwise be.'[12]

The events that took place in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, and other North African and Arab states in 2011, underline this finding in a most impressive way. The conception of security, which focused on survival of regimes, led *inter alia* to situations in which armed forces and police, in the name of autocratic regimes, fired live ammunition and killed peaceful protesters demanding social and economic change.

Although this aspect is maybe not getting sufficient exposure by media and analysts, it was the relationship between the military and security forces and the regimes, that not only galvanized some of the protest agendas, but also defined the methodology of response of the autocrats to the demands of the demonstrators in those popular uprisings, and significantly, also the character and speed of reform in those countries, that have embarked upon changes.

The Concept of Security Sector Reform (SSR)

The concept of Security Sector Reform is also a relatively recent one, and linked, to some measure, to the emergence of the concept of human security. While in an early, narrow definition, the security sector was understood to consist of only armed forces, the most recent efforts to define what should be included in the understanding of what constitutes security, broaden the scope considerably. This development reflects the recognition, gained

mostly during efforts to reform the security sector in Central and Eastern Europe and elsewhere, that reforms that do not take into account the broader environment are doomed to failure. To give an example, the OECD DAC Guidelines on Security System Reform and Governance, agreed by ministers in 2004, define the security system as consisting of: 'core security actors (e.g. armed forces, police, gendarmerie, border guards, customs and immigration, and intelligence and security services); security management and oversight bodies (e.g., ministries of defense and internal affairs, financial management bodies and public complaints commissions); justice and law enforcement institutions (e.g. the judiciary, prisons, prosecution services, traditional justice systems); and non-statutory security forces (e.g., private security companies, guerrilla armies and private militia).'[13] Other efforts to provide a definition identify some categories of actors:

'1. State security and justice providers;

2. State governance and oversight mechanisms;

3. Non-state security and justice providers; and

4. Non-state governance and oversight mechanisms.'[14]

Thus the concept of Security Sector Reform (SSR) refers to the process, through which a country seeks to review and/or enhance the effectiveness and the accountability of its security and justice providers. According to the 2008 report by the UN Secretary General on security sector reform, 'Security sector reform describes a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities, that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law.'[15]

DCAF argues that SSR is:

- 'A Nationally-Owned process aimed at ensuring that security and justice providers deliver…
- Effective and Efficient security and justice services that meet the people's needs, and that security and justice providers are…
- Accountable to the state and its people, operating within a framework of good governance, rule of law and respect for human rights.'[16]

SSR has been successfully implemented in a number of states that have undergone reform, including in Africa. However, as the paper will argue,

North African states have, so far, done very little, if anything at all, to advance SSR.

Link SSR-Human Security

What is the link between SSR and human security? There are several ways of linking the concepts. DCAF, a Swiss think-tank devoted to advancing SSR, argues that the concept of SSR developed along with the shift towards human security. The link that DCAF emphasizes is development. Thus, SSR, both in post-conflict situations and post-authoritarian settings, is seen as prerequisite for sustainable development, and thus the broader notion of human security.[17] Analysts point to a link between SSR and human security in several realms, namely development, democratic governance and sustainable peace.[18]

What is of interest to this paper is, that an explicit link focusing on the role of security and armed forces has been suggested by the UNDP Arab Human Development Report of 2009, and argues forcefully that 'Security and armed forces that are not subject to public oversight present grave potential threats to human security, as the experience of numerous Arab states attests.' [19] Ghada Ali Moussa, writing about human security in Arab states, also develops an explicit link between SSR and human security, by suggesting that reforming the security sector creates critical preconditions for human security, namely physical security, justice, and the rule of law. 'Since state-sponsored conflict and repression are major sources of physical insecurity and fear of violence, the instruments of violence controlled by the state must be transformed, so that they support, not undermine, the achievement of human security.'[20] Consequently, it is worth noting that the adoption by a state of a human security approach would have a significant impact on the shapes of and roles performed by the security sector and how and by whom it is controlled and governed.

The UN Human Development Report 1994 also established a link between the political dimension of the broad understanding of human security and military strength, and military spending.[21] The paper, in exploring the situation in the states of North Africa, will thus analyse both aspects, the size of the military and military spending, as both arguably serve as interesting, although clearly not conclusive, indicators of the state of human security in those countries.

It is worthwhile pointing out, that while SSR and human security as concepts, share the focus on the individual, and are interlinked in significant ways, they are by no means identical. Their main difference is that SSR is concerned with 'freedom from fear', while human security, particularly in its broader application, includes many more considerations of threats to human beings. This in itself is not problematic. However, some analysts warn that SSR cannot adhere to the broader understanding of human security, because this may have implications for the role and mandates of the security sector. To be more specific, while specifically in North African states, the goal of SSR should be *inter alia* to shift from military performing internal tasks to external tasks (unlike the police for example), adoption of a human security approach may lead to the armed forces to perform non-traditional internal tasks (linked to the broad agenda of human security).[22] It is worth pointing out, however, that cuts to bloated military budgets can potentially result in more budgetary support for the broader human security agenda.

Situation on the ground: Case Study of Armed Forces

The scope of this paper does not allow for an in-depth analysis of the situation in the individual countries of North Africa. However, a quick look at the military size and budget of some of the countries of the region (Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and Libya) will be helpful in the context of this paper.

Military size

Although the size of military forces is arguably not the single, most important information pertaining to it, it is worth having a quick look at the numerical strength. Information about size of armed forces should be viewed in combination with broader sets of date on resources, demographics, social change and regional issues in order to give an appropriate picture. One such effort is The North African Military Balance**,** produced in 2010 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, which serves as an excellent resource for any student of the region.[23] Here, only very brief and generic references will be provided.

There is a profound difference between the Tunisian military and its counterparts in other parts of North Africa. The Tunisian Army, which did not lay the basis for the new Tunisian regime after the country's independence in 1956[24], has a relatively small number of personnel of some 35.000 men,

mostly conscripts. Experts argue that the population did not associate it with the past authoritarian regime.[25] Tunisia, together with Morocco, is one of the major recipients of US military equipment and training in North Africa, but not on a scale comparable to Egypt.

In contrast to Tunisia, the Egyptian army has a manpower of some half a million troops in the armed forces, but there are also 300,000 strong paramilitary forces, the Central Security Forces, staffed with conscripts, and created in the 1970s to address domestic disturbances.[26] The Egyptian military benefits from US defense-procurement credits and training and assistance programmes, both in the US and in the country. It is claimed that Egypt is one of the largest recipients of U.S. military aid. In 2007, Washington agreed to a $13 billion, 10 year aid package to Egypt.[27] 'Egypt's military is the foundation of the modern state, having overthrown the country's monarchy in 1952. All four of the country's leaders since then – Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat, Hosni Mubarak and now, Mohammed Hussein Tantawi – have been army or air force officers, and the armed forces play a major role in the Egyptian economy.'[28]

Algeria and Morocco, which are not directly in conflict with each other, but compete and pursue an arms race over the issue of Western Sahara, both have relatively large militaries. The North African Military Balance has the following to say about the Algerian military strength: 'Algerian regular military manpower peaked at around 170,000 in the mid 1980s, but declined to 147,000 actives by 2010, including some 80,000 conscripts. It had an on-paper reserve strength of some 150,000, with little or no real-world readiness and war fighting capability.'[29] The army is seen as heavily politicized. The military is a direct successor of the armed wing of the National Liberation Front, which fought the war of independence.[30]

Morocco has some 195,800 active military forces, including the 175,000-man army, 'the only force in the Maghreb that has recently had to train and organize for serious combat, although this combat has consisted largely of guerrilla warfare'. The Moroccan army has conscripts and regular military corps.[31] Morocco also has a 150,000-man reserve and a paramilitary Force Auxiliaire, with 30,000 men designed to reinforce the army in a campaign against Algeria. According to US embassy reports published on Wikileaks, the King keeps military and police under strict controls due to lack of trust, and the very large, costly and reportedly corrupt military, constitutes a drain on national resources. [32]

It is rather difficult to describe the Libyan army, as information is not released. It is reported, that Libyan army consists to a large degree of conscripts and volunteers, and is relatively small with 50,000 men. There is lack of information about other units, such as special guards and paramilitary units. 'While the army is sometimes reported to have some 40,000 men in its People's Militia, this force is more a symbol of Qadhafi's ever-changing ideology than a military force. The Libyan army seems to lack anything approaching an effective and well-trained reserve system.'[33] However, it is the paramilitary forces and personal guards, which the events have shown as being the mainstay of the regime.

Thus, there are substantial differences in the region in the sizes and structures of the militaries. But only Tunisia, and possibly Libya, do not have a large and overbearing military apparatus that is linked to the political elites. Libya, however, makes up for the weak and smallish army with other units. Its complete lack of transparency on the security sector makes it also a very specific case. The ongoing use of military and special units by the regime, to violently suppress protests and to use military means to quell rebellion, points to the complete lack of attention to human rights, human security and SSR.

Military spending

Quite clearly, North African countries are militarized countries with considerable defense budgets. As is the case for most non-democratic states' budgets, there is a certain lack of transparency on defense budgets and spending. Here again, the countries that are providing the opposite ends of the spectrum is Tunisia and Egypt. Tunisia has a small defense budget, with spending lowest in all North African countries, and significantly lower than its neighbours Algeria and Libya. However, some analysts note that spending on paramilitary units, which are to guard public order and safety, is higher than funds allocated to the armed forces. [34] 'Egypt's USD4.56 billion defense budget in 2010, makes it the strongest among its immediate neighbours in Africa'.[35]

The SIPRI Yearbook 2009 describes North Africa (excluding Egypt, which it considers as part of the Middle East), as the region with one of the largest increase in military spending worldwide in the last years.[36] Spending growth in this region 'accelerated sharply', dominated by Algeria, the largest military spender in Africa[37], and Morocco. Morocco's defense spending reportedly

increased by 127 per cent between 2000-2009, while Algeria climbed by 105 per cent.[38] The media reported[39] also, that Morocco doubled its military budget for 2009 (or as some reported in the period 2005-2009), attributing this increase to an arms race with Algeria. For Libya, there are no official figures for 2009 or 2010. However, a jump in defense spending has been noted for the period 2007-2008.[40]

While most analysts note, that in terms of share of GDP the defense budgets of North Africa remain within an acceptable budget, it must be noted that none of the countries release full sets of data, and some suggest that the real spending on the military is much higher than the figures that are provided in publications such as SIPRI Yearbook, or the North Africa Military Balance. It is clear, however, that the lack of transparency on military spending is a serious problem in assessing the situation on the ground. As Fred Tanner argues, 'Military spending, [...], is not only very high in the countries of the region, but also unaccountable, as the militaries, in addition to formal defense budgets, typically have various informal sources of income over which there is no independent control.' [41]

What are the armed forces used for ?

The biggest problem is really what the militaries in North African countries are used for and who they are accountable to. Keith Krause argues that the developments of separation of the internal and external security functions of the state, and the subordination of armed force to civil authority, illustrates the way in which the concept of 'freedom from fear' became part of the understanding of the liberal state. He points out that this is the reason why human security concerns (in their narrow, more focused form) resonate so strongly with some international actors.[42] Thus, in a modern liberal state, the police is used to protect against threats from within, such as criminality, and the military is used to defend the state from external threats, and this, thus, also assures that the narrow understanding of human security, as freedom from fear, is safeguarded.

Looking at what militaries are used for in North African countries, it is quite clear that they have had an internal role, supporting authoritarian regimes, quelling unrest and suppressing political opposition, and often also having a clear direct or indirect political role itself.[43] The UNDP Arab Human Development Report 2009 eloquently formulates the problem in the following way:

> 'Executive branches and security and armed forces that are not subject to public oversight present grave potential threats to human security. All Arab heads of state wield absolute authority, answering to none. They maintain their hold on power by leaving the state's security apparatus an extremely wide margin for manoeuvre, at the expense of citizens' freedoms and fundamental rights. Arab security agencies operate with impunity because they are instrumental to the head of state and account to him alone. Their powers are buttressed by executive interference with the independence of the judiciary, by the dominance (in most states) of an unchanging ruling party over the legislature, and by the muzzling of the media.'[44]

It is possible to go a step even further and claim that 'the security sector constitutes the backbone of the Arab political system'[45] and indeed, militaries have for a long time been seen as guarantors of regime security, as the ultimate protectors of the regimes.

Who are the armed forces accountable to?

The second question is how the militaries are being controlled and made accountable. Fred Tanner argues that 'in practically all countries of the region, there is only limited, if any, civilian participation in and oversight over security policy-making. Instead of being accountable to elected parliaments, the security forces of these countries remain the preserve of executive powers and military establishments.' [46] This lack of transparency, accountability and democratic control of the security forces in general and militaries in particular, is a picture that most analysts of North Africa would agree with.

While these shortcomings would indicate a need for reform, not surprisingly maybe, there has been so far, very little demand for it from the North African countries. Indeed, experts on security sector reform argue that of all of the regions of the African continent, North Africa is the least advanced on this matter, and indeed that North Africa constitutes one of the most problematic regions worldwide, when it comes to state of security sector reform.

Morocco is an interesting case study. King Mohammed VI has initiated in 1994 some limited reforms aimed at 'limiting abuses of power by security actors and educating police and prison staff, as well as the general

population, about human rights.'[47] However, most analysts argue that the reform is largely cosmetic as long as the constitutional arrangements remain unchanged, and those do not provide for democratic control of the military.[48] The Security Sector Reform Resource Centre argues that 'the eventual goal of full democratization and civilian control is impossible, as Morocco continues to function as a Constitutional Monarchy and the King retains wide authority over the army and other security actors.'[49] The reinvigorated reform efforts that the King launched, following the Tunisian and Egyptian events and constitutional referendum to take place in June 2011, combined with the demands of the civil society in Morocco, may yet bear fruit, but following the King's speech on 17 June 2011, it appears, not surprisingly maybe, that the very key issue of democratic control and reform of the military will not be tackled directly at this stage.

Role of the armed forces in Arab Spring events

While arguably the militaries are the guarantors of regime security across the region of North Africa, it is worth noting that the behaviour of the militaries, when faced with public protests on the one hand and autocratic leaders on the other, has by no means been uniform. This reflects, of course, the fact that the various regimes faced with unrest, have chosen different ways forward, such as revolution, evolution, repression, unstable status-quo, or all out conflict, and some have oscillated between them. But this is not the full explanation, because in some instances all or parts of the military apparatus did not follow the policy of the regime. An explanation for this phenomenon is provided by Dr Lutterbeck in his contribution to the volume. Suffice to say at this stage, that the military structures have in basically all cases, except possibly Tunisia, played an important role of their own in conditioning the response to the protests.

While in Tunisia some civilian protesters were shot by security forces, the military, which is not the oversized military common to the region, ultimately demanded the ouster of the President.[50] In Egypt, with its large and powerful armed forces, the military is now in charge of the transition processes, but abuses of human rights by the military continue to be reported regularly.[51] It is also unclear whether, and in which way, the Egyptian military will conclude its political role in the transition process. Algeria, where large protests have taken place, but no meaningful changes have followed, is one of the largest military spenders in the region. Morocco's ruler has responded to events in neighbouring countries by announcing reforms. But here too, the military is

large and military spending is high. It is, at this stage, not possible to predict the course of events in both of these countries. In Libya, while some units and military leaders have sided with the rebel forces, Quaddafi was able to sustain military actions with troops loyal to him, but mostly with elite guards and mercenary groups, that cause suffering and death among the civilian population.

Impact of the Arab Spring Events

Indeed, the militaries and the security sector overall, once geared to ensure regime security, have become a difficult legacy for those countries that have embarked upon the course of reform. Significantly, it is Tunisia, which comparatively speaking should have the least difficulty in reforming the security sector, that has shown the desire for change first. DCAF reports that already in April 2011, a Tunisian delegation discussed reforms to Tunisia's security sector as part of the transition and democratization process. DCAF suggests that 'Bringing the security forces under democratic control, constitutes the biggest challenge to reformers after the overthrow of former Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. People expect that reformed security forces respect the law, especially human rights, perform professionally, stay apolitical, and remain accountable for their actions. Tunisia wants change in the minds, texts, institutions and practices in order to get security forces that serve the people'.[52] Sources indicate also, that individual states within the EU and the USA have been approached at high level by Tunisian officials wishing to explore the possibility of expert support for efforts aimed at SSR, and specifically at reforming the police sector. There is little to indicate at this stage, that the military would also be subjected to reforms.

At the same time, the question worth asking is whether Egypt, with its strong military now firmly embedded in the process of change, is able and willing to implement such changes? The size and budget, as well as the political and economic role of the army, would make it a difficult and long-term effort. The additional difficulty here is that the Egyptian army has been built and supported by the US, and therefore the US needs to be on board for any reform process to succeed, possibly with the EU and other players involved.

This realization leads to another question. With the democratization processes more or less firmly on the way only in Tunisia and Egypt as well as Morocco, are those the only countries of North Africa which could possibly

pursue SSR and change of overall philosophy concerning the use of armed forces, or are other states of the region able to, as well? Clearly, as from June 2011, Libya is out of bounds for any such reforms for the time being, but ultimately, they will be possible and necessary. The context of it will be any post-conflict reconstruction and reform effort the international community might undertake, and it is, as yet, too early to speculate how this will be undertaken, as the discussion is ongoing. And while Algeria's and Morocco's relationship makes any effort at reform more complex because of their rivalry, still it appears that Morocco may be open to some aspects of reform of the security sector.

The issue of timing, with regards to putting SSR and the concept of human security on the agenda, appears significant. As constitutional reforms are under way in Tunisia, Egypt and to some degree Morocco, it is clear that there is not much time to approach the issue. Once the constitutions are amended, only superficial and more technical reforms will be possible, as the issue of separation of powers and supervision of the armed forces will be set in principle.

Most observers, writing prior to the Arab Spring events, argue that introducing SSR in North African countries will not be an easy task. Medhane Tadesse described the situation in the following way: 'The idea of security sector reform (SSR) in the Arab region of Africa seems highly unrealistic, given the sensitivity of the issues involved.'[53] The events of 2011 did transform the political landscape in the region, and arguably the idea of SSR is no longer unrealistic. But the sensitivities of the issues certainly did not disappear overnight.

Issue of Ownership of the Processes of Reform of the Security Sector

Taking into account these sensitivities, the process of reform must, on the one hand assure local ownership, by involving civil society and media in the reform drive, and on the other hand, SSR good practices must be imported from abroad (while allowing for development of own solutions).

The issue is how to support local ownership. Working with unreformed governments or police and military leaderships will be difficult in most places, not only because there may be no particular interest in pursuing a reform agenda, but also because efforts to decouple authoritarian or semi-authoritarian rulers (or even transitional governments) from the formal

security sector, may be perceived by both sides as threatening to their *raison d'être* and privileges. There will be significant differences in responsiveness, depending on which course of action both the regime and the security sector have chosen in response to the popular movements demanding change. But the case of Morocco indicates how difficult the process will be overall.

However, the concept of SSR, based on a broad definition of its stakeholders and agents, does provide for starting points other than formal co-operation with a state's police or military force. Indeed, civil society and NGOs are considered significant actors and potential partners in the SSR process. In simple terms, civil society actors and organisations can place the issue on the domestic agenda, start and sustain a public debate on the issue, and generate pressure on state actors. That is, of course, immensely more difficult and more dangerous for civil society actors in non-democratic societies, particularly those in which the formal security sector (i.e., police, military, secret services) have privileged access to economic and/or military power and where human rights are routinely abused. In the case of North Africa, where little to no reform of the security sector from the top has been observed, and where the Arab Spring has reflected and, indeed, been based on active, although, often unstructured engagement of civil society, there may thus be interest and indeed demands for steps in this direction.

The concept of human security would be a useful tool in this context. It is both a conceptual model, that allows explaining the end-goal of SSR, and a policy tool, which frames the individual reforms and steps needed to launch SSR. Human security is a concept with which civil society in North Africa appears more familiar with than SSR, and that may have tremendous appeal to societies in transition. Furthermore, human security may allow creating a network with civil society organizations working on human security issues across borders. Analysts suggest that on human security in Arab countries, 'a more inclusive dialogue between states and civil society is desirable, as is an effort to create links between civil society actors at the transnational level – a sort of global civil society dialogue'.[54]

An additional difficulty for any such reform is the lack of a regional framework, that could tallow for tackling this matter in a co-operative fashion and would assure local ownership for the efforts to introduce SSR and place human security on the agenda, but also involve other major players, such as the USA and the EU. Much could be said both with regards to why there is no framework tackling security-related issues in the region, and, also, why it

would be needed. But as there are no indications in the immediate future, such a framework could be constructed, suffice to say, that a response to the situation on the ground must cope with this additional problem.

Having been involved in train and equip projects in the region of North Africa and having provided military aid, the US must be involved in SSR efforts there, and particularly in Egypt. However, as has been pointed out recently by US commentators, the US does not have a clear policy approach on SSR, or any centralized institutional capacity to pursue SSR abroad effectively. Robert Perito of the United States Institute for Peace calls the US track record on this issue 'spotty', but indicated that there may be a shift in thinking on this issue, as a result of the Arab Spring events.[55]

Interestingly, in his seminal foreign policy speech on North Africa and Middle East in May 2011, US President Barak Obama touched upon many important consequences of the Arab Spring, that has to date resulted in changes in governance and leadership in Tunisia and Egypt: 'the need to consider not only the stability of nations, but also self-determination of individuals', support for political and economic reforms, the example that both countries could set through 'free and fair elections, a vibrant civil society, accountable and effective democratic institutions, and responsible regional leadership'. [56] Noticeably however, President Obama did not refer in his speech to the role and need for reform of the security sectors in general and militaries, more particularly, of the countries of the region. This is not to say, that this aspect could not be subsumed under some of the consequences mentioned above.

The EU has thus far 'been rather reluctant to become involved in SSR activities in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East.'[57] Indeed, the EU's experience of failed efforts to give the Barcelona process a security co-operation dimension, testifies its difficulty engaging on security issues with the southern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, the EU does have at its disposal, several instruments that would allow it to shape an SSR role for itself in the region.

The first EU document to respond to events in Tunisia and Egypt, the Joint Communication of the European Commission and the high representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy entitled, 'A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean'

(March 2011) does not mention SSR or human security at all.[58] 'Security and law enforcement sector reform (including the police) and the establishment of democratic control over armed and security forces', is recognized in the Joint Communication of the European Commission and EU High Representative on the changing Neighbourhood of the 25/5/2011[59] as one of the elements common to building deep and sustainable democracy, and part of political reform, that the EU is ready to support.[60] However, the document does not specify in which way any such reform could be supported by the EU, which according to observers failed, so far, to place the aspect of security sector reform in southern Mediterranean high on its agenda.

A number of European and transatlantic organizations and NGOs with experience in SSR and in democratization processes, such as NATO, OSCE, parliamentary organizations, and DCAF, could act by contributing their intelligence and experience. They can and should be activated to support the message and provide expertise.

An additional question concerns the examples that should be invoked for the reform processes. It would be counterproductive to be entirely Euro-centric and invoke, for example, the Central European model. Some analysts have been pointing to the example of Turkey, and the changing role of the military in its political context, as a possible model for the way forward. But as some point out, 'Turkey does not provide much of a model for many liberal democrats in countries like Egypt and Tunisia who seek to establish a secular-parliamentary political system along European lines. Egypt and Tunisia are looking at a more telescoped transition from considerably more authoritarian states.'[61] However, the Turkish example, just like transitions in Eastern Europe of 1989, the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as other transitions moving away from authoritarian regimes in other parts of the world, and the accompanying efforts aimed at reforming the security sectors, may provide lessons learned, rather than complete examples on how to move forward. Other regions, such as Asia or other parts of Africa, may also yield useful lessons for the situation in North Africa.

Thus, partners such as the EU and the USA, possibly working in tandem with a network of human security and SSR-focused NGOs, and using examples from a variety of regions, may have the opportunity in those countries where reforms are under way, that is Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco, and in the future possibly also Libya and possibly other states, to work towards ensuring local ownership through co-operation with civil society. But the matter is not

straightforward: much remains to be done to place the issue of SSR and human security high on the political agenda, following the Arab Spring, both in the countries of southern Mediterranean and their partners in Europe and North America.

Conclusions

Almost every analysis of the situation in Arab states, published at this stage of the Arab spring, starts with references to the use of security apparatus to shore up the regimes, and its use as an instrument of repression. But most then focus on issues such as elections and economic reform and short-term challenges. Thus, while the problem has been recognized, there is no clear analysis on the cure.

This points to a lack of analytical coherence, or the belief, that once the autocratic rulers are gone, the militaries and security forces will somehow automatically behave in the right way. Of course, this cannot be seen as anything but wishful thinking, particularly in countries in which the military has entrenched political roles.

The countries of North Africa that embark upon a course of political reform, inherit a difficult legacy with numerous economic, social and political challenges. It is important to understand their need to embark upon the long-term and complex process of amending the lack of transparency, accountability and democratic control of the military and security forces. It is worthwhile to specify what is at stake.

At stake is the legitimacy of the governments and their security forces, in particular if human rights abuses and violations committed by security forces, cannot be curtailed and brought to justice. Furthermore, failure to make transparent the allocation of scarce public resources to militaries and to review this allocation, to create what some term 'a peace dividend', would also pull into question the legitimacy of efforts to reform. And finally, a democratic domestic order will be very difficult, if not impossible, to pursue if the old habits of striving for regime security and using security forces for this purpose, will not be eradicated.

A good starting point for efforts aimed at introducing SSR and the policy goal of human security, would be those countries that have embarked upon a course of reform. At this time, those are Tunisia and Egypt, as well

as Morocco. But the different roles that militaries play in those countries, as well as their sheer size and budget, indicate that Tunisia is the only country where quick progress may be possible. What augurs well is, indeed, that Tunisia's transition government has stretched out feelers to explore possible sources of expertise and assistance on SSR. But others must follow.

The reform processes can only go ahead on the basis of local ownership, through the involvement and inter-linkages of civil societies and NGOs, but with expertise from major players, such as the USA and EU, that need to step up their involvement on the issue of security sector reform, and other organizations with experience in democratization issues. The concept of human security will also be helpful in galvanizing civil society input.

The key issue will be timing, as the constitutional reforms under way in a number of countries of North Africa, provide a limited window of opportunity to start a debate on the role, place and responsibility of the security sector, but also on the issue of its transparency, accountability and democratic control.

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