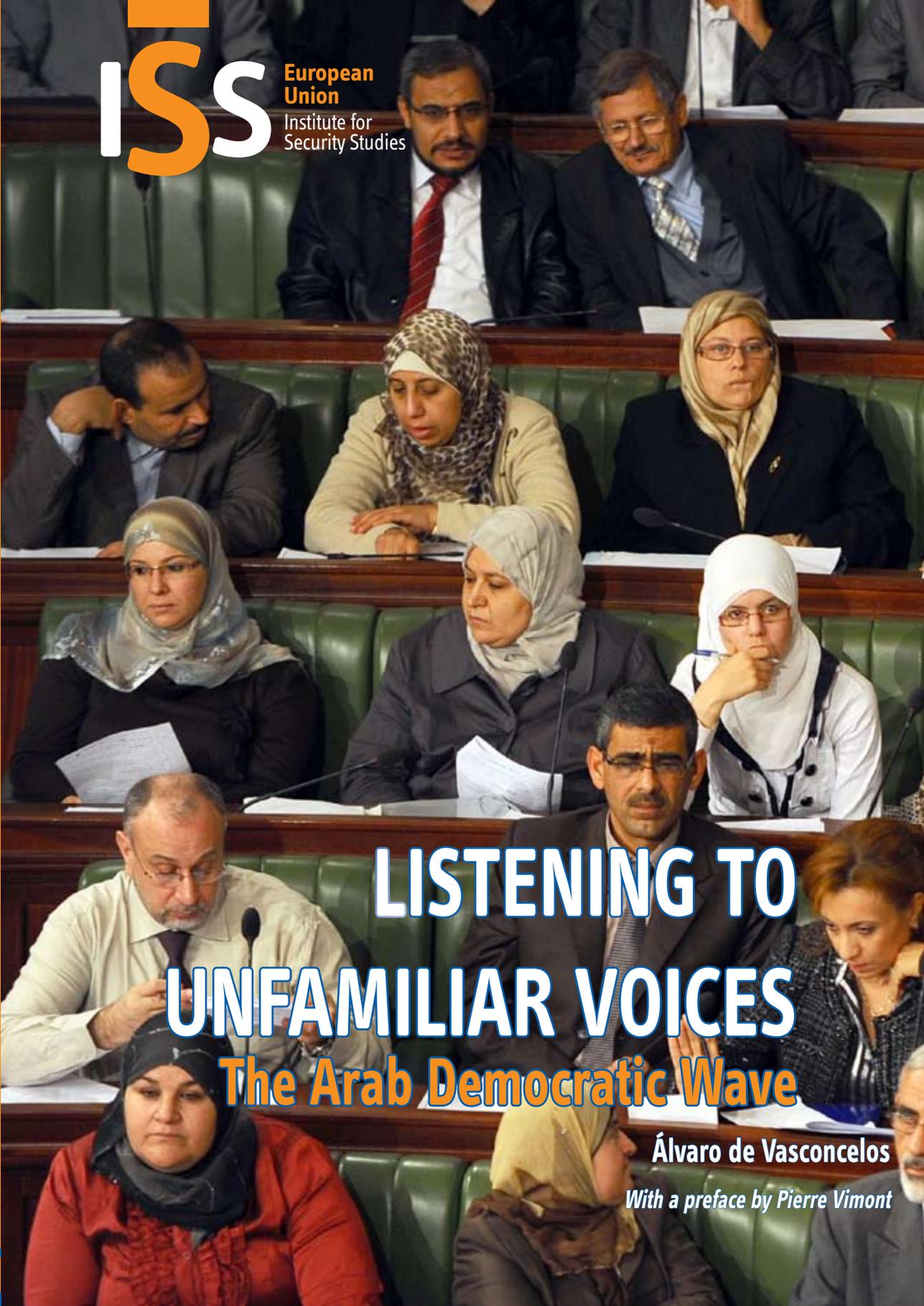


**LISTENING TO  
UNFAMILIAR VOICES**  
**The Arab Democratic Wave**

**Álvaro de Vasconcelos**  
*With a preface by Pierre Vimont*



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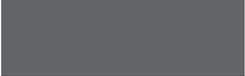
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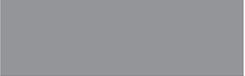


# Listening to unfamiliar voices – The Arab democratic wave

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Álvaro de Vasconcelos

*with a preface by Pierre Vimont*



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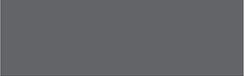
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I dedicate this book with *saudade* to my late wife Maria do Rosário de Moraes Vaz, to whom many of the essays on which this book is based owe so much.

Álvaro de Vasconcelos



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# Preface

Everyone knows it and it has been extensively commented upon: the Arab Spring took Europe by surprise. Indeed, it took the whole world by surprise and not just Europe. Why did these events occur so suddenly and unexpectedly? It seems undeniable that a certain intellectual complacency had taken hold, whereby the Arab world was regarded as an exception in the vast process of democratisation which had progressively spread to Southern Europe, Latin America and then Eastern Europe over the past forty years. Perhaps also, and more simply, it should be remembered that the great upheavals of history often occur without any warning, even if the most attentive observers have sometimes discerned the first signs of the underlying tectonic movements at the origin of these changes. Nevertheless, a general attitude prevailed for far too long in intellectual milieus that Arab countries were fundamentally resistant to the idea of democracy and were content with a political culture where liberty, tolerance and dialogue were lacking.

The great merit of Álvaro de Vasconcelos's essays, collected in this volume, is to put the momentous events that we have recently witnessed in perspective, elucidating their full significance and placing them in an historical context from which many important lessons may be drawn. These essays invite us to ponder on our past as much as on our future.

It is plain for all to see that Europe – although not only Europe – has for a long time had a difficult relationship with the Arab-Muslim world, despite being its immediate neighbour. Various policies succeeded one another – ranging from the bilateral agreements negotiated between the EC and individual Mediterranean third countries, to the Barcelona Process, to the Neighbourhood Policy – without ever really satisfying either side of the Mediterranean: political dialogue remained at a superficial level; economic development always seemed to lack real dynamism and dialogue between societies was rather too formal and hesitant. Then the shock of 11 September 2001 only reinforced a sense of uneasiness that politicians dared not express for fear of fuelling the most radical ideologies. Far too often we witnessed the spectacle of EU Member States who appeared to be content with a *status quo* that protected their interests and dispensed them from having to make difficult choices.

In this light, the events of the Arab Spring are a much-needed wake-up call for Europe. They oblige Europe to reevaluate the relationship that it wants to develop with its Southern partners and answer the question: what type of partnership do we want to build

with our Southern neighbours? What are our common interests, our priorities and our ambitions? Do we wish to foster political stability and economic prosperity all around the Mediterranean Basin, whose borders we share? If this is indeed the case, how do we intend to go about contributing to the economic development of countries that need immediate financial aid as well as support for structural reform over the long term? How, moreover, can Europe establish a cool-headed and responsible relationship with political Islam, which is by all appearances the big winner in the first elections of the Arab Spring and which will now have to find its way in societies and states in the throes of modernisation? How, finally, can a diplomatic approach be developed within an Arab world beset by increasingly complex, indeed contradictory, influences?

These challenges are all the more difficult for Europeans as they will need to be addressed in an increasingly globalised world where we will be faced with competition from many of our partners in the international community. The European Union cannot count on a quasi-exclusive relationship with the protagonists of the Arab Spring, as was the case during the emancipation of Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. At that time, the prospect of future membership of the European Union, as well as their desire to escape from the shadow of the former Soviet empire, meant that all of these countries embarked on a fairly straightforward path towards democracy. Today, for our Southern neighbours, the choices are more complicated, the models to emulate more varied and the influences more diverse.

In this context, it is worth remembering that the European Union has on the whole reacted better to the events in the Arab world than its critics care to acknowledge. Very early on – in March 2011 – it proposed a wide range of measures designed to aid the countries of the Southern Mediterranean in their efforts to relaunch their economies. Faced with the electoral success of the Islamist parties in Tunisia, Morocco or in Egypt, European countries responded calmly and called for both tolerance and vigilance. At the same time, Europe deployed various initiatives to support the essential democratic transition that each of these Southern countries is currently undergoing on the political, economic and societal levels.

All this, however, does not mean that the European Union is absolved from making any additional efforts. Clearly, it still has a lot to do. First it needs to acquire a better understanding of the nature of the profound transformations that are currently underway in the Arab world, and in particular have a clearer sense of the acute desire for dignity and respect that the citizens of all these countries now want recognised. This reality must be fully acknowledged, and to this end Europe needs to pay more attention and engage in more dialogue than in the past. This calls for Europe to be tolerant without renouncing

its own convictions or values, and to pay particular heed to the political and cultural realities of its neighbours, so near and at the same time so different.

Above and beyond its offers of aid and assistance, the EU must define a method and set of instruments adapted to the situation in the Southern Mediterranean nations, which rapidly need aid that is tailored to meet the complex problems they are faced with, at first as a matter of urgency and then in the long term. These are the difficult challenges facing a Europe used to moving forward at its own pace and according to its own priorities. Here again, it is openness and dialogue that should be paramount.

The countries of Europe and the EU will have to demonstrate political determination in the difficult moments that inevitably lie ahead. First and foremost, in order to maintain solidarity, at a time when the financial and economic crisis that has spread to the very heart of Europe may lead nations to turn in upon themselves. Secondly, in order to make the right diplomatic choices faced with the vagaries of the Arab Spring, now characterised by increasingly complex alliances and influences. Finally, in order to foster the type of clear-sighted and responsible relationship that it will be necessary to establish with political Islam at a time when political parties in the different countries of the region must embark, not without difficulty, on the path to modernity.

Not least among the merits of Alvaro de Vasconcelos' essays is that they provide us with rich and stimulating ideas on all these issues and insights on how to face a future that is full of challenges but also of promise. This book should serve as a guide to our times, a reflection on the events unfolding daily before us, a rich fund of lessons learned and pointers for understanding the changing face of the Mediterranean world.

*Pierre Vimont,  
Executive Secretary General of the European External Action Service,  
Brussels, February 2012*



## Author's Note

Free and fair elections in Tunisia and Egypt; elections in Morocco after the introduction of constitutional reform; the citizens of Syria taking to the streets after those of Libya face death and gain freedom from a long-standing dictator: these are extraordinary events that should mobilise all those in Europe and elsewhere who believe in the values of democracy and human rights. But this seems not to have happened. The initial enthusiasm, the surprised comment that 'they are like us after all' which I have heard many times, has been followed by fears that elections would lead the Arab world down an unfamiliar non-Western democratic path. These fears are more the result of ignorance than a reflection of the political prudence that is necessary when facing difficult and uncertain transitions from dictatorship to democracy.

It can be hard to hear what others have to say, to listen to unfamiliar voices. There is a clear paradox inherent in this situation: on the one hand, there is support for a democratic transformation, but on the other, the new democracies that may emerge could be distinctly less pro-Western than the dictatorships that preceded them. But we must accept a relationship between equals with new Arab leaders based on the values that we share, and a new agenda. This is a great challenge, as we must deconstruct the West's ideological bias and fear and ignorance based on neo-Orientalist stereotypes that have replaced the old Orientalist admiration of the East and its culture.

For all these reasons, I felt it was important to publish a book that might contribute to a European reflection on the implications of Arab democracy. This book builds on articles and essays published between 1991 and 2011, through which I engaged in the debate about Islam and democracy from the earliest days.<sup>1</sup> The essays have been revised and updated, and are complemented by new material that offers an overview of the Arab democratic wave a year on, and proposes some ways in which Europe might forge a coherent policy capable of responding to the demands of the moment. These writings, covering almost three decades, testify to the fact that the big issues under debate today are not new; they also make it plain that although many were surprised by the democratic awakening of the Arab world, there were good reasons not to be. They also convey the sense of frustration of someone who always thought that it was necessary and possible to find an alternative to supporting authoritarian regimes out of fear of political Islam. As noted

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1. All the relevant publications are listed at the end of the book. All internet citations in this book were accessed or consulted between 14 January and 24 February 2012.

in the first EuroMeSCo report of 1998,<sup>2</sup> ‘political Islam became an unavoidable reality of the transition processes in the South’ and contrary to the stereotype ‘the Islamist movement is heterogeneous’ and European civil society should develop relations not only with familiar voices but with all civil society organisations including those with a ‘religious inspiration.’ At the time, this provoked a reaction of angry protest by some Southern leaders and met with the silence of most Europeans officials.

These writings also bear witness to an intellectual adventure of a group of strategic thinkers – now firm friends – who refused time and again to accept neo-colonial, culturalist and securitising perspectives that ill-informed and prejudiced analysts and politicians imprinted on relations between the peoples of the shared Euro-Arabian Sea. First among them is my much-missed companion, Maria do Rosário, who contributed so much to these essays; and then our friends, with whom we launched the EuroMesCo network and other Mediterranean initiatives, including Azzam Mahjoub, Abdallah Saaf, Amr Elshobaki, Madhi Abdul Hadi, Mustapha Hamarneh, Roberto Aliboni, Atila Eralp, George Joffé, Claire Spencer, Muriel Asseburg, Volker Perthes, Gema Martín Muñoz, Alejandro Lorca, Luis Martínez and Erwan Lannon, among many others. I would like to thank the staff at the EUISS who have assisted me in preparing this book, in particular my research assistants Any Freitas and Charlotte Blommestijn and the EUISS publications team, Catherine Gliere, Gearoid Cronin and Noëlle Tomas. Last but not least, I want to make a very particular mention of Alexandra Barahona de Brito, for her editorial input and very useful comments.

The last three decades have been full of intellectual and political debate and myriad initiatives, during which we discussed and researched all the important questions, ranging from liberal authoritarianism to democratic reform, political Islam and secularism, free trade and social cohesion, migration and xenophobia, the Palestinian question and the two-state solution, violence and terrorism and civic movements and justice, to the rights of women and Islamic feminism.

All this intellectual output was endlessly debated in a number of initiatives, some of which played a key role in the creation of a Euro-Arab-Israel public arena, among them the Western Mediterranean initiative launched in the 1980s by Special Envoy of then President Mitterrand Jacques Huntzinger, the Gredos and Buitrago forums led by Alejandro Lorca, the cooperative effort among Western Mediterranean think-tanks launched in Tunis by the late Ambassador Driss and the Institute of Strategic and Inter-

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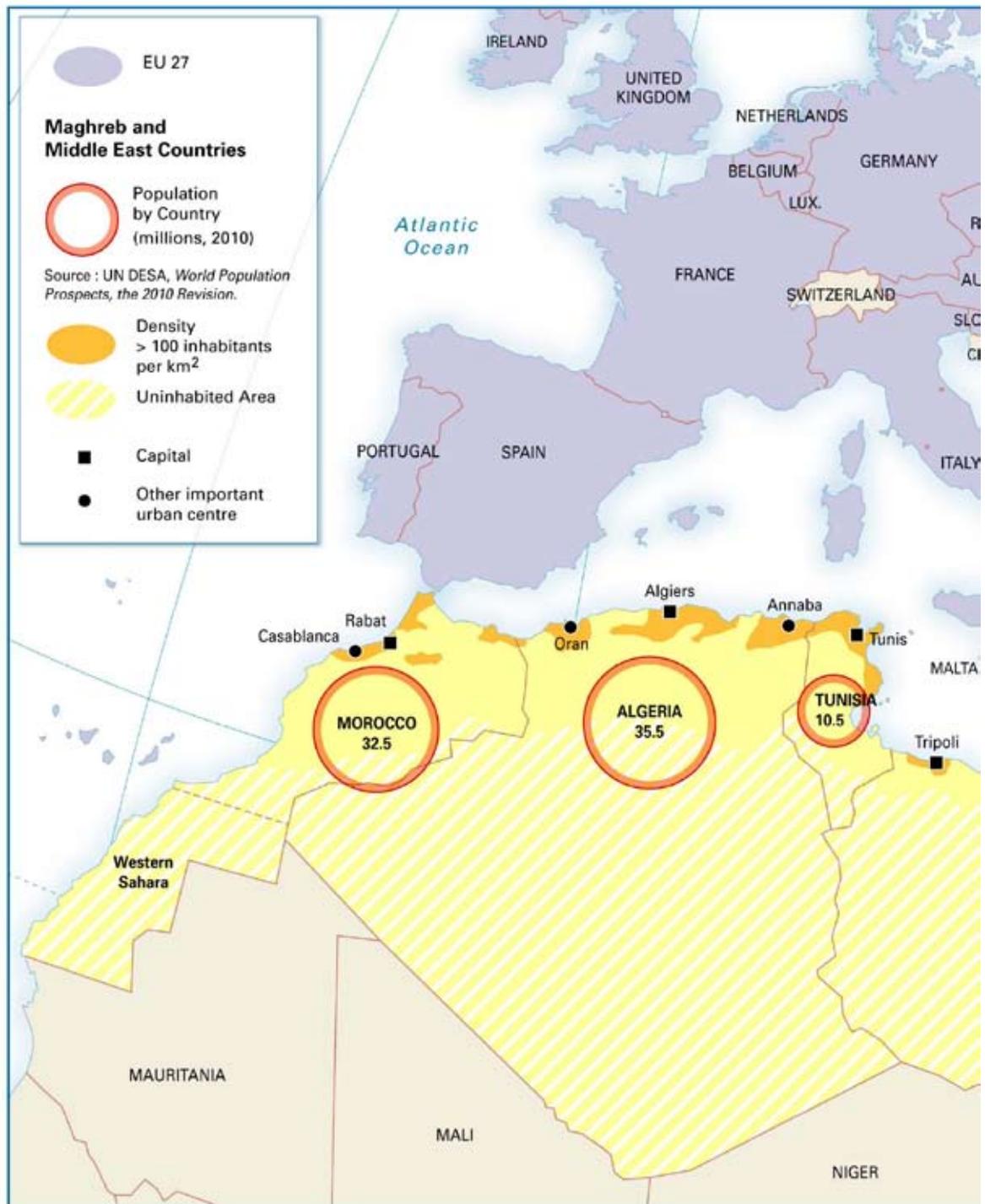
2. EuroMeSCo Working Group Report, published by the EuroMeSCo Secretariat at the IEEI in November 1998. The basis for that report was a paper published in Álvaro Vasconcelos & George Joffé (eds.), *The Barcelona Process: Building a Euro-Mediterranean Regional Community* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

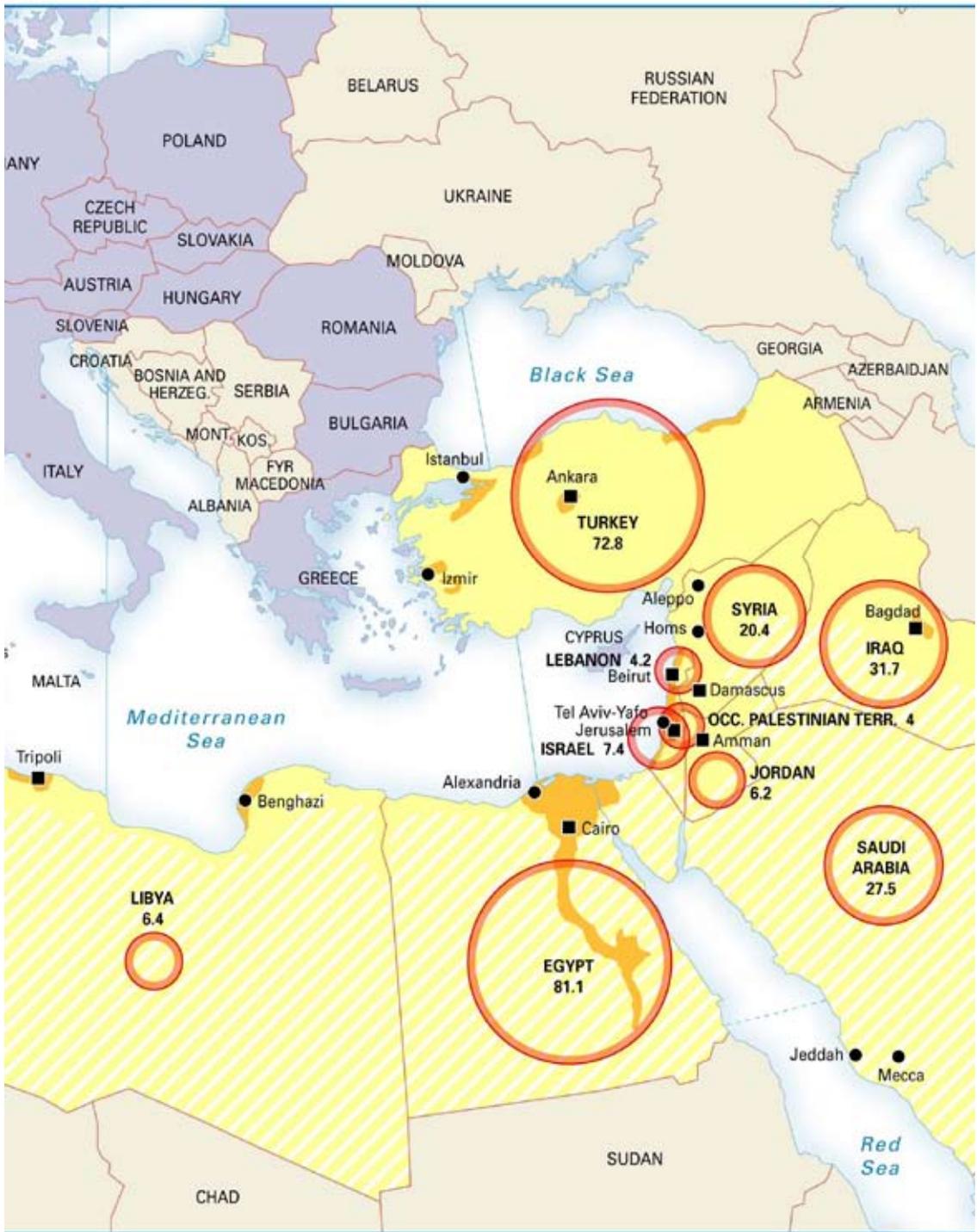
national Studies (IEEI) of Lisbon, later broadened to include the whole Mediterranean region, the MeSCo project led by Roberto Aliboni, which came to include the European states and became EuroMeSCo at a meeting in Sesimbra, Portugal when I was Secretariat Coordinator. Also important are the joint Centre for Studies and Research in Social Sciences (CERSS)-IEEI Euro-Mediterranean Summer school on democratic transitions held in Tetuan, Morocco, since 2004, the outreach work of the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), and the Centre for International Studies and Documentation of Barcelona (CIDOB) forum on security cooperation in Barcelona. Among all these events, I would like to highlight the EuroMeSCo annual conference in Ramallah organised in 2000 by the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) and Mahdi Abdul Hadi.

Many of these projects received the support of the European Commission as well as the backing of private foundations or national governments. Of all the people in the institutions of the EU who have shared our aims, Laura Baeza deserves a special mention for her tireless efforts to put human rights and democracy on the Euro-Mediterranean agenda. All these initiatives and projects, among many others, aimed to develop a common understanding of the ideals and aspirations of the citizens of Europe, the Mediterranean Arab countries and Israel. I have been privileged to be involved in all of these projects in one way or another, and I have learned a great deal from them.

There were many difficult moments over these three decades and there was deep debate about the meaning of dramatic events such as the US bombing of Tripoli in 1986, the conflict in the Western Sahara, the two Iraq wars and September 11, both Intifadas, in particular the second which made relations with Israeli colleagues more difficult, the elections and ensuing civil war in Algeria, and the Lebanon and Gaza wars. The strategic debate has been intense as is natural for a region where war and hope have coexisted so closely.

When I took on the directorship of the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) in 2007 I vowed to continue working for a vision of an open, hospitable Europe, one capable of integrating all its citizens independently of their origins, and able to broaden its founding credo of unity within diversity to embrace other peoples. I was aware then, as I am now, of the urgent need to defend these principles. It appears even more necessary today, as the economic crisis seems to have led Europeans to turn inward, and has led to a loss of faith in the Union as a project for all based on solidarity and respect for different identities. The Arab revolutions are the ultimate test of the capacity of the European Union to develop a common foreign and security policy (CFSP) consistent with its values and principles, a pre-condition for it to remain an important global actor in the twenty-first century.







# Introduction

‘The conventional wisdom of the Tower of Babel story is that the collapse was a misfortune. ... Perhaps the achievement of paradise was premature, a little hasty if no one could take the time to understand other languages, other views, other narratives.’

Toni Morrison, The Nobel Lecture in Literature, 1993.

In 2011, millions of citizens in the Southern Mediterranean took to the streets demanding an end to dictatorship and the right to choose their governments, and also affirming their right to their cultural and religious identities and well-being. The now thirty-seven year old third democratic wave is finally sweeping the periphery of old Europe. This wave came in four phases: it caused the fall of the dictatorships in Europe in Portugal, Greece and Spain in the 1970s, then in Latin America and Asia in the 1980s and 1990s, followed by Eastern Europe and other countries in the 1990s; and now, after the lost decade at the start of this century, it is sweeping the Mediterranean and Arab world.<sup>3</sup>

The democratic revolutions in the Arab countries express what Paul Valéry called ‘*l’air du temps*’ of a world in transition,<sup>4</sup> with the growth of the middle class in emerging countries empowered by the universal spread of information technologies. The Arab wave has had contagion effects, from the movement of the outraged (*indignados*) first in Spain and then elsewhere, the Occupy Wall Street movement in the US, whose organisers have explicitly acknowledged the influence of the Tahrir Square mobilisation as their source of inspiration, to people demonstrating in Russia against electoral fraud and Chinese bloggers; it has also affected democratic countries, with demands for a renewal of representative democracy through greater participation. Indeed, demands for ‘real’<sup>5</sup> and more participatory democracy, dignity with justice, and for a society that gives hope to its young generations,<sup>6</sup> amplified by people’s determination to take advantage of social networks to make their voice heard and to be informed, can be heard and are evident from Cairo, Tunis and Madrid to New York and Paris.

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3. Although I am very critical of Huntington’s theory of the clash of civilisations, his ‘wave’ metaphor has proved apt and useful and I prefer the term to ‘Arab Spring.’ See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993). Huntington would no doubt have been surprised to learn that his ‘third wave’ of democratisation has culminated in transitions to democracy in the Arab world.

4. Paul Valéry, *Le Bilan de l’intelligence* (Paris: Editions Allia, 2011).

5. Real Democracy Now (*Democracia Real Ya*) is the name of the Spanish movement, which emerged from the *indignados* mobilisation of May 2011, and gathers hundreds of small associations and groups. There are offshoots from this in Brazil, among other places. See: <http://www.democraciarealbrasil.org>.

6. I conducted various meetings with young leaders in different Mediterranean and other countries in the context of the ESPAS project and afterwards. In the region, these meetings (‘focus groups’) were held in Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia. See ESPAS Report, *Global Trends 2030: Citizens in an interconnected and polycentric world*, EUISS, Paris, forthcoming.

**Table 1: Three waves of transition to democracy, 1828-2010**

**First wave\* (1828-1926)**

EUROPE	AMERICAS	ASIA	MIDEAST	AFRICA
Austria	Argentina	Australia	-	-
Belgium	Canada	New Zealand		
Czechoslovakia	Chile	Japan		
Denmark	Colombia			
Estonia	United States			
Finland	Uruguay			
France				
Germany				
Greece				
Hungary				
Iceland				
Ireland				
Italy				
Latvia				
Lithuania				
Netherlands				
Norway				
Poland				
Portugal				
Spain				
Sweden				
Switzerland				
United Kingdom				

**Second wave\* (1943-1962)**

EUROPE	AMERICAS	ASIA	MIDEAST	AFRICA
Austria	Argentina	Burma	Israel	Botswana
Belgium	Bolivia	Malaysia	Lebanon	Gambia
Denmark	Brazil	Fiji		Ghana
France	Colombia	India		Nigeria
Italy	Costa Rica	Indonesia		
Netherlands	Ecuador	Japan		
Norway	Guyana	Pakistan		
Malta	Jamaica	Philippines		
Turkey	Peru	Sri Lanka		
West Germany	Trinidad and Tobago	South Korea		
	Uruguay			
	Venezuela			

\* Countries that went through democratic or semi-democratic phases during the three waves of democratisation listed in Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century*.

**Third wave \*** (*selected countries*)  
(1974 onwards)

PHASE 1 (1970s)	Year **	PHASE 3 (1990s)	Year **
Portugal	1974 ***	Czechoslovakia	1990
Greece	1974	Hungary	1990
Spain	1977	Bulgaria	1990
Dominican Republic	1978	Nicaragua	1990
Nigeria	1979	Romania	1990
Ecuador	1979	Haiti	1990
<b>PHASE 2(1980s)</b>		Slovenia	1990****
Peru	1980	Croatia	1990****
Honduras	1981	Latvia	1991****
Bolivia	1982	Estonia	1991****
El Salvador	1982	Lithuania	1991****
Argentina	1983	Mongolia	1992
Turkey	1983	Peru	1993
Uruguay	1985	South Africa	1994****
Brazil	1985	Haiti	1994
Guatemala	1985	Nigeria	1999
Sudan	1986	Senegal	2000
Philippines	1986	<b>PHASE 4 (2010-)</b>	
South Korea	1988	Arab democratic wave	
Pakistan	1988		
Poland	1989		
Chile	1989		
Panama	1989		

\* Countries that went through democratic or semi-democratic phases during the three waves of democratisation listed in Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century*.

\*\* The years indicated in this table are the years in which transitions from autocracy to democracy took place and are taken (where possible) from Jay Ulfelder and Michael Lustik, *Modeling Transitions to and from Democracy*, American Political Science Association, 2005.

\*\*\* Samuel P. Huntington contended that the third wave began with the end of the Portuguese dictatorship in 1974.

\*\*\*\* Dates added by the author.

The Arab democratic wave is also part of a much broader global shift toward a post-Western world<sup>7</sup> in which the global agenda is no longer defined by the West alone. As US hegemony fades, the Western monopoly on the democratic debate will end, and other ‘unfamiliar’ voices will be heard. They tell us that democracy and human rights are not Western but universal values. It is no longer credible to counterpose Asian, Islamic and Western values; there is a growing global belief that democracy brings greater freedom, protects basic rights better, increases the chances for development with dignity, and that

7. My reflections on a post-Western world were greatly enriched by my participation in the ESPAS Global Trends 2030 project. See in particular the chapter ‘Demands for political participation but dangers of populism,’ ESPAS Report, op. cit. in note 6.

it is a better system to affirm different identities and to promote peaceful international solutions to the world's problems.

Europeans will have to listen to these new and unfamiliar voices and acknowledge their legitimacy. These are the voices of those who need to recover their dignity. These may not be less democratic, but they will certainly be more autonomous.

For Europe, this democratic wave could not have come at a better time, as it needs to undertake a profound renewal of the relationship between government and citizens, and thus requires a mobilising project, a new sense of its faith in its people and in Barack Obama's 'shared spirit of humanity'.<sup>8</sup> In this context, the democratic revolutions in the Arab countries offer a unique opportunity for the European Union (EU) to contribute to a peaceful and democratic neighbourhood and to give new impetus and *raison d'être* to the European project. But Europe has hesitated; it seems fearful of change and appears to lack the conviction and energy for that task. So its response has not matched the historical importance of events – how inferior is this response to the enthusiasm that swept across Europe in 1989, with the democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe.

Can this be explained by the financial and economic crisis? Is it the crisis that has turned the EU inward? Or is this the result of the difficulty of accepting the relative decline of Europe and the global shift to Asia in the transition to a post-Western world? Or is it caused by a sense of impotence in the face of rapid changes due to the economic development and the emergence of the middle class in the South, supposedly a European goal after the end of its colonial dreams? Or more disturbingly, is Europe fearful that the demands of angry youths for participation and justice will be contagious and spread to Europe, and that the deficit of democracy and coherence will become more evident? Do the former colonial powers fear that they will lose what influence and prestige they still have in the Arab world? Certainly, all these elements are important, but I would say they are not the essential cause of Europe's laggard response to changes in the region.

Above all, it is Europe's difficulty with Islam that explains the hesitation and ambiguity – and even hostility – towards the democratic wave in North Africa. These difficulties are not new, and have been at the heart of the debate about the Mediterranean and relations between Europe and Muslim-majority countries, reflecting doubts about the impact on European interests in the region of the rise of power of Islamist forces (unknown and unfamiliar). They are also suggestive of the resistance to the extraordinary transformation of Europe's cultural and religious landscape, particularly of its large urban centres.

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8. 'Obama Easter Speech: President Hails "Shared Spirit of Humanity"', *Huffington Post*, 3 June 2010, at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/03/obama-easter-address-pres\\_n\\_524203.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/03/obama-easter-address-pres_n_524203.html).

Today, almost all of Europe's big cities are multicultural hubs, regardless of whether multiculturalism is state policy as it has traditionally been in the United Kingdom,<sup>9</sup> or resisted as it is in France because of fears that the Republican integration of the community of citizens is under threat. But as philosopher Dominique Schnapper has accepted, then years after her very critical stance towards multiculturalism in *The Community of Citizens*,<sup>10</sup> the principle of citizenship alone is insufficient to build a community and there is no contradiction between forging a community of citizens and recognising different cultural identities. As she notes, 'democratic individuals refer to diverse communities (...) and, as citizens, are also the holders of rights that make all individuals equals.'<sup>11</sup>

Negative attitudes towards Muslim religious practices and traditions were exacerbated by a perverse tendency to 'securitise' social issues such as immigration, particularly of Muslims, in the post-September 11 context. Even today, it is more likely for a young Muslim to be a police suspect in Europe. But more often than not the problem is not security: Muslims in Europe are more likely than the average EU citizen to be poor and to live in segregated neighbourhoods with higher rates of crime.<sup>12</sup> Discriminatory attitudes in housing, employment, education and many other areas of life are a feature of the life of European Muslims.<sup>13</sup> Muslims are also overrepresented in official crime statistics, in large part because of the negative stereotyping of young male Muslims who are seen as potentially dangerous. This discourse is reinforced and reproduced by the media and in other public forums.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, although it is often claimed that riots are religiously or politically motivated, providing evidence of radical Islam at work, polls suggest that they are above all about jobs and opportunities.<sup>15</sup>

Third, there is a genuine possibility for the Middle East to find peace and for its people to focus their energy and knowledge on building better lives for themselves, and overcoming the cycle of war and violence that has destroyed millions of lives since the Second World War. This region has been the epicentre of conflict and war since the second half of the last century. The Iran-Iraq war was the longest conventional war of the twentieth century; some

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9. 'State Multiculturalism Has Failed, Says David Cameron', *BBC News*, 5 February 2011, at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994>.

10. Dominique Schnapper, *La Communauté des citoyens: Sur l'idée moderne de la nation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994).

11. Dominique Schnapper, 'La communauté des citoyens: Utopie créatrice', *Le Monde*, 11 November 2004.

12. Samir Amghar et al, *European Islam: Challenges for Public Policy and Society* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies), 2007.

13. *Muslims in the European Union: Discrimination and Islamophobia*, European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, 2006, at: [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Manifestations\\_EN.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Manifestations_EN.pdf).

14. Laurent Mucchielli, 'Délinquance et immigration en France: un regard sociologique', *Criminologie* vol. 36, no. 2, 2003, pp. 27-55.

15. A poll by the Pew Research Centre of 2007 showed that Muslims in the US, whose incomes and education are in line with the national average 'are highly assimilated into American society.' *Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream*, Pew Research Centre, 22 May 2007, at: <http://pewresearch.org/assets/pdf/muslim-americans.pdf>.

countries have been involved in a multitude of wars, many involving Western powers; and there is a seemingly endless conflict (and peace process) involving Israel and its neighbours. All this has certainly generated the perception that this is a region where violence has been the rule. But peace as the consequence of democratisation is now a real possibility.

For all these reasons, it seemed to me essential for Europeans and their leaders in particular to make real efforts to understand the issues at stake and the nature of the different actors at play. Europe needs a policy that is up to the complexity of this new emerging reality, one that is based on a vision of an open, hospitable Europe that is capable of integrating all its citizens independently of their origins, and able to broaden its founding credo of unity within diversity to embrace new citizens. This has become even more pressing today, as the economic crisis turns Europe inward, and leads to a loss of faith in the Union as a project for all based on solidarity and respect for different identities.<sup>16</sup>

Europe must be inclusive, it should not exclude ‘the other.’ As the preamble of the constitutional treaty asserted, if Europe remains ‘united in diversity’ it has a much better chance of pursuing, ‘with due regard for the rights of each individual and in awareness of their responsibilities towards future generations and the Earth, the great venture which makes of it a special area of human hope.’ This is a founding principle of European integration, the aim of which was to give a very culturally, religiously and linguistically (there are 234 living languages in Europe) diverse citizenry a common project.<sup>17</sup> Although some political leaders believe that multiculturalism has failed in their countries, the EU is and has always been a multicultural project.

There is a very worrying tendency for Muslims to be stereotyped along cultural lines, which has had a profound impact on the analytical framework adopted by many European decision-makers and politicians when determining policy towards the Arab world. This attitude has paved the way for anti-Islamic xenophobia and a growing rejection of immigrants from Muslim-majority countries, who are seen as a threat to security and social cohesion in Europe. The legitimisation of one form of xenophobia paves the way for others, including against European citizens. Furthermore, anti-Islamic feeling is a severe handicap for European foreign policy, and weakens the soft power attraction of the EU.

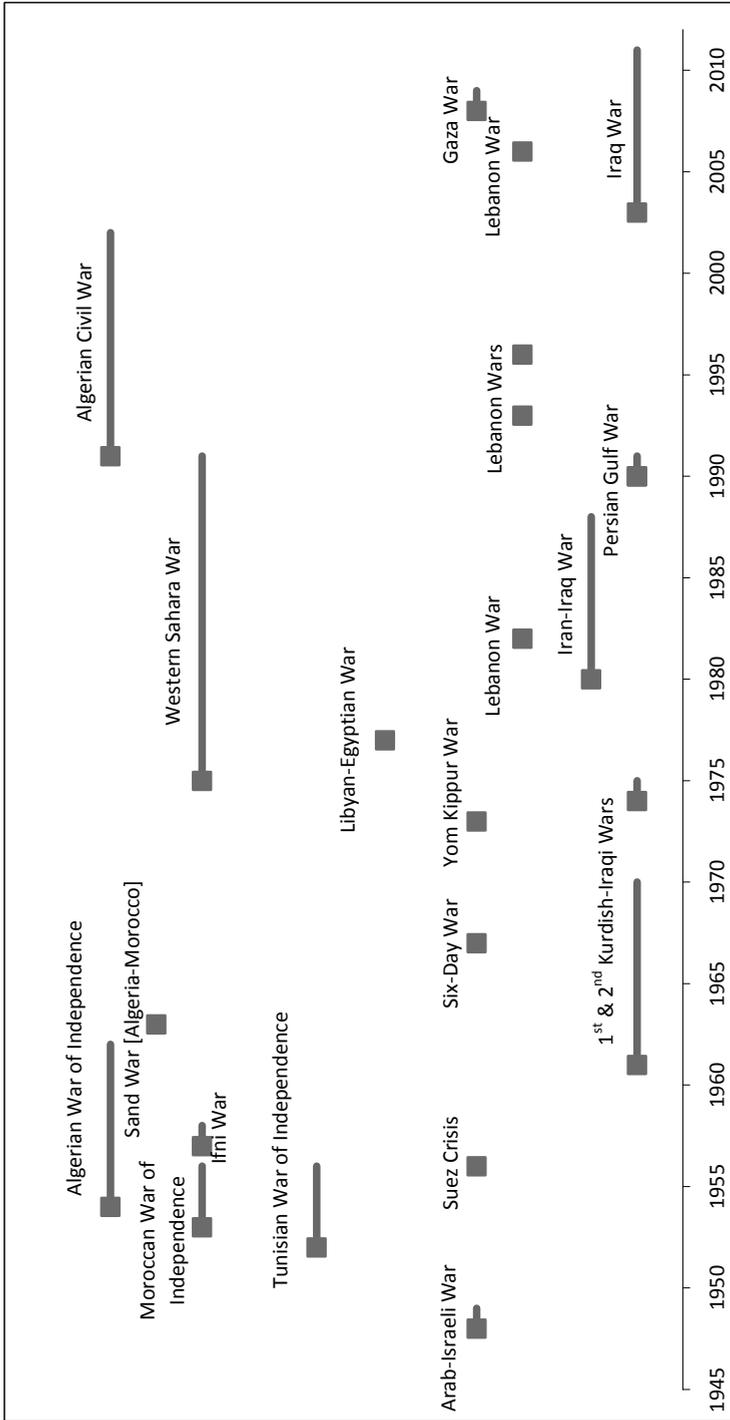
In sum, a tendency has taken root to consider Islam and its practices and traditions as contrary to the European spirit and thus as a threat to its identity. In some countries,

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16. Cf. the view held in some parts of the EU that Southern Mediterranean countries are inherently unable to govern themselves.

17. [http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno\\_docs/distribution.asp?by=area](http://www.ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp?by=area). There are other quasi-extinct languages. In France, for instance, there are at least ten different Romance languages, including Picard, Gascon, and Provençal. France has 63 languages, of which 39 are immigrant languages.

Figure 1 – Major wars and conflicts in the Middle East



this view has even been turned into legislation. There are many examples of this, from the French debate about the wearing of the headscarf, to the federal vote in Switzerland on the introduction of a constitutional ban on the building of minarets.<sup>18</sup> The debate about Turkish accession to the Union has suffered from the same vice, as some have expressed the view that Turkey cannot be European because the majority of its population is not Christian.

It is not just the fate of the people of North Africa that is at stake in the Mediterranean; that of Europe is also in the balance. As Jean-Paul Sartre said in his essay of 1948, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, it is racism that makes races. Before the Second World War, a Jew was not a person who identified themselves as such, but one who was thus identified by others.<sup>19</sup> The same is happening today in some European countries where Muslims are identified as the ‘other.’ Racists reject what seems different in order to affirm the superiority of the particular community to which they feel they belong and to increase their power. As Sartre highlights, populists used resentment of the rich and privileged among the impoverished middle class to stoke anti-Semitism. Anti-Islamism is based on the idea among the same class of people that they are superior to their Muslim peers in the same social situation. As Sartre wrote, every person must realise that the ‘fate of the Jews is his fate’; the same can be said about Muslims or of citizens of any or no religion.<sup>20</sup>

The prejudices and hypocrisy of populist and nationalist politicians are feeding an ‘Islamic problem’ that poisons Europe’s democracies and threatens the very foundations of the European project. Nazism and fascism discredited all forms of nationalism and the politics of hate towards ones neighbours, and robbed all forms of racism and xenophobia of legitimacy.

This double de-legitimisation allowed Europeans to overcome historical hatreds and made it possible for their countries to integrate despite their enormous diversity – a diversity that is not just between states but exists within each state. It would be an illusion to think that the European Union can survive if anti-Islamic xenophobic populism becomes legitimate and is transformed into state policy.

Europe and the West as a whole must accept that the Arab countries are experiencing an Islamic religious revival.<sup>21</sup> In this they are following a trend apparent elsewhere, whereby

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18. One campaign against building minarets was so racist that it was banned. Tariq Ramadan, ‘Swiss Minaret Ban: Can Europe Learn to Trust Its Muslim Citizens?’, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 30 November 2009, at: <http://www.cfr.org/religion/csm-swiss-minaret-ban---can-europe-learn-trust-its-muslim-citizens/p20866>.

19. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate* (New York: Schocken Books, 1948).

20. Ibid.

21. Álvaro de Vasconcelos (ed.), *Européens et Maghrébins: Une solidarité obligée* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1993).

populations turn to religion in response to the uncertainties of globalisation and the demise of secular utopias with the collapse of communism and the bankruptcy of the triumphal Western ‘end of history’ narrative. This trend has facilitated the development of political movements with religious overtones not only in the Arab world but also, among other places, in the US and Brazil. However, I wish to make it very clear that when I speak about political Islam I am referring to a political rather than a religious phenomenon. An Islamist party may come to power that is less conservative than the average citizen of any given country. This may well be the case of the Muslim Brotherhood (*ikhwan*) in Egypt, which is modernising at a much faster pace than the Egyptians who gave twenty-five percent of the votes to the more conservative Salafist movements in the most recent legislative elections.

The greatest obstacle to understanding what is happening in the Arab world – and the gravest prejudice – is the belief that Islam and democracy are incompatible. This culturalist doctrine gained impetus in the 1990s with the publication of Samuel Huntington’s article in 1993<sup>22</sup> and a book, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, in 1996,<sup>23</sup> in which Huntington argued that there would be a clash of civilisations and that democracy had Christian roots. If we want to understand what is happening in the Southern Mediterranean and the emergence of democratic Islamist movements, we need to deconstruct the theory that different civilisations are political actors with irreconcilable values, and cast off the notion that people can be defined by a single identity, be it Islamic, Shiite or Sunni. Huntington remains a reference for many people who have not read his work but have heard about the ‘clash of civilisations.’ Thus, exposing Huntington’s mistakes and showing that Muslims have multiple identities and strong democratic aspirations is the goal of the first part of this book.

One could argue that the Arab revolutions are a ‘post-Huntingtonian’ development. They testify to the fact that the democratic credo is perceived as the best way to express strong identities, namely Muslim identities. Those fighting for democracy do not feel they are adopting Western values but rather that they are calling for the application of universally shared values that are compatible with their cultural and religious traditions. Arab democratic revolutionaries say they will resist the imposition of any cultural or political agenda by the West in the name of justice and dignity. This is one of the many signs that we are entering a post-Western era.

The second part of this book addresses the consolidation of the view that Muslims are the enemy after the tragic events of September 11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the Danish cartoons crisis in 2005. The idea that the US is at war with Islam has become

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22. Samuel P. Huntington, ‘The Clash of Civilisations?’, in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3, Summer 1993, pp. 22-49.

23. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

so widespread as a result of those events that in 2009 the US president felt obliged to state that ‘America is not at war with Islam.’<sup>24</sup> The invasion of Iraq and the subsequent justification of the war as an exercise in ‘democracy promotion’ in the so-called Greater Middle East undermined the efforts of Arab democrats and the strength of the European democratic wave of the 1990s for a decade. In 1995, Arab leaders agreed to pursue democracy jointly with the EU with the Barcelona Declaration; ten years later such unity of purpose was no longer possible.

The EU decided to pursue a policy that offered an alternative to that of the Bush administration and neo-conservatives. That most people preferred this to war was proven by the millions who demonstrated on 15 February 2003 against the Iraq war in London, Rome, Madrid, Barcelona, Berlin and Paris among many other cities. This also showed the proximity of the views of the citizens of the Northern and Southern Mediterranean about issues such as war in the Middle East – already in 1991, most citizens had opposed the invasion of Kuwait.<sup>25</sup>

The European alternative is the theme of the third part of this book. Europe created this alternative by giving renewed impetus to the project of Euro-Mediterranean inclusion, starting with the Barcelona summit in 2005. An important component of that renewal was that the Union took advantage of the communitarian method, inspired by the enlargement *acquis*, to pursue policies to support human rights and civil society, although the Southern states found it difficult to implement these because of the diplomatic constraints on bilateral relations.

The summit reminded its Southern partners that the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 had established democracy as a goal with the support of civil society, particularly human rights activists. The proposal for a Euro-Mediterranean community surfaced for the first time in a report by EuroMeSCo, prepared in response to a request by the ministers of foreign affairs of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP).<sup>26</sup> During the review of the first decade of the EMP in 2005, it was apparent that despite the various civil society and human rights initiatives economics had trumped democratic goals. This was primarily because of fear of political Islam, but also because it was assumed in Europe that liberalisation and free trade would automatically bring about development, stability and, over time, perhaps even democracy.<sup>27</sup>

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24. The White House Office of the Press Secretary, *The President's Speech in Cairo: A New Beginning*, 4 June 2009, at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/NewBeginning/>.

25. Álvaro de Vasconcelos & Fernanda Faria, ‘Security in Northern Africa: Ambiguity and Realities’, *Chaillot Paper* no. 25, EUISS, Paris, September 1996.

26. EuroMeSCo report, *Barcelona Plus: Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States*, April 2005.

27. See *Barcelona Plus*, *ibid.*, for a critical overview of this formula.

In March 2003 the European Union launched the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP),<sup>28</sup> to promote the social and economic integration of its Southern partners in accordance with a variable geometry. This would reward the countries that made the greatest progress with key political and economic reforms, according to a tailor-made action plan. Given the parallel focus on security, these plans also outlined the contours of cooperation on migration and border control. Morocco became the first country to obtain ENP ‘advanced status’ because of progress with political and economic liberalisation. This should have resulted in a domino effect in the other Southern Mediterranean countries, but this failed to happen. First, the political demands were too onerous, and the system lost credibility when the EU began to negotiate advanced status with Tunisia.

The fourth part of the book looks at why the initiatives of the European Union failed and why its Member States were never able to use Europe’s institutions to forge a coherent policy of support for democracy. Fear of Islamist forces weakened the credibility of EU policy and encouraged an intimate relationship with dictators, as it was hoped that autocrats would adopt Morocco’s liberal route and prevent Islamist parties from acceding to power. EU perceptions of the Southern Mediterranean were also negatively affected by its immigration policies and the evolution of its position on the Palestinian question. In short, the EU securitised its policies towards the South, thus excluding its normative goals in practice. The provisions for cooperation on migration in the association agreements were also controversial, as they made cooperation levels conditional upon the willingness of the Maghreb countries to control migration flows to Europe.

With the Venice Declaration in 1980, Europe emerged as the champion of the rights of the Palestinian people; just over two and a half decades later in 2006 it refused to accept the victory of Hamas (*Harakat al-Muqawamat al-Islamiyyah*) in the Palestinian legislative elections that European observers had declared to be free and fair. The EU was also unable to stand up to Israel during the 2008 Gaza war. Meanwhile, the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) that year failed to take into account the democratic and civil society *acquis* of the Barcelona Process and the once politically ambitious communitarian approach was replaced by an intergovernmental and project-based policy. All this contributed to the perception that Europe lacked democratic coherence.

The fifth part of the book analyses the Arab democratic wave – a term I prefer to the Arab Spring – that extraordinary popular movement which has already felled three dictators (four if we include Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh who agreed to step down from power in February 2012). The citizens of the Arab world have amply demonstrated

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28. The policy was first outlined in a Commission *Communication on Wider Europe*, March 2003, at: [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy_en.htm).

their determination to uphold democratic values, be it with their peaceful revolution in Tunisia, or by resisting brutal repression in Syria. The participation of some European states in the military intervention to protect civilians from massacre in Libya under the mandate of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was also decisive in bringing about regime change in Tripoli; but the way the operation evolved led the emerging BRIC powers (Brazil, Russia, India and China) to resist the application of the principle of responsibility to protect (R2P) to Syria, where humanitarian intervention is no less urgent.

The final part of the book assesses the democratic wave one year on, and what the options are for the EU in a dramatically different and increasingly post-Western international context. In this context, the challenge will be to accept the democratic choices of citizens in the South and to learn to live with the fact that Islamist parties are likely to come to power all over the region. Europe needs to act as a consensus-builder in the Arab quest for democratic legitimacy and not as a divisive force that either supports secularist forces against Islamist parties or marginalises liberals in the name of a new political pragmatism.

Europe and the US have to work with others to support transitions to democracy in the Arab world. The EU and some of its Member States are unavoidable actors in the Maghreb. The risk is that European policy choices may have a negative impact on local politics or that the EU offers the region insufficient means to address the huge social challenges it faces. In the Middle East, where the European Union is one among many actors, Europe risks becoming irrelevant in a region that remains the world's strategic hub.

After years of reflection, I have distilled a set of principles that would allow the EU to help make the Mediterranean the 'better world' referred to in the European Security Strategy formulated by the EU in 2003.

## Hospitality

This principle makes it an ethical imperative to 'offer an unreserved and un-calculating welcome, limitless exposure to newcomers,'<sup>29</sup> even though it may be necessary to place limits on the free circulation of people for practical reasons. Hospitality means respecting the rights of and accepting the other without demanding that he or she change their identity.

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29. Jacques Derrida, *De l'hospitalité* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997).

### *Unity within diversity*

This principle is inspired by the European experience with integration. It means integrating people in the framework of values shared by the community but also guaranteeing the right to cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.

### *Non-violence*

This principle means refusing to use force to resolve political and social problems, a principle that has been legitimated in Europe as a result of the terrible lessons learned in inter-European and colonial wars. This permitted the development of a human security concept that limits the use of force in accordance with strict international law provisions, to protect civilians from mass murder.

### *Development with dignity*

Economic policies should prioritise social cohesion and tackle inequality, empowering socially marginalised sectors, particularly women. A new development index that addresses factors other than GDP growth such as the OECD Better Life Index should be used to assess progress.

### *Inclusion*

This principle means being open to integration with democratic states. The history of the EU is one of gradual ‘inclusion’ of democratic states. This should apply beyond its borders to the Mediterranean. To assist the democratisation of the Southern Mediterranean, Europe must define a long-term strategy of political and socio-economic inclusion, inspired by European integration.

### *Shared values*

This principle is inspired by the successive waves of democratisation all over the globe, most recently demonstrated by the revolutions in the Arab world. Europe must recognise that the West does not have a monopoly on democracy and human rights – including the rights of women – and that these are universal aspirations, so it must accept that their appropriation by Arab citizens is a basic condition for the affirmation of their cultural and religious identity.

Sharing such principles will make it possible to refound Euro-Arab relations on a new and sound basis. The Arab democratic wave constitutes an enormous opportunity for

the EU to give its foreign policy a new direction, and to affirm its role as a supporter of democracy and peace within its region and its neighbourhood. Making the project for a Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic states the final goal of bilateral agreements with the Southern partners may be the best way forward.

This project could be undertaken with the countries where freely elected democratic governments are in place. But there should be no European conditionality for participation, unless countries are applying for EU membership. The only acceptable form of conditionality is a 'democratic clause' that applies equally to all members, as exists in the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUL) and in the Commonwealth. The global and regional attraction and influence of such a community, one that reflects the needs and aspirations of its citizens, would be enormous. But first the EU must overcome its economic crisis; if it fails to do so, the countries of the South will have no difficulties finding other partners that are willing to cooperate to promote their economic and social development in the polycentric world that is now emerging.

# 1. Cultural relativism as doctrine

‘We are not stupid! We are just poor!’ Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*, 2005.

## Huntington’s mistakes

With the end of the Cold War and the concomitant demise of the paradigm of two opposing blocs, various grand theories emerged to explain conflict in the international system.

During the more pessimistic phase of the post-Cold War period, Samuel Huntington published an article in the summer of 1993, in which he affirmed that the clash of civilisations would dominate global politics, and that the ‘fault lines between civilisations [would] be the battle lines of the future.’<sup>30</sup> The West which, in his view, included only Europe and North America, had to prepare itself for a conflict with two newly found substitute enemies: Islam and Confucianism. There was even a danger, he felt, that a coalition might be formed between Islam and Confucianism that would challenge Western ‘interests, values and power.’<sup>31</sup>

In support of his thesis, Huntington stated that on ‘both sides the interaction between Islam and the West is seen as a clash of civilisations.’ He cited two authors in support of this statement, one ‘Western’ and the other not. But the list of his critics, among which there are many ‘good Christians’ and ‘good Muslims’, would fill numerous pages.<sup>32</sup> Among the most prominent was Edward Said, who countered that Huntington did not have ‘much time to spare for the internal dynamics and plurality of every civilisation or for the fact that the major contest in most modern cultures concerns the definition or interpretation of each culture, or for the unattractive possibility that a great deal of demagoguery and downright ignorance is involved in presuming to speak for a whole religion or civilisation. No, the West is the West, and Islam, Islam.’<sup>33</sup>

For many in the societies of the South, the idea of a clash of civilisations finally confirmed what they already suspected: that the North viewed their people and societies as a threat. Huntington’s view has since become a quasi-depreciative term used to describe the exact opposite of the kind of policy that should be adopted towards the Islamic world. State-

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30. Samuel P. Huntington, op. cit. in note 23.

31. Ibid.

32. Some of the critiques can be found in Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations?: The Debate* (Council on Foreign Relations, 1997).

33. Edward W. Said, ‘The Clash of Ignorance,’ *The Nation*, 22 October 2001.

ments made by the Secretary General of NATO in 1995 about how NATO should prepare for the threat of ‘Islamic fundamentalism,’<sup>34</sup> the new global threat, were criticised as being ‘Huntingtonian’ (ie. wrong-headed).<sup>35</sup>

But although many analysts criticised and continue to rebut Huntington’s ideas, his thesis gained popularity among European politicians, perhaps because it offers a simplified (good vs. evil; us-and-them) explanation of post-Cold War conflicts, which obviates the need for self-examination or, indeed, to explore complex realities that are often difficult to decode and make sense of. It is no accident that Huntington’s absurd and dangerous thesis makes most sense to people who know little about the societies of North Africa and the Middle East or Islam apart from what they read in the papers about ‘Islamic terrorists.’ So, eighteen years after Huntington first expounded his argument about the ‘clash of civilisations’, it is still worth pointing out the main errors underlying his theory.

### *The first mistake*

Huntington states that the main conflicts of the future will occur between nations and civilisations, and that if there is to be a third world war, it will be between civilisations. There is nothing about current conflicts that suggests this is or will be the case. The examples that Huntington deploys are not convincing. Take his Arab and Islamic terrorists, for instance. There have, in fact, been attacks against Western targets, but as has been amply documented, the main victims of this kind of terrorism have been Arab citizens and Muslims, particularly in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Muslims were also among the victims of the attack on the Twin Towers. Indeed, an estimated thirty-two Muslims died on September 11, twenty-nine at the World Trade Centre, and three who were on United Airlines Flight 175 and American Airlines Flight 11. Around one percent of the victims of these attacks were Muslims, which corresponds roughly to the representation of Muslims in the US population.<sup>36</sup> The Gulf war is also a bad example. It started when Iraq attacked another Islamic country, and various Arab and Islamic countries participated in the anti-Iraqi coalition of forces. Saddam Hussein’s sudden conversion to Islam fooled nobody, and certainly not radical Islamist Iran. And the conventional Iran-Iraq war was between two Muslim states and led to the death of an estimated 500,000 mostly Muslim people.

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34. The use of the term ‘fundamentalism’ in connection with Islam spread rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s, and the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defined it not only as ‘the strict maintenance of ancient or fundamental doctrines of any religion, especially Islam.’ See Martin Kramer, ‘Coming to Terms: Fundamentalists or Islamists?’ in *The Middle East Quarterly* X(2), Spring 2003.

35. Youssef M. Ibrahim, ‘Europe’s Muslim Population: Frustrated, Poor and Divided,’ *New York Times*, 5 May 1995.

36. Council on American-Islamic Relations, at: <http://www.cair.com/Portals/0/pdf/Muslim-Victims-of-911.pdf>.

The war in Bosnia, the example that Huntington uses to typify a war between civilisations, supposedly elicited the intervention of the Muslim and orthodox Christian countries. Although he says this is comparable to what happened during the Spanish Civil War, he forgets that fascist, communist and democratic countries intervened in that conflict. He ends up reproducing the demagoguery of extremist nationalists, particularly Serbians, who set themselves up as the bulwark of Christianity against the Muslim ‘menace.’ If the ‘Christian West’ did mobilise it was to help Bosnia’s Muslim population; not in the name of Christianity but of human rights and peace and against extremist nationalism – a close cousin to fascism (here the parallel with the war in Spain would make sense).

### *The second mistake*

Huntington conflates radical Islamism with Islam, and extremist nationalist groups with a whole civilisation. It is true that nationalist demagoguery makes an appeal to original identities, namely religious identity. But this is not new and does not make extremists representatives of a whole civilisation. How many Europeans identify with Jean-Marie Le Pen and his impoverished doctrines? Even the radical movements that call themselves pan-Islamist are, as an analysis of the movements in the Maghreb shows, predominantly national. Moroccan Islamists, for instance, have exactly the same view of the conflict in the Western Sahara that is held by the King of Morocco.

Thus conflated, Huntington sees the Islamic world uniting against the West. But the issues are much more complex. One of the developments that has characterised predominantly Muslim countries in the post-Cold War era has been the abandonment of the chimeras of ‘third-worldism’ and non-alignment, and the search for integration into the Western economic system. Euro-Mediterranean initiatives, which have involved nine Muslim countries – eight of them Arab – provide evidence of this. Huntington also says that economic integration occurs between countries of the same civilisation. But there are huge hurdles to economic integration in the Arab world. The Union of the Arab Maghreb (UAM) is paralysed due to various conflicts between neighbours. And the best opportunities for economic integration have been North-South oriented in the context of Euro-Med trade agreements. Another unconvincing argument that Huntington puts forward is that since the Cold War cultural affinities have tended to superimpose themselves on ideological differences. Among other things, he says, this has brought China and Taiwan closer together. But democratic progress in Formosa actually distanced it from the Popular Republic of China in the 1990s, and Taiwanese independence was being seriously considered. Beijing sees the democratic success of Hong Kong as a factor that can facilitate *rapprochement* with Taiwan rather than reaffirm a common Confucianist heritage.

### *The third mistake*

Huntington's third mistake is that he completely ignores politics. A civilisation cannot 'act.' Only individuals organised into associations, parties, institutions and other organisations can act, and there are no civilisational groups of this sort to speak of. The European Union is possible not because its members converge culturally but because they converge democratically. Portugal would never have become a member of the EU if it were not a democracy. Contrary to what Huntington argues, the MERCOSUL did not emerge in the 1990s because its members are Latin American, but because they are neighbouring democracies.

Politics – not civilisation – is at the heart of conflict and cooperation. A shared language and culture can facilitate proximity, but only if there is political convergence. Without it, cultural proximity can sharpen antagonisms (otherwise, among other things, there would be no civil wars). Huntington also forgets that because people have plural identities and live in an interconnected world, they are just as likely to identify with people across cultures as they are with their own. A Portuguese woman fighting for equal pay in a multinational company may have more in common with a *niqab*-clad Muslim woman in Egypt fighting for childcare provision than with her Portuguese male boss. Just as one's gender is only one aspect of one's identity, so one's religion and even one's culture is not the whole of oneself.

Involuntarily or not, Huntington lent grand strategy credibility to the racist theories of Jean-Marie Le Pen and his kind. For Huntington, threats to security do not emanate solely from the Islamic-Confucian coalition but also from the internal menace that immigrants from other civilisations supposedly represent to identity. He noted that according to census predictions, by 2050 twenty-three percent of the US population will be Hispanic, sixteen percent black, and ten percent Asian. With astonishing candour, he asked whether liberal democracy can survive if 'the United States becomes truly multicultural and pervaded with an internal clash of civilisations.'<sup>37</sup>

In a lesser known book,<sup>38</sup> Huntington discusses what he sees as the real threat posed by the clash, and it is altogether closer to home than a nebulous global cleavage between 'the West and the rest.' Muslims, Confucianism and Catholicism in Latin America are all deemed unable to live with the liberal democratic credo, which is a creation of the American Revolution; and Huntington believes their growing presence in the US constitutes an existential challenge to American democracy.

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37. 'If Not Civilisations, What? Samuel Huntington Responds to His Critics,' *Foreign Affairs*, November-December 1993.

38. Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004).

Huntington's ethnic-based dogma conflates extremist minorities with entire countries and communities. However, not only can a whole people not be identified with a terrorist cell; individuals everywhere have plural identities. A Tunisian or an American can be a democrat or authoritarian, a religious believer or an atheist political radical; a Syrian or a Dane can be a liberal or a terrorist, tolerant of others or intolerant; an Egyptian or a Frenchman can be a social activist, a blogger, a doctor or a farm labourer. As Amartya Sen has so powerfully argued, it is wrong and politically unwise to imprison any human being inside the straitjacket of a single defining identity. If the goal is unity within diversity, room must be made for multiple identities.<sup>39</sup>

This sort of aversion to multiculturalism and these fears about a threatened national identity can be found in the discourse and writings of the French National Front (*Front National*, FN). As stated by a member of the FN political commission, two years before Huntington published his theory, 'the cultural identity of the French nation is at stake because immigration [is] incompatible with the Muslim and African culture of the new immigrants, an incompatibility that underlines how utopian is the policy of integration to establish a pluricultural society as sought by the political class and media.'<sup>40</sup>

### *Half-truths and dangerous fears*

Of course there is some truth to what Huntington says, otherwise his theory would not have attracted the following it has. Societies that feel threatened by an influx of migrants from other cultures may become less democratic and more inclined to authoritarian politics (that much has been observed in Europe). The terrorist acts that had the most impact (because of their scale and novelty) over the last decade were carried out in the name of Islam, and bin Laden's words were transmitted by television across the globe for all to hear. But the interpretation of these truths is such that a distorting lens is placed over reality, a lens that is coloured by fear. In the case of Huntington, fear of the loss of world dominance of a familiar, Christian America; and, at home, the fear that the old white Christian Anglo-Saxon elite will lose their dominance in a multicultural society – hence the dread of the Hispanic 'invasion.' Huntington banishes Latin America from the West, a region with predominantly European roots and culture (much like the US), which Alain Rouquié rightly called the 'Far West.'<sup>41</sup>

39. Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006).

40. Jean-Claude Bardet, Colloque 'Immigration: les solutions,' 16 November 1991, at: <http://www.ades-grenoble.org/ades/assoce/actions/CE-FN/ce-fn-discussion.html#anchor-4-cit>.

41. Alain Rouquié, *Amérique Latine: Introduction à l'Extrême-Occident* (Paris: Seuil, 1987). Huntington would probably ban the Portuguese from the West (they are culturally closer to Brazil than to Denmark) and the Spanish too (with their no less suspect links to and affinities with the Spanish-speaking Americas).

### *Why this matters for Europe*

Even after a decade and a half of critical debate, it is still important to take a stand against Huntington's theory in Europe because his defence of a process of integration that ensures cultural *uniformity* and his antipathy to multicultural diversity has more followers than one might imagine. Huntington states that one can be 'half-French and half-Arab, but it is more difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim.'<sup>42</sup> This is true. But so what? What matters is that one can be half-French and half-Arab and profess any religion one chooses or none at all. It is the multiplicity of identities of each individual that must be recognised.

This became very clear with the debate about the accession of Turkey. Saying 'no' to Turkey after it was formally accepted as a candidate in 2001 would mean denying the European Union's founding identity as an open, pluralist, democratic and secular society. It would be tantamount to yielding to those who argue that the European constitution should state Europe's commitment to Christian values and a Christian historical and cultural identity. If the Union were to be defined as a Christian club that is culturally uniform, it would cease to be a pluralist secular space.

Accepting the cultural and religious diversity of Europeans, and accepting that Islam is one of Europe's religions, one practised by millions of European citizens in the Union; and establishing the political conditions for the expression of diversity – these are necessary conditions to halt the triumph of identity-based nationalism and to prevent the spread of the seeds of conflict of which it is a carrier. If the European project is to survive, it must see the diversity of nations as a trump card and build a politically and culturally open Union.

## **A dialogue of civilisations or unity within diversity?**

'The neglect of the plurality of our affiliation and of the need for choice and reasoning obscures the world in which we live.'

Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Identity*, 2006

Because many people quickly became aware of the grave dangers of identity-based nationalism and of the concomitant popularity of the clash of civilisations thesis, many initiatives such as dialogues or alliances between civilisations were organised in an attempt to neutralise and prevent confrontation and conflict. The first of these initiatives was launched by Khatami, the reformist President of Iran, who responded to the idea of a

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42. Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilisations,' op. cit. in note 22.

clash of civilisations by calling for a dialogue between civilisations in a famous interview on CNN in January 1998.<sup>43</sup> Three years later, 2001 was declared the UN Year for Dialogue among Civilisations, and the UN General Assembly issued a resolution on a Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilisations.

Another initiative co-sponsored by Spain and Turkey in 2005 led to the creation of the UN Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC), which gave the inter-civilisations project global multilateral legitimacy.<sup>44</sup> There have also been various non-UN initiatives, such as the World Public Forum Dialogue of Civilisations (WPFDC) established in 2002; and the Alexandria-based Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures, established in 2005 in the context of the EMP. And there are also the more religiously-oriented United Religions Initiative (URI) founded in 2000, and the Interfaith Encounter Association (IEA) established in 2001. These are just some examples of the plethora of initiatives adopted after the clash of civilisations was announced.

Why should we counter-pose dialogue and diversity, as I do above? Surely there is no contradiction between a dialogue (even one between civilisations) and an approach that emphasises inclusion. Indeed, are not both similar and should we not avoid emphasising one to the detriment of the other? It is tempting to consider that a dialogue between civilisations can be the antidote to the intensification of identity-based politics, easy to see it as the antithesis of the clash of civilisations. But I would argue that this is not the way forward for a simple reason.

In the concept of a dialogue is implicit the idea that civilisations exist in different, isolated spheres and must be ‘taught’ to be tolerant of one another and to coexist peacefully. Although well-intended, this perpetuates the idea that civilisations are political actors and that the international system is divided into culturally or religiously defined opposing camps that are necessarily either engaged in conflict or busy with dialogue. Although all the above-mentioned dialogues supposedly cover all civilisations, most define as their goal addressing the negative perceptions between Islam and the West, following the logic of civilisation-based bipolarity prompted by September 11 and the Iraq war. In doing so, they fail to challenge the idea that there is a natural link between culture and specific political values.

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43. Transcript of interview with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, *CNN News*, 7 January 1998, at: <http://edition.cnn.com/world/9801/07/iran/interview.html>.

44. The idea of this kind of dialogue is not new, however. It was first proposed to the UN in the 1920s, and there is an even older instance of inter-faith dialogue, the World’s Parliament of Religions, held in 1893, which was the first attempt at global inter-faith dialogue.

Cultural factors and religion are undeniably important in promoting solidarity among peoples. But they are certainly not the sole, or even the strongest, factors of convergence or of radical divisions. A dialogue between civilisations is not the best way to resolve real problems of negative perceptions, nor does it promote genuine mutual understanding. It relies on an overly rigid dichotomy that is all too likely to encourage stereotyping. So rather than dialogue, I would argue that inclusion is the right antidote to overcome ignorance and boundaries. One must resist the temptation to define social arrangements, groups constituted by states or other entities, or political movements and human groups in general along lines that are solely ethnic, cultural, religious or civilisational – concepts that are interchangeable for many people.

The antithesis to the clash of civilisations is the politics of inclusion – the capacity of societies and states to integrate individuals and communities without threatening their diversity. Inclusion means rule of law-based respect for domestic cultural and religious diversity and basic rights and civil liberties within and beyond national or regional frontiers.

The Euro-Mediterranean process launched in 1995 and the neighbourhood policy established in 2003 constituted attempts to engage in the politics of inclusion. The ultimate aim of these initiatives was to establish a regional group of democratic states. This group would be highly plural and integration would mean encouraging unity within diversity. The aim to include was also part of the recognition of Turkey as a candidate for full membership in December 1999. This moment of openness reflected the climate of the 1990s, the decade of democracy and regional integration. The outcome of the European Union focusing on unity within diversity is bound to be positive, as it emphasises what is shared by disparate peoples rather than what divides them as a result of civilisational cleavages.

It is interesting to note that Khatami called for a dialogue of civilisation as a means to promote cultural integration and a blending of races rather than a dialogue with groups that preserve their identity intact. In his view, the ‘capacity to integrate involves reflective contemplation of the methods and achievements of various cultures and civilisations in order to augment and enrich one’s cultural repertoire. The spiritual wisdom of Sohrevardi, which elegantly synthesises and integrates ancient Persian wisdom, Greek rationalism and Islamic intuitive knowledge, presents us with a brilliantly exceptional example of the Persian capacity to integrate.’<sup>45</sup>

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45. Address by H.E. Mohammed Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, *Round Table: Dialogue among Civilisations*, United Nations, New York, 5 September 2000, at: <http://www.unesco.org/dialogue/en/khatami.htm>.

### *Identity-based nationalism: the curse of our times*

The rise of identity-based terrorism targeting cities and countries everywhere – New York, Madrid and London; or Iraq, Pakistan and India – has provided additional proof (if such were needed) of the resurgence of identity-based nationalism rooted in a totalitarian vision. Because it rejects the notion of basic universal rights altogether, this worldview has immense destructive powers. The brutality of Serbian forces and Hutu militias in Bosnia and Rwanda are cases in point. The humanitarian crisis in the Sudan, which is of catastrophic proportions but has failed to elicit a proper response by the international community, is another. These disasters only differ from those occurring in other areas in terms of magnitude and duration. They demonstrate that limiting international security to combating transnational terrorism is not only mistaken but costly in human lives.

In Western Europe, there have also emerged political parties whose primary purpose is to defend the national identity which they feel is under threat from cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. And terrorist acts are also carried out in the name of identity – by the Basque Fatherland and Liberty group (*Euskadi ta Askatasuna*, ETA) in Spain and by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Ireland, for instance; and more recently, albeit in a different context, in Norway, by the fascist extremist, Anders Behring Breivik, who acted to save ‘Western Europe from cultural Marxism and a Muslim takeover.’<sup>46</sup> Indeed, as one report suggests, ‘the threat of Europe’s far right has been under the radar for too long [even though] we’ve seen British neo-Nazis convicted of terror plans, and paramilitary guards attacking Roma in Eastern and Central Europe. Not to mention the emergence of the English Defence League (EDL), the largest far-right street movement since the days of the National Front and with branches across Europe.’<sup>47</sup>

Public perceptions of the war in Iraq and towards the Bush administration were quite similar in Europe and in the Muslim world, and were not a facsimile of the attitudes of leaders and governments. The demonstrations against the Iraq war were even more massive in Europe than in the Arab countries, particularly in Spain and Britain which were both involved in the invasion. Public opinion polls in Europe showed that the Bush administration consistently scored very low approval ratings in various domains.<sup>48</sup> Equally, the attitudes of Muslim and non-Muslim Europeans towards the Arab-Israeli conflict

46. ‘Profile: Anders Behring Breivik,’ *BBC News*, 29 November 2011, at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-14259989>

47. Lisa Bjurwald, ‘Europe’s New Racist Threat,’ *Huffington Post*, 24 July 2011, at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/lisa-bjurwald/europes-new-racist-threat\\_b\\_908153.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/lisa-bjurwald/europes-new-racist-threat_b_908153.html).

48. *Bush Unpopular in Europe, Seen as Unilateralist. A Multinational Survey including a commentary by Morton H. Halperin*, August 2001, <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/5.pdf>.

have also been similar. As Amartya Sen has pointed out, there is a growing and dangerous tendency to define people by just one of their many identities.<sup>49</sup> This is especially pronounced in relation to Muslims. But this ignores the fact that people's many overlapping identities – European, French, Muslim, liberal, conservative, feminist, among many others – establish a multitude of connections across the so-called civilisational divide that are the basis for common action and understanding.

### *Islam: reason and violence*

The argument that Islam is incompatible with reason became a powerful one after September 11, as Islam and Islamic fundamentalism were conflated in philosophical and political debates. In the West, it was conveniently forgotten that all religions have their fundamentalists and their history of violence. There was also lively discussion about this topic among Islamic intellectuals. In contrast with the European debate, in the Arab world the division was between rationalists and fundamentalists, with the former referring to the influence of Greek philosophy on Islam in the Middle Ages and arguing for the compatibility between tradition and faith in the sacred texts and reason.

This stance seems to have won the day in most Arab countries. As I noted in discussions in Cairo and Rabat, Arab thinkers such as Mohammed Abded al-Jabri are a point of reference for young leaders from Morocco to Egypt.<sup>50</sup> Al-Jabri argues that it is the political context that explains the options of different groups, a fact that Europe has not properly understood, it seems. To cite one example, in a September 2006 speech at the University of Regensburg in Germany, Pope Benedict XVI quoted Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos who supposedly said the following to a Persian philosopher: 'Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.' For this Pope as for many culturalists, Islam is the cause of violence. He therefore uncritically compared Christianity, which says that 'not to act in accordance with reason is contrary to God's nature' and Islam, for which 'God is absolutely transcendent. His will is not bound up with any of [the Christian] categories, even that of rationality.'<sup>51</sup>

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49. Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006).

50. Mohammad Abed al-Jabri, *The Formation of Arab Reason: Text, Tradition and the Construction of Modernity in the Arab World* (London: IB Tauris, 2011).

51. 'Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections,' Meeting with the Representatives of Science, Aula Magna of the University of Regensburg, 12 September 2006, at [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060912\\_university-regensburg\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html).

### *Are there any Islamist feminists?*

The clash of civilisations is often expressed as a fight for the liberation of women from Islamic obscurantism and as being the result of the incompatibility between Islam and women's rights. One of the most acute observers of this phenomenon, Gema Martín Muñóz, has observed that the image of the Oriental woman wearing a veil is alternately a symbol of mystery in the centuries-old Western image of the Orient as 'exotic', or of submission and oppression, in accordance with the traditional view of women as anonymous, backward and subjugated by a patriarchal religion.<sup>52</sup> The image of Muslim women has been instrumentalised by politicians and the media. For many, the spectacle of *burqa*-clad women as examples of the oppression of the Taliban justified the US intervention to liberate Afghanistan. The *burqa* remains a symbol of the oppression of women but it did not disappear after the US intervention, as the Kharzai government favours its use just as the Taliban did.

Secular Europeans find it very hard to understand that a woman can have a dual identity as a Muslim and an Islamist and, what is more, as an Islamist militant and a feminist.<sup>53</sup> The projection of one identity onto others diminishes understanding and radicalises the discourse of European secular feminists who cannot imagine the plurality of identities of Islamic women, and who establish an automatic link between Islam and the oppression of women. Islamic feminists would argue that there is no contradiction between their faith and the demand for women's rights and equality, and doing so in the name of the Koran. For them, feminism is not a Western but a universal concept. As Margot Badran has claimed, 'Essentially, ontologically, all human beings are equal, they are only distinguished among themselves on the basis of their rightful practice or implementation of the fundamental Qur'anic principle of justice. Hence there is no contradiction between being a feminist and being a Muslim, once we perceive feminism as an awareness of constraints placed upon women because of gender, a rejection of such limitations placed on women, and efforts to construct and implement a more equitable gender system.'<sup>54</sup>

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52. Gema Martín Muñóz, 'Islam's Women under Western Eyes,' 8 October 2002, at [http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe\\_islam/article\\_498.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/article_498.jsp).

53. When EuroMeSCo presented its report at the preparatory meeting of the Ministerial Conference on the Rights of Women, in Rabat on 14-16 June, there was intense debate and polarisation about whether it was possible to speak of Islamic feminism or whether this is a contradiction in terms; about how secular feminists should position themselves *vis-à-vis* Islamist feminism; and about the relationship between Islamist politics, human rights and democracy. See EuroMeSCo Report on *Women as Full Participants in the Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States*, April 2006, at: [http://www.euromesco.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=238%3Awomen-as-full-participants-in-the-euro-mediterranean-community-of-democratic-states&catid=105%3Aprevious-reports&Itemid=97&lang=en](http://www.euromesco.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=238%3Awomen-as-full-participants-in-the-euro-mediterranean-community-of-democratic-states&catid=105%3Aprevious-reports&Itemid=97&lang=en).

54. Margot Badran, 'Islamic Feminism: What's in a Name?', *Al-Ahram Weekly Online* 569, 12 January 2002, at: <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/569/cu1.htm>. See also her edited volume, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009).

It is true that while Islamic feminists want political equality and freedom for women they tend to support the conservative credo of Islamic parties when it comes to issues such as chastity and abortion.<sup>55</sup> But Western women in secular societies also hold a variety of views on such issues. Some Western feminists may believe that Muslim women are oppressed by male hegemony, but as long as there is freedom of expression and basic rights are guaranteed, it must be accepted that each society – be it Ireland or Tunisia – will adopt the values that suit their citizens, and that each will evolve and change at its own pace and over time.

Clearly, some practices that are defended on cultural grounds such as female genital mutilation, stoning or depriving women of the right to choose their partner or to inherit violate basic rights and cannot be condoned. But changes to those practices will come about as a result of opening political boundaries to democracy. As pointed out in the EuroMeSCO Report, *Women as Full Participants in the Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States*,<sup>56</sup> the oppression of women in the Mediterranean, both North and South, is not the result of any particular religion but of powerful patriarchal traditions, which also predominated in Southern Europe until the 1960s. Authoritarian regimes that champion women's rights (as Tunisia's did) actually co-opted women's NGOs and did not challenge the basic patriarchal and paternalistic models and modes of political and social life.

Without democracy and free speech to spread information about the rights of women, there cannot be real equality. But this is an ongoing process of change. Even in well-established democracies where the rights of women or gender equality are enshrined in law, women continue to fight for the implementation of their rights.

### *Secularism and democracy*

One of the most misleading aspects of the debate about Islam and democracy is the tendency to equate secularism with democracy, so that calls for Islamic constitutions by Islamist parties are interpreted as the desire to establish theocracies such as Iran's. This is a legacy of the French Revolution and reveals the influence of French constitutional thought in the former French colonies of the Maghreb. There is more than one model for relations between state and religion in the world's recognised democracies; indeed diversity of arrangements is the rule. Alfred Stepan claims there are at least three models, all of which feature variants of the Indian call for 'equal respect, principled distance, and equal (and substantial) support for all religions.'<sup>57</sup> If judged

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55. *Women as Full Participants*, op. cit.

56. Ibid.

57. Alfred Stepan, 'The Multiple Secularisms of Modern Democratic and Non-Democratic Regimes,' Paper presented at the APSA Annual Meeting Paper 2010, at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1643701>.

according to the harshest French Republican standards, many European democracies would not pass the test of absolute separation. In all the Nordic states, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland, Evangelical Lutheranism is the constitutionally enshrined official religion. However, these constitutional texts guarantee that the Lutheran Church cannot impose its doctrines and will on the citizenry or suppress the rights of minorities. Indeed, Scandinavian democracies are deemed to be good examples of the protection of minorities.

An analysis of the constitution of democratic states shows that many refer to the existence of an official religion. For example, in Norway, where there is a debate about whether there should be an official religion in a multicultural context, Article 2 of the constitution states that ‘All inhabitants of the Realm shall have the right to free exercise of their religion. The Evangelical-Lutheran religion shall remain the official religion of the State. The inhabitants professing it are bound to bring up their children in the same.’ Several Latin American constitutions refer to God (Brazil, for instance) or state that Roman Catholicism is the official religion (Argentina). Indonesia and India are perceived as good examples of the practice of the principle of unity within diversity. According to Radha Kumar, ‘secularism in India is taken to mean freedom of practice for all religions. Many quote the Sanskrit phrase *Sarva Dharma Sambhava* (all religions are equal).’<sup>58</sup>

**Table 2: Relations between State and religion in the West (excluding the US)<sup>59</sup>**

Category of relationship	Percentage
Government funding of religious schools or education	100
Religious education standard (optional in schools)	76
Government collects taxes for religious organisations	52
Official government department for religious affairs	44
Government positions or funding for clergy	40
Government funding of religious charitable organisations	36
Established/Official religion	36
Some clerical positions made by government appointment	24

58. Conversation with the author.

59. Source for data in table: Alfred Stepan, op. cit. in note 57.

It should also be remembered that many dictatorships have been and are secular (Iraq under Saddam Hussein to give just one example, whose revolution was inspired by the French model and sought to crack down on Islamist opponents) and even atheistic (the Soviet Union). The Islamist Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) in Turkey has contributed to the democratisation of that country against the wishes of a few radical secularist sectors that prefer a military dictatorship over an Islamist democracy.

### *The dangerous shift on migration*

Migration, which used to be rightly treated as a primarily social and human issue, has in recent decades become part of the political and security debate and, even more troublingly, of geopolitical design. The idea that migrants from the Southern Mediterranean constituted a demographic threat to Europe became quite widespread in the 1980s, and various states began to include the ‘migrant threat’ in their security doctrines.<sup>60</sup> At the EU level, during the debates on the revision of the European Security Strategy in 2008 some states proposed (and failed) to include migration as a security issue.<sup>61</sup> The inclusion of immigration in the international security agendas is the most visible evidence of the slow but steady process of ‘securitisation’ of immigration at the national level. This gained particular force in the 1980s and 1990s in different European countries, in particular those of the South Mediterranean,<sup>62</sup> which had then recently become immigration host countries. But the emergence of an alarmist discourse of fear about North African migrants ‘invading’ Europe’s Southern shores is a European-wide phenomenon.<sup>63</sup>

The absence of coherent policies and institutions to deal with immigration, and of meaningful strategies to facilitate migrant integration at the national and European levels, has in many cases only served the purposes of far-right and populist forces across the continent.<sup>64</sup> Parties such as the Northern League (*Lega Nord*, LN) in Italy, the Austrian Freedom Party (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ), the Flemish Bloc (*Vlaams Blok*, VB) in Belgium, the Hellenic Front (Ελληνικό Μέτωπο, EM) in Greece, and the NF in France

60. Álvaro de Vasconcelos & Abdallah Saaf, presentations at the *EuroMesCo-IEMed Conference on Immigration in the Euro-Mediterranean Agenda: Partnership, Security and Development*, held on 14 November 2003, in the context of the World Congress on Human Movements and Immigration (HMI), at: <http://www.iemed.org/documents/euromesocprog.pdf>.

61. Álvaro de Vasconcelos (ed.), ‘The European Security Strategy 2003-2008: Building on Common Interests’, *EUISS Report* no. 5, 1 February 2009.

62. Once major exporters of workers, Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal became net importers of migrants between the mid-1980s and 1990s. This shift from ‘sending’ to ‘receiving’ status was not only sudden but also quite rapid, since the evolution of net immigration numbers reached rates only comparable to those of traditional immigration host countries like Germany, France and Britain in 1990-2010.

63. Hein de Haas, ‘The Myth of Invasion: The Inconvenient Realities of African Migration to Europe,’ *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 7, 2008, pp. 1305-1322; Russell King, Gabriella Lazaridis and Charalambos Tsardanidis, *Eldorado or Fortress? Migration in Southern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

64. Evelyne Ritaine (ed.) *L’Europe du Sud face à l’immigration. Politique de l’étranger* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005).

among others see the migration issue as a key opportunity to build greater support by taking advantage of anxieties and fears about rising unemployment, the legitimacy crisis of traditional centre parties, decelerating growth and declining fertility rates. These issues have little to do with migration or the origins and religious backgrounds of migrants.

Although they are not representative of the view of the majority of European citizens,<sup>65</sup> populist and anti-immigrant arguments often coloured or motivated by anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments have entered the public realm and political discourse, and have even served to legitimate the adoption of strict immigration policies and exclusionary social policies. Negative representations of immigrants (in particular North African Muslims) have been reproduced by the media and institutionalised by policies for over two decades, feeding a vicious cycle whereby immigrants are deprived of basic social rights and seen as a threat to domestic (urban) security or to the cultural and national identity of the host state. These views act as a self-fulfilling prophecy and entrench the 'us' (Europeans) vs. 'them' (immigrants) mentality pervading some immigration policies.<sup>66</sup>

This is evident at the European level in the policy instruments of the third pillar on Justice and Home Affairs, the Schengen agreements, and the Dublin Convention,<sup>67</sup> and the new security paradigm adopted at the national level. Both have led to greater control over EU external borders and stronger action to prevent unauthorised migration in the Mediterranean. This policy paradigm is based on the belief that Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism, irregular migration and open borders are real sources of instability and must be a priority. The so-called 'global approach' of the EC illustrates this. It supposedly proposes a 'win-win immigration policy'<sup>68</sup> based on the premise that 'migration and mobility are embedded in the broader political, economic, social and security context. A broad understanding of security means that irregular migration also needs to be considered in connection with organised crime and lack of rule of law and justice, feeding on corruption and inadequate regulation.'<sup>69</sup>

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65. According to Pew Research Centre poll of 2006, majorities in different European countries said it is a 'good thing' that people from the Middle East and North Africa came to work in their countries (Spain 62 percent; France 58 percent; Britain 57 percent; Germany was the major exception with 34 percent). Pew Research Centre, *Muslims in Europe: Economic Worries Top Concerns about Religious and Cultural Identity*, 6 July 2006, Washington, D.C., p. 8.

66. Many Europeans seem sceptical about the willingness of Muslim immigrants to 'adopt their national customs and way of life' and their wanting to 'remain distinct from the larger society' (Germany 76 percent; Britain 64 percent; Spain 67 percent; Russia 69 percent). *Muslims in Europe*, *ibid.*

67. J. Huysmans, 'The European Union and the Securitisation of Migration,' *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 38, no. 5, December 2000, pp. 751-777.

68. European Commission, 'A Win-Win Migration Policy,' 21 November 2011, at: [http://ec.europa.eu/news/external\\_relations/111121\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/news/external_relations/111121_en.htm).

69. See European Commission, 'The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility', COM(2011) 743 final, Brussels, 18 November 2011, p. 15, at [http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v9.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/1_EN_ACT_part1_v9.pdf).

Not only does this contradict non-discrimination, equal opportunities, and the basic right to mobility,<sup>70</sup> but it also goes against the political and economic interests of the European Union. Although there is no full agreement about the exact numbers, specialists point out that Europe will need immigrants if it wishes to sustain growth and welfare as its population ages.<sup>71</sup> These anti-immigrant policies and discourse pose a delicate and complex threat to Europe because it may not be easy to reverse the spiral of fear and exclusion they create.<sup>72</sup> This was quite clear in the reaction to the refugees from North Africa in 2011.

By the end of July 2011, 24,769 Tunisians and 23,267 Libyans had arrived on Italian soil, causing a major crisis.<sup>73</sup> The local mayor asked the Italian government to ‘empty the island of illegal immigrants immediately.’ Dozens of police and immigrants were injured. The local population also attacked and insulted the staff of Save the Children Fund. Consequently, the reception centre was closed down and the island of Lampedusa declared ‘an unsafe harbour’ by the Ministry of Interior. The Schengen agreement came under threat as various European states, including Italy, Malta, France and Germany, called for a possible reintroduction of border controls among the twenty five Schengen states. In April 2011 French President Nicolas Sarkozy said that he ‘want Schengen to survive, but to survive [...it had to be] reformed’; his Italian counterpart, Berlusconi, added that ‘in exceptional circumstances there should be variations to the Schengen treaty.’<sup>74</sup>

This absence of European solidarity and inability to deal with 50,000 refugees contrasted dramatically with the Tunisian reaction. According to the UNHCR, since the Libya crisis broke out in February 2011, almost one million people have crossed the border from Libya into Tunisia. The Tunisian people and their government mounted a generous relief effort, allowing Libyan nationals to benefit from a *de facto* temporary protection scheme.

### *Hospitality for a common humanity*

There is an alternative to tolerant coexistence. It involves recognising that, despite different cultural and traditional heritages, every person is first and foremost a member of the human family, sharing President Obama’s ‘spirit of humanity.’ As such everyone

70. These principles are enunciated in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and different EU texts.

71. In 2000, the UN reported that Europe would need millions of immigrants. United Nations, ‘Replacement Immigration: Is it a Solution to Declining and Ageing Populations?’ in P. Fargues, ‘Arab Migration to Europe: Trends and Policies,’ *International Migration Review*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2004, pp. 1348-71.

72. The section on migration builds on the work of Any Freitas, ‘Redefining Nations. Nationhood and Immigration in Italy and Spain,’ PhD dissertation, European University Institute, Florence, July 2010.

73. ‘48,000 Migrants Flee Libya, Tunisia for Italy Since Beginning of Year,’ *Tripoli Post*, 16 August 2011, at: <http://www.tripolipost.com/article/detail.asp?c=1&i=6672>.

74. See: [http://www.cemmis.edu.gr/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=277%3Athe-larab-springr-and-its-consequences-on-the-euro-mediterranean-migration-flows&catid=37%3Aepikairi-analusi&Itemid=66&lang=el](http://www.cemmis.edu.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=277%3Athe-larab-springr-and-its-consequences-on-the-euro-mediterranean-migration-flows&catid=37%3Aepikairi-analusi&Itemid=66&lang=el).

needs to enjoy the same basic rights. This fundamental conviction is what allows for the creation of democratic states and regional communities such as the European Union. As Jacques Derrida would say,<sup>75</sup> we need a hospitality based not on recognition of the other with a different origin, nationality and religion, or from a different civilisation, but of an intrinsically similar other, an equal.

This distinction is not as trivial as it may appear to be at first sight: if one lets go of that principle, one begins to accept the dangerous idea of levels of tolerance, or the idea that there are limits to social inclusion or to the limit on the number of migrants that any given host society can tolerate; or one may begin to accept the equally dangerous securitisation of immigration policy. Derrida's humanism is a useful antidote to this kind of thinking.

### *Huntingtonism in reverse*

Many regarded the polarising response of the US administration to the events of September 11 as part of the clash of civilisations. Terrorism was deemed a global existential threat, and non-existent 'links' were established between al-Qaeda and the secular Iraqi dictatorship. As a result, Saddam became a target in the war on terror with the tragic consequences now widely acknowledged.

But this was only one of the aspects of the war on terror waged by George W. Bush. More perversely, it spread the view that Islam was a *global* problem. This was not articulated in the conservative sense proposed by Huntington,<sup>76</sup> who suggested that Islam is intrinsically incompatible with democracy and that migrants and multiculturalism are threats to the identity of the West. Rather, the Bush administration adopted the transformative approach proposed by Bernard Lewis,<sup>77</sup> who argued that Muslims were the 'sick men' of the world and in urgent need of a 'grand project' to cure them of their ills. While Huntington argued that Islam was incompatible with democracy *tout court*, Lewis's sick man was capable of recovery, and might require a forceful injection of a large dose of democracy and modernity. This was later used as a justification for occupying Iraq, with the tragic consequences with which we are now all too familiar.

For proponents of this view, Islam is conflated with the radical currents of political Islam and those advocating religious purity. The idea of spreading democracy in the Greater Middle East and the largely rhetorical initiatives conceived to attain that end were part of the grand project to democratise Islam. This was also the goal of the occupation of Iraq,

75. Jacques Derrida, op. cit. in note 29.

76. Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004); Álvaro de Vasconcelos, 'Os Erros de Huntington,' *Público*, 12 July.

77. Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

and it is why the Bush administration targeted the Greater Middle East, from Marrakech to Bangladesh. But the debate about the Greater Middle East and events in Iraq demonstrated yet again that democracy is primarily a national endeavour that depends first and foremost on domestic factors. This is not to say that international action is worthless – it was invaluable in Chile and Portugal, for instance – but rather that it plays a supporting rather than a leading transformative role.

International assistance for democratisation cannot effectively target a civilisation or a culture; it needs to focus on specific social and political forces or projects. A Crusade can never be undertaken between equals; respectful assistance can. With Islam as the policy target, a new bipolarity is established, in which the West is identified as the Christian world. A dialogue between a Christian Europe and a Muslim Southern Mediterranean would fail to reflect the diversity that exists on both sides, and neutralise any attempt to promote inclusion, or unity within diversity.

### *Europe's duty*

The European Union must engage its Southern partners in a process that prioritises political issues even as it promotes economic integration. In short, the Union needs a holistic policy based on democratic pluralism. This is the precondition for a successful policy of 'unity within diversity.' Putting politics first involves accepting the very diverse set of political actors in the region, including Islamist forces, and engaging them in a shared project. Arguments of cultural relativism cannot be used to combat negative Western perceptions of Islam. Europe must not use the cultural argument to ignore the urgent need for political reform and for measures to protect human rights. Inter-cultural dialogue is no substitute for political and cultural pluralism.

The success of EU policy towards the Arab world depends on the ability of the Southern countries to democratise. However, it also depends largely on the degree to which the European Union and its Member States act consistently with the Union's model of integration and its *motto* of unity within diversity; on Europe's ability to affirm itself as an *espace monde*, or as an *open integration* project which preserves 'the values of an open society; political democracy, cultural and religious diversity, free trade, and freedom of citizen participation.'<sup>78</sup>

One of the key merits of the European Constitution was that it did not define the Union in religious or cultural terms. Unfortunately, that project failed and there have been new calls

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78. Álvaro de Vasconcelos et al., *Open Integration, The European Union and the Mercosur and the International System*, A Euro Latin American Forum Report (Lisbon: IEEL, March 2005).

for a re-opening of the debate about the identity of the Union. But any cultural or, worse, religious definition of Europe spells self-inflicted defeat; its model for integration would not survive. That is why it is crucial to judge the merits of Turkish accession *solely* according to performance criteria, the same applied to all other candidate countries.

The EU must address immigration and migrant communities in the same open spirit. Immigrants should be recognised as central players in the process of economic and political Euro-Mediterranean integration. Tensions in the suburbs of French cities should not reinforce the clash of civilisations thesis, but rather strengthen the spirit of hospitality, encourage European citizens of Southern Mediterranean origin to become politically active by peaceful means, and inspire citizens and governments to combat discrimination and marginalisation more forcefully. To do so in the current context is to provide answers to the problems of a region that now dominates the global political agenda.

## The post-Huntington revolutions

Huntington's theory of the incompatibility between democracy and Islam has been proved absolutely wrong by the democratic revolutions in the Arab world.<sup>79</sup> It is high time for advocates of Huntington's thesis to fully realise this, and to take on board the lessons to be learned from the end of the 'Arab exception'. There is no clash of civilisations. It never really existed.

### *Muslims don't like democracy?*

The enduring popularity of Huntington's simplistic and Manichean vision of the Muslim world largely explains why so many were taken by surprise by the millions of mostly Muslim citizens who took to the streets demanding freedom in the Arab world. Not only did this paradigm poison international politics, it also poisoned domestic politics. It is hardly an exaggeration to observe that the reduction of Muslim identity to a single element – religion – is another example of what Hannah Arendt called the 'banality of evil'.<sup>80</sup> Muslims, especially the more devout, were judged to be innately dangerous, and therefore unfit to live in a community based on liberal democratic values. Integrating Muslims into Western societies was consequently deemed highly problematic.

Disturbingly, Huntington's view continues to influence political thinking, even as the citizens of North Africa have made it plain that they share the same aspirations held by their Western counterparts. Let us deconstruct Huntington's paradigm by revisiting the interpretation of certain key events of the last two decades.

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79. Samuel P. Huntington, *op. cit.* in note 38.

80. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (London: Penguin Classics, 1994).

### *Islamists start wars?*

Let us begin in 1991, with the victory of the Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS) in Algeria. We must recognise that it was not this victory that triggered a civil war which culminated in the death of over 200,000 people; rather, a combination of three factors account for this outcome. First, the elections were not part of a transition process that would pre-define the ‘rules of the game’<sup>81</sup>; second, the Algerian military refused to accept the results, cancelled the election and cracked down on the opposition using methods not unlike those deployed nearly two decades later by Gaddafi and al-Assad in Libya and Syria. Third, the ideology of the FIS at the time has nothing to do with that of modernised Islamic parties focusing on justice and development such as the AKP, the Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD), the Tunisian Renaissance Party (*Ennahda*) or even the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

Let us now turn to September 11 and re-examine the response of the Bush administration to that attack. Contrary to conventional wisdom, it was not a group of Muslims that attacked the Twin Towers in the most cosmopolitan of cities; it was a gang of murderers fuelled by an extremist vision of nationalist identity not unlike that of the Serbian nationalists who perpetrated the Srebrenica massacre. The so-called war on terror that subsequently targeted Muslims all over the world was a colossal blunder. Correcting that error is what led Obama to affirm that ‘the United States is not – and never will be – at war with Islam.’<sup>82</sup> The death of bin Laden did not mark the end of the influence of al-Qaeda extremists in the Arab world, not because they are powerful but because they were never influential in any Arab country in the first place: his death just serves as a reminder of how completely his own clash of civilisations project failed.

### *Islamist women have no rights?*

Finally, let us take a look at women’s rights. Proponents of the clash of civilisations view emphasise how women are oppressed in the Muslim world by violent and oppressive menfolk who are unable to accept a liberal democratic order because of their religion. Not only is it forgotten that women were treated as objects and cheap labour in the West within living memory, but this view conveniently ignores the fact that many of the most active people fighting for political rights and for equality are women wearing headscarves. We have seen the women in Tahrir Square and we have watched as *abbeya*-clad women have carved out a new political role for women in the Gulf. Forcing women out of their

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81. This phrase was coined by Adam Przeworski, and appears in a book published in 1991, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

82. ‘Osama Bin Laden’s Death: Political Reactions in Quotes,’ BBC News, 3 May 2011, at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-13256956>.

headscarves is not a way to protect women's rights – on the contrary. Freedom emerges not from what one wears, but from the degree of autonomy one is able to gain. Over the last century, women everywhere have fought to gain autonomy and to empower themselves, and Muslim women, although lagging behind, are engaged in the same struggle, with or without headscarves. Women's rights are human rights and reflect the right of individuals to self-determination.

### *What Europe must learn*

In order to regain its credibility as a partner supporting the democratic hopes of the Arab revolutions, Europe must do some serious homework. First, it must adopt a more generous immigration policy to combat the xenophobia that already permeates government policy as a result of alarming electoral gains by right-wing populist parties. Second, it must recognise that the Arab revolutions are not only directed against those in power but also against those who supported the now crumbling *anciens régimes*. Arab civic society is calling for direct support from Europe. Egyptians and Tunisians have a keen interest in what can be learned from the Portuguese, Spanish or Polish experiences of transition to democracy. In Libya, European action to prevent the massacre of the population of Benghazi was welcomed, and the French flag was hoisted during demonstrations as a symbol of revolutionary liberty.

It is time for European democratic leaders to jettison their prejudices, stereotypical images and irrational fears of 'the other,' and show that they have heard the roar of democracy emanating from the Arab world. If they do so, they will one day be fondly remembered in the Arab world, just as Southern European countries celebrate the international figures who aided the democratic wave in the 1970s in Portugal, Spain and Greece, or Central and Eastern European nations remember the foreign backers of their velvet revolutions and peaceful transitions to democracy in the 1990s. Europeans must unequivocally cast aside Huntington's racist paradigm and recognise that people everywhere share a desire for freedom and dignity because they are united by a 'shared spirit of humanity.'



## 2. The Bush era: the clash of civilisations as strategy

‘I have suspected that history, real history, is more modest and that its essential dates may be, for a long time, secret.’

Jorge Luis Borges, *The Modesty of History*.<sup>83</sup>

### September 11

Immediately after the terror visited upon the United States, I argued that the response of Europe had to be sure and effective, but that there should be no over-reach, either by Europe or any other country or region. Human life is worth as much in New York as in Srebrenica, in Ramallah and Tel Aviv. Terrorism is the result of extremist politics found all over the world and has no particular ties with a specific race or religion. Seriously combating terrorism is not just about security; it requires a commitment to resolving the crises and problems that facilitate its emergence and allow terrorists to act. It also requires a sustained attack on poverty, totalitarianism and injustice; but not on democracy.

### *Nous sommes tous Américains*

At that time, I also argued that September 11 would have a long-lasting impact on the West and future generations. The monstrous crime was committed in the heart of the most cosmopolitan of American cities and resulted in thousands of victims from many different nations. Europeans had already been shocked by the return to Europe of identity-based barbarism and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia. But many had felt that the victims in the Balkans were too far away from them. By contrast, nobody remained indifferent to the attack in New York, a few feet from the Statue of Liberty. New York is not America, much less the America that makes Europeans feel like outsiders; New York is the world, and for some, the most European of American cities. This identification led many Europeans to agree with an editorial in *Le Monde* when it claimed two days after the attack that ‘we are all Americans.’<sup>84</sup>

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83. Jorge Luis Borges, *Other Inquisitions, 1937-1952* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), p. 167.

84. This was the title of the noted editorial in *Le Monde* published two days after the attack. See Jean-Marie Colombani, ‘Nous sommes tous Américains,’ *Le Monde*, 13 September 2001. It stated that ‘dans ce moment tragique où les mots paraissent si pauvres pour dire le choc que l’on ressent, la première chose qui vient à l’esprit est celle-ci: nous sommes tous Américains!’

### *A Manichean reaction*

My feeling at the time of the attack was that the medium-term reaction to September 11 could result in the opposite of what New York symbolises: all the peoples of the world in all their diversity living peacefully side by side. This would occur if the Manichean mentality of part of the ‘other America’ prevailed, so that ‘good’ was associated with one state, nation or race, and ‘evil’ with another. I highlighted incidents that took place at the time as a result of this sort of mentality. Shortly after the attacks, an Egyptian man was lynched in California; in other places, people identified as Arab-Americans were beaten, forced off airplanes and buses, and refused jobs. Europe was not immune to this new racist wave. As one headline of the newspaper associated with the far-right Italian Northern League (NL), *Padania*, screamed out at the time: *A million immigrants: how many terrorists?*

### *The dark face of Europe*

I remember that days after the crime against Manhattan I visited an exhibition in Paris entitled *Hitchcock and Art: Fatal Coincidences*, which drew parallels between Hitchcock’s films and European art. It was a harrowing experience given the atmosphere at the time, comparable to that created by the Euro-American master-director in his film, *Rope*.<sup>85</sup> This is a masterful study of the fascist ideal of the Superman, which shows that evil is not ‘the other,’ but something that lurks within us.

As the exhibition underlined, European art of the early twentieth century reflected a darkness that seemed to anticipate the slaughter of the First and Second World Wars. Shortly after the end of the Second War, Albert Camus warned about the danger of the return of totalitarian barbarism. Evoking the joy of the crowds celebrating the end of the war, Camus recalled that the peace being celebrated was also threatened. For ‘the plague never dies or disappears,’ and there would be a day when it would return to spread death and misery in a once ‘happy city.’<sup>86</sup> From another angle, in *The World of Yesterday*, Stefan Zweig mourned the loss of a cosmopolitan Europe free of the walls raised by nationalist fanaticism after the First World War, making it very clear that there could be no open and free society that did not respect the right of ‘outsiders.’<sup>87</sup>

Post-war Europe was built ‘against’ history. It was the awareness that the totalitarian plague could one day return that gave rise to the European Union. This represented an extraordinary achievement against nationalist and totalitarian barbarism; but it is a frag-

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85. Alfred Hitchcock, *Rope*. Warner Brothers, 1948, starring James Stewart, John Dall and Farley Granger.

86. ‘[...] perhaps the day would come when, for the bane and the enlightening of men, it would rouse up its rats again and send them forth to die in a happy city.’ Albert Camus, *The Plague*, 1947.

87. Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (New York: The Viking Press, 1943).

ile one. The enemies of tolerance and peaceful coexistence have re-emerged in the form of racist and xenophobic currents in many European countries. The European Union will have to continue to work against history if it is to survive. Ethnic cleansing in Bosnia undertaken in the name of Western civilisation and a 'pure' ethnic and racial identity bears witness to the dangers and to Camus's prescience. The response to that carnage – slow, timid and conciliatory – showed how Europeans and Americans are prone to the neutral posture and selfishness of those who feel 'safe' and are prosperous. Ultimately, Europe and the US mobilised to protect the Bosnians and their basic rights, particularly those of Muslims, so that one day they might participate in a diverse, tolerant and democratic Europe.

It is important to remember that Europe is not only the land of Averroes, Kant, Camus and Tolstoy, but also the homeland of Hitler, Stalin and Milosevic. There is no place for civilisational arrogance. As I noted at the time, the US should have engaged in a similar reflection, as the tragedy in New York stirred up blind wrath. But if the potential for barbarism exists everywhere, so does the thrust towards democracy and the protection of fundamental rights.

As I noted at the time, citizens in the Arab world were ambiguous about the US: they had experienced the unfulfilled hopes and the humiliations of the 1990s; they had painfully and indignantly seen how differently the West reacted to the deaths of Muslims and Westerners; and they experienced the rigours of conflict. Thus, it was also crucial for intellectuals in the Muslim world to engage in an ideological and political debate about democracy, human rights, xenophobia and about how to counter extremism.

### *A universal rights-based response*

Then as now it is necessary to reject cultural relativism, and identify the perpetrators of the Manhattan crime as examples of an extremist identity-based current that constitutes the main threat to democracy and freedom everywhere, from Srebrenica to New York and from Afghanistan to Rwanda. Europe cannot be a Switzerland surrounded by poverty; and the US cannot be an island enjoying the benefits of an increasingly interdependent world but refusing to submit to any multilateral constraints, as President Obama has recognised.

The same factors that are leading to the emergence of the interconnected information society, which as Maria do Rosário Vaz often said challenges 'space and time' and makes economic and political borders porous, also facilitates the work of terrorist networks. This is why I argued in the wake of the attacks that the response to September 11, the

deadliest crime of the globalisation era to date, had to be universal. It was necessary to encourage a nascent global civil society to mobilise in favour of a world governed by truly universal global rules, and to establish mechanisms to eliminate oppression and distribute the benefits of international trade. As the International Criminal Court (ICC) was not yet in place at the time, I advocated that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) should establish a tribunal to try those responsible for the crime perpetrated on September 11.

What I meant was not that combating terrorism required only political and social measures; indeed, I argued for a security response, but one that would not stand in the way of political measures designed to make the emergence of terrorist groups more difficult over the long term. One of the most onerous issues confronting the US-led coalition was that authoritarian states used the fight against terrorism to attack their domestic opponents, including peaceful Islamic parties and movements. But combating terrorism could not serve as an excuse to legalise extra-judicial killing. If security measures did not respect legal limits and basic rights, this would only increase the attractions for totalitarian movements.

### *Combating terrorism*

After every terrorist attack, the same sorts of arguments have been reprised. That one must fight terror without being too pusillanimous about rights and liberties, and that authoritarian regimes are more efficient than democracies when it comes to combating terrorism. But empirical analysis has demonstrated that democracies are better equipped to combat terrorism and that when they imitate authoritarian regimes they are weakened.

Democracy and the rule of law do not provide a failsafe guarantee of security – that does not exist. But respect for basic freedoms and justice when combating terrorism isolates extremists and robs their methods of legitimacy in the eyes of those who might otherwise identify with their cause. Victims of torture are a powerful advertisement to recruit indignant youths into violent extremist groups. This is perhaps one of the key legacies of Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib. Conflating different Islamist currents, those who reject violence and those who resort to terror against civilians, only facilitates the action of extremists, who then appear as legitimate opposition forces.

Under authoritarian regimes too, the oppression of civilians only feeds the recruiting capacity of extremist movements. Russia's scorched earth policy in Chechnya provides the clearest example of the failure to end terror by resorting to authoritarian violence

without regard for the rule of law. The merciless repression of anyone fighting for independence led many nationalists to join the ranks of the extremists. The attacks did not diminish – more than 330 people were killed on the September 2004 attack on a school in Beslan. How therefore can it be argued that Putin’s authoritarianism has been more efficient than the liberalism of European democracies?

The intelligence services of democracies are also more efficient. In authoritarian states, these services tend to become centres of autonomous power, or dependent on central state powers, and there is no democratic control and accountability. In the absence of accountability or a culture of monitoring, they become incapable of analysing their mistakes. Secret services in democracies are also very opaque, but there are mechanisms for democratic control to prevent abuses of power and to ensure efficiency and accountability when policies fail. The best response to extremism and intolerance and to what Amin Malouf has termed ‘murderous identities’ is an open, pluralist society.<sup>88</sup> It is because Europe made diversity one of its fundamental traits that its project has had such an impact. Protecting it is the best way to honour the memory of the victims of terror.

### *The response of the EU*

My conclusion at the time of the attacks was that the EU should play a leading role in promoting this kind of agenda, given its unique experience with democracy, justice and social cohesion. I argued that it should strengthen its relations with and promote basic rights and freedoms in the Muslim world, and that it could not rely solely on the force of its own example and sympathetic rhetoric, but would have to combat totalitarianism and tackle the underlying causes of extremism and terrorism unambiguously. I also contended that Europe could not opt for anti-American neutrality: it needed the US, and had to persuade it to support multilateral action and universal justice. Equally, the US would not be able to address these challenges as it was not immune to their effects. The hope was that the plural and open ‘America of Manhattan’ would prevail in the transatlantic debate on how to respond to terrorism. As the cartoons crisis and other subsequent events proved, this hope was not quite fulfilled.

As Maria do Rosário Vaz once pointed out, the US strategy following September 11 culminated in a series of tragedies and violations of basic rights, and turned bin Laden into ‘an individual superpower.’ In the most interesting book published about the attack on

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88. Amin Malouf, *Les identités meurtrières* (Paris: Grasset, 1998).

the Twin Towers,<sup>89</sup> consisting of interviews with Italian philosopher Giovanna Borradori conducted months after the event, Habermas and Derrida argue that as a concept September 11 was ultimately not defined by al-Qaeda's crime, but by the 'multiplication effect' that it had as a result of the words and deeds of the Bush administration and the media, heard and witnessed by a global public who watched the deaths of thousands of fellow citizens in close to real time on their television screens. Thus the war on terror started with all the dire consequences that many warned against.

## The cartoon crisis: a dangerous ignorance

'All cartoon characters and fables must be exaggeration, caricatures.  
It is the very nature of fantasy and fable.'

Walt Disney

After September 11, the mood was one of fear of and antagonism towards Islam, even though there were calls for tolerance in the public discourse of the West. Bin Laden's and Bush's statements were full of religious references, one referring to Islam and evil non-believers, and the other to America as being 'God blessed' and to its opponents as members of an 'axis of evil.' The belief that Islam is an intolerant religion became ever more widespread not only as a result of September 11 but also because of the 1989 fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeini against Salman Rushdie following the publication of *The Satanic Verses*.<sup>90</sup> Thus, it was through the clash of civilisations perspective that many interpreted the events that unfolded after the publication of twelve cartoons of the Prophet by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* on 30 September 2005, which suggested that there was a direct link between Islam and violence.

The reaction of the general public and European heads of state to the publication of the cartoons was completely disproportionate to the event. It was symptomatic of the dangerous habit of putting all protesters into the same nebulously-defined category and equating religious sentiment with political action; and it was also symptomatic of the willingness of Arab governments to take advantage of the crisis to resist reform at home.

This sort of ignorance and political manipulation has fuelled extremism and identity-based barbarism in Europe and in its neighbouring Southern countries. They are partly

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89. Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

90. Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (New York: Viking, 1988).

the result of the ideological influence of the clash of civilisations theory and the popularity of the image of Arab men filled with rage, as reflected in the title of essay by Bernard Lewis, *The Roots of Muslim Rage*, published in 1990.<sup>91</sup>

### *A new enemy*

One only has to read the papers of the time to see that it comforted people to interpret the cartoons crisis according to the absurd theory that the defining conflict of our times is between the West and an Islamic world. The deconstruction of the events shows that this was not the case. The cartoon crisis was part of a much broader set of problems that are not cultural or religious but political. The crisis was political in its origins – it consisted of a conflict between Danish Muslim communities, the government in Copenhagen, and the xenophobic extreme right that supports it in parliament.

The radicalisation of an important segment of the population in Arab countries is also a political phenomenon, resulting from identity-based nationalism or repression by Arab governments that were then facing growing Islamist opposition and increasing international pressure to reform. Xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and anti-Western prejudice – all are part of the dialectic of hatred and mutual scorn, to paraphrase Edgar Morin. They are a challenge that European democracies must face.

### *It's politics, politics, politics*

Is it really the case that there was no religious dimension to this crisis? Clearly, just as Christians are regularly offended by cartoons, films and works of art, the Danish cartoons offended the religious sensibilities of many Muslims. But this was not a clash of civilisations. In answer to Huntington's question, 'if not civilisations, what?' the answer must be 'politics, politics, politics.'<sup>92</sup> The central point is that democracy and the rule of law are necessary conditions for a fair judgment of how to react to things we disagree with. European countries established the conditions for freedom of speech, including speech that is offensive to others, allowing majority tolerance of minority opinion. The rule of law and democracy guarantee religious freedom and the freedom to be free of religion.

The uproar over the cartoons in many Arab countries was a product of the weakness of the rule of law and press freedom or, put differently, the absence of democracy. But

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91. As Edward Said noted, Huntington relied heavily on the Orientalist ideas of Bernard Lewis. See Edward Said, *The Clash of Ignorance*, op. cit. in note 33, and Bernard Lewis, 'The Roots of Muslim Rage: Why so many Muslims deeply resent the West, and why their bitterness will not easily be mollified,' *Atlantic Magazine*, September 1990.

92. Samuel P. Huntington, *If Not Civilisations, What?*, op. cit. in note 37.

the debate about the cartoons also intensified demands for basic freedoms. Indeed, in marked contrast with the image that is transmitted by the media in Europe, the cartoons provoked a serious debate about freedom of expression in many Southern countries. Some Arab newspapers even published the cartoons so readers might know exactly what the fuss was about and why some journalists responsible for reprinting the cartoons were jailed.<sup>93</sup>

### *A changing Arab scenario*

What was particularly notable about this crisis is that Europe, which had gained much sympathy in the battle over Iraq, became a target of criticism and even attack by some Arab states. Why did that sympathy evaporate? The answer is that ‘soft power’ Europe altered its policy of support for the *status quo* in the Arab world.

In the run-up to the Euro-Mediterranean summit in Barcelona in November 2005 the European Union realised that bolstering the *status quo* was neither in its own interest nor an appropriate way of dealing with political realities in the Southern Mediterranean. It observed that reformist movements had gained strength, and that there was intense debate about possible paths to democratisation underway, most notably in Lebanon and Morocco. This reflected changes within Southern polities more than US or European pressure.

A key aspect of change was that Islamists were becoming unavoidable political actors: they were represented in the parliaments of Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan, and in many cases they were the main alternative to authoritarian nationalist regimes. In this context, a few European states began to recognise that the Islamists must be taken on board. This was new, and it was not to the liking of many Arab governments, including Mubarak’s.

Not only had the Union put democratic reform on its agenda – albeit timidly – but some European states even adopted a hard position *vis-à-vis* Syrian policy in the Lebanon (forcing the Syrian regime to put an end to a twenty-nine year old occupation in 2005). The anti-European reaction of some Arab governments was therefore a response to European involvement in political reform, and the firm way in which some of the Member States were dealing with Syria. In Gaza, for instance, the force that attacked the offices of the EU was not the Islamist Hamas, but the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a group connected to the party representing Arab nationalism in Palestine, the Fatah (*Harakat al-Tabrir al-Watani*

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93. Kahel Bousaad and Berkane Bouderbala, two Algerian journalists, were detained for having published some of the cartoons in two Islamist newspapers, *Errisala* and *Iqraa*, in January 2006. The same happened with Jihad Momani, the Jordanian journalist who was sentenced to two months in prison for having published the cartoons on 30 May 2006.

*al-Filastini*). The attack expressed anger against Europe for pressuring Palestine to hold elections which Fatah then lost.

Four years after 9/11 came the cartoons crisis of 2005. Clash of civilisations-based interpretations of that event also obscured what was actually happening on the ground.<sup>94</sup> The crisis was not created and hyped-up by Islamic parties, but by Arab regimes that the West had regarded as staunch allies. It was not the Muslim Brotherhood that decided to take the cartoons issue to the Organisation of Islamic States (OIS) and the Arab League (AL) in Cairo; it was the Egyptian government that did so. Calls for a boycott on Danish products came not from the Muslim Brotherhood but from Al-Azhar, an official institution. And it was not independent-acting Muslim extremists who were behind the attacks against European embassies in Damascus, but the omnipresent Syrian secret service commanded by al-Assad. The Arab autocracies reacted in this way to co-opt Islamist forces, put pressure on their European allies, and to present their regimes as a 'bulwark against chaos.' And it is no accident that this response came just as a human rights agenda for Euro-Mediterranean relations was taking shape, and at a time when Syria was under strong international pressure because of its role in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri.

Some Islamist currents also used the cartoons to channel popular discontent, but as a rule they did so peacefully, and sometimes in conjunction with secular forces. Contrary to the predominant view, the cartoons did not inflame public opinion in the Arab countries; the most violent and significant demonstrations took place far from the Mediterranean, in Pakistan where the cartoons were not published. These demonstrations were clearly aimed against the Pakistani government and the US (which condemned their publication), although the EU was also the target of protest since its Member States had become dominant in the highly unpopular NATO force operating in Afghanistan.

### *The European response*

The evolution of US policy presented specific challenges to the Union. The Bush administration had placed democratisation on the international agenda after 11 September, but by this time US citizens had begun to question the price of neo-conservative interventionism and the absence of any coherent 'freedom promotion.' The word 'failure' became more frequent in the US in reference to Iraq with news about the treatment of enemy non-combatants at Guantánamo and the discovery of the use of torture by US forces at Abu Ghraib in 2004. As I commented at the time, while the US would eventually with-

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94. See Álvaro de Vasconcelos et al, 'Getting it Right: Inclusion within Diversity: Lessons of the "Cartoons Crisis" and Beyond', *EuroMeSCo*, November 2006.

draw from the Middle East and Iraq, the EU could not simply pack its bags and go home as the US could. Europe could not allow its policy to be swayed by those who manipulated outraged religious sentiments to oppose liberalisation and democratic reform.

The EU had to be intransigent with xenophobia at home and at the same time defend freedom of speech. *Some* of the cartoons were indeed racist, equating Islam with terrorism, but the reaction of the Danish government was simply to give all protesting Arab governments short shrift. This reaction reflected Europe's difficulty in dealing with racism and xenophobia, which partly fed debates about immigration and the need for a European code to test the cultural suitability of migrant integration. Meanwhile, it was necessary to defend the freedom of expression of those in the South who reacted to the cartoons in a way that differed from the official anti-European position. The complexity of the situation and of the diversity of positions in the South illustrated the need to differentiate between different political trends.

It is only by preserving the values of tolerance and diversity at home that the EU will retain the legitimacy and credibility it needs to provide effective support for democratic reforms in the Southern Mediterranean. The success of Union policy depends largely on the ability of its leaders and citizens to understand that there is no clash of civilisations and that the problem is essentially political even when it wears the mask of religion.

## The tragedy of the Iraq war

‘For those who make wise decisions are more formidable to their enemies than those who rush madly into strong action’.

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*

The war in Iraq constituted a diversion from the war on terrorism. It opened a new front with no direct links to the attacks of September 11 or to international terrorism. Indeed, it gave radical Islamic groups new arguments to recruit and gain more support from alienated and disaffected youths in the countries where they are active. And all this before military victory was consolidated in Afghanistan.

Two and a half years later, it became even more apparent that the Bush administration's diagnosis of a new bipolar world order – whether based on a specious linkage between terrorism and Saddam's tyrannical regime or on a refusal to distinguish between international terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda and essentially national terrorist groups – was gravely mistaken. Independently of its source, scope and *modus operandi*, the threat

of terrorism was said to be global and fighting it had to take the form of war. Thus, it became impossible to adopt a strategy that took into consideration the kinds of political and social conditions that cultivate terrorist political action and asymmetrical violence.

The overwhelming majority of UN members supported the US in the aftermath of September 11: the international community almost unanimously legitimated anti-terrorist action and American leadership in this domain. But the very high level of international solidarity in the immediate aftermath of September 11 wore away. The decision to ignore the majority of UNSC members and attack Iraq unilaterally and the lack of credible arguments to justify the war significantly increased suspicions about the real aims of US foreign policy, eroded the legitimacy of the US-led war on terror, and led to serious divisions within the anti-terrorist 'front.' Euro-American cooperation to combat terrorism did not diminish, nor did the new awareness of the threat inherent in asymmetric violence disappear; but the political environment for transatlantic relations became more difficult, which affected the efficacy of international anti-terrorist action and complicated the involvement of many EU states in the resolution of the Iraq crisis.

### *Democratisation as a pretext for going to war*

One of the *a posteriori* justifications for the intervention was that democratising Iraq would trigger a new wave of democratisation in the Greater Middle East, from Morocco to Pakistan. This view was endorsed not only by the Bush administration but also by neo-liberals who had served under Clinton. It was based on the essentially correct perception that one of the causes of anti-Americanism (which helps feed Islamist extremists) was the identification of the US and Europe with support for dictatorship in the Arab world.

But like the Huntingtonian view upon which it is based, this failed to see the internal diversity within political Islamism and, like the Orientalist view put forward by Lewis, that democracy – or its absence – is first and foremost a national issue. The social engineering of democratic processes was further aggravated by the pursuit of what were mutually exclusive goals: the intervention in Iraq was undertaken in the name of democracy and spreading democracy to the Arab world, but the fight against terrorism was undertaken in cooperation with authoritarian regimes and in connivance with their repressive anti-democratic methods.

The intervention in Iraq did have the merit of raising the democracy issue and highlighting the limits of accepting or even defending the authoritarian *status quo* and only very timidly championing human rights, all for fear of the Islamic alternative. However, it raised the issue in the worst possible way, as it conflated democracy with US military

intervention and made life more difficult for endogenous democratic actors, who were forced to address what many saw as an act of aggression and, what was worse, one that coincided with the interests of Israel. The legitimacy and credibility of the policies of the US and its allies in the region were also seriously damaged because there was no comparable and concomitant effort to settle the Israel-Palestine conflict – which has always had a powerful radicalising influence on Arab public opinion.

### *Europe as a global actor*

Given the nearly non-existent response of the EU to the Iraqi crisis, one might be tempted to conclude with many other analysts that there was no meaningful CFSP in place at the time. The EU failed to respond in a united and coherent manner given the paralysing effect of the disagreement with the United States. The crisis in Europe provided a glimpse of how bewildering the sea change in US policy under the Bush administration was for Europeans, and how difficult they found it to work with the neo-conservative vision and the strong unilateral stance that the Bush administration adopted. This may always be the case when such divisions occur.

But this conclusion might be premature. The Iraq war also saw the emergence of a European public favouring a more autonomous EU that could act independently of the US in the international arena and arguing for a European defence policy. Many felt that the EU had to remain true to its values, which made European integration possible and de-legitimised power politics. Other regions or countries also backed greater EU autonomy, including the Mediterranean, where most countries have supported an EU defence policy.

More fundamentally, as Habermas and Derrida noted, opposition to the Iraq war was a result of Europe's historical experience. 'Each of the great European nations has experienced the bloom of its imperial power. And, what in our context is more important still, each has had to work through the experience of the loss of its empire. In many cases this experience of decline was associated with the loss of colonial territories. With the growing distance of imperial domination and the history of colonialism, the European powers also got the chance to *assume a reflexive distance from themselves*. They could learn from the perspective of the defeated to perceive themselves in the dubious role of victors who are called to account for the violence of a forcible and uprooting process of modernisation. This could support the rejection of Eurocentrism, and inspire the Kantian hope for a global domestic policy'.<sup>95</sup>

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95. Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida, 'February 15 or What Binds Europeans Together: A Plea for a Common Foreign Policy, Beginning in the Core of Europe,' *Constellations*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2003, pp. 291-97.

The inter-European crisis over Iraq was not symptomatic of insurmountable divisions and did not foreshadow the fragmentation or permanent disabling of the EU as an international political and security actor; but nor did it act as a powerful stimulus to reform. All the same, there was an attempt to define a coherent security policy in the aftermath of the crisis, with the approval by the Council in December 2003 of the European Security Strategy (ESS).<sup>96</sup> But foreign policy is not just about hard military issues. It also involves soft international issues. Here, the EU retains a capacity to act, although the impetus and scope to do so has been curtailed because of the prolonged effects of the still ongoing financial crisis.

### *The transatlantic crisis*

The Iraq war caused the deepest crisis in transatlantic relations since the Suez crisis of 1956, only this time without the cement of a common enemy: the Soviet Union. Iraq aggravated an already existing rift over key multilateral instruments and institutions such as the Kyoto Protocol and the ICC. What was the cause of this crisis? That it involved deep differences between France and Germany, the motors of European integration, and the United States automatically made it a serious one. The quarrel was essentially over how to conduct international politics and different political readings of and approaches to military intervention in the Arab world and its impact on the Maghreb, the Middle East and Muslim communities in the West. The conflict with the US made it clear for the first time that it was possible for the US not to care about the success or failure of European integration. Fears that European unity might not withstand this were exacerbated by the fact that the EU was then enlarging to include countries with a markedly Atlanticist position.

The crisis shook the confidence of European countries in their bilateral and collective relations with the US. It showed that Atlanticism could not be a solid basis for relations with the United States. The Iraq war revealed the bankruptcy of both uncritical alignment and open opposition, and counselled critical involvement. It was necessary for the EU to learn to say 'yes' or 'no' on a case-by-case basis. But for this to work, it would need strong European convergence so that the EU could act as a bloc. However, a decade later, a common European voice inside NATO has still to emerge.<sup>97</sup>

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96. *A Secure Europe in a Better World: The European Security Strategy*, approved by the European Council, 12 December 2003, drafted under the aegis of EU High Representative Javier Solana.

97. Álvaro de Vasconcelos (coordinator), 'What do Europeans want from NATO?', *EUISS Report* no. 8, November 2010.

### *What sort of international system?*

The war in Iraq marked the end of the first phase of the post-Cold War era, which had been characterised by the prevalence of multilateralism and regionalism as regulators of globalisation and, in the wake of the Balkan and Rwandan wars, a new emphasis on a responsibility to protect populations threatened by grave human rights violations. The hope of the 1990s was that a new model of global multilateral governance might limit sovereign boundaries and strengthen human rights and democracy. Since sovereignty was not sacrosanct for the EU, it was in a good position to promote this model, which as the Kosovo war had shown, was also backed by its citizenry.<sup>98</sup>

The question remained, however, about the circumstances justifying intervention, and the system best able to promote peace, with some backing unipolarity (Tony Blair) and others multipolarity (France). The war showed that unipolarity was too unstable and biased to be legitimate; but a multipolar balance-of-power system would also be unstable, be it to counter-balance the US (then) or other emerging powers in Asia and elsewhere (today). By its nature, the EU cannot aspire to be a superpower, and to assert itself internationally it must not define itself by its enemies or rivalries but by its internal values.

The EU can only operate effectively in an international system that is based on shared norms and rules supported by strong international organisations. This was a lesson re-learned the hard way during the Iraq war. The Union was unable to play any role in the resolution of that crisis, and has not been able to do much to secure peace in post-war Iraq. The EU can only exert influence meaningfully in an effective functional multilateral system, and this is only possible if states accept limits on their sovereignty and share power.<sup>99</sup>

## **The Greater Middle East**

The March 2004 Madrid bombing was part of a wave of terror that has victimised Christians and Muslims alike. It reignited the debate about how best to combat terrorism and also the significance of the Greater Middle East Initiative (GMEI) which the US hoped that the G8 and NATO would approve in June 2004. Agreement was difficult: ignoring the views of some European leaders, the US excluded the Israeli-Arab conflict from the initiative, and wanted to concentrate exclusively on the social and economic causes of extremism and terrorism in the Islamic world.

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98. It is worth remembering that the idea of humanitarian intervention was born in Europe: in 1991 François Mitterrand, then President of France, supported the idea of a military intervention in Iraq to protect the Kurds.

99. A similar point is made by Jean-Marie Guéhenno in 'The Impact of Globalisation on Strategy,' *Survival*, Winter 1998-99. For a discussion on multipolarity and multilateralism, see Hélio Jaguaribe & Álvaro de Vasconcelos (eds.), *The European Union, Mercosul and the New World Order* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

European concern with the region began long before September 11 and the Madrid bombing. When Europe launched the Barcelona Process in 1995 fears about regional instability, economic stagnation and social backwardness abounded. There were anxieties, too, about the increasing loss of legitimacy of Arab nationalist regimes. But if defending the *status quo* no longer seemed possible, the prospect of regime change in the region incited its own fears. Many suspected that Islamist radicals would be the big winners of any democratic opening. But as I then argued, the stubborn inertia of authoritarian regimes only encouraged radicalisation, so the need for a gradual process of liberalisation and democratisation was already clear.

The dilemma underscored the difficulty of crafting a democratisation strategy for so vast a region as the Greater Middle East, stretching as was said at the time from 'Marrakesh to Bangladesh,' a geographical region identified as home to the 'Islamic civilisation' that the US sought to democratise in the name of culturalist and essentialist goals. After all, any such strategy had, by definition, to ignore local specificities and regional realities, when what was truly necessary was a policy that reflected the specificities of different states and regions, and a clear awareness that democracy is, above all, a national process shaped primarily by domestic actors.

In light of the bombings and the GMEI, I made a series of suggestions about what European and US policy should be towards the Middle East. First, public opinion had to be won over. Arab civil societies and citizens and not just governments had to be involved. Second, there had to be support for democratic transition, and strong incentives for leaders to initiate reform processes. The historical parallel here is not, as is often suggested, with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), but with the Marshall Plan, which provided real incentives for integration and democratisation, not just lofty rhetoric and hortatory appeals.

It was also necessary to reinforce anti-terrorist cooperation. The fight against terrorism had to be differentiated from the long-term process of reform. The priority in fighting terrorism should be police and intelligence service cooperation, which produces much faster results and limits the capacity of extremists to mobilise. It was also crucial to be consistent. Human rights could not be defended if antiterrorism activities failed to respect the rule of law. Nor would democracy advance if authoritarian regimes were given support merely because they are secular and anti-Islamist (as Iraq was under Saddam Hussein). Equally, there had to be sustained engagement and resources, and the larger the project the more difficult to sustain. That was a key weakness of the GMEI.

It was necessary to recognise that the US had a crucial role to play, as it did with post-war European integration. The main US focus should have been finding a fair solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Iraq crisis, although economic support for political reform would also have been welcome. Institutional diversity could have been an asset. The EU and the US, for instance, could have established mechanisms to promote security cooperation in peacekeeping operations.

Finally, the millions of European citizens of North African origin should have a political, cultural and economic role to play in a European Middle East initiative. But this would mean accepting the diversity of the Union. Democracies can deal with political Islam, fight obscurantism, and respect basic rights and diversity. Indeed, the main lesson of these years was that the security of democracies requires that they support democratic opening elsewhere.

As I concluded then, none of this would work without serious reflection about political Islam. The key reality was then, and is now, that there can be no democratic transition if Islamic actors that reject violence and accept democratic ground rules are not allowed to participate fully in the political arena.

## 3. Why the European alternative failed

Were you sent in order to unite or to distinguish and divide?

Rumi, *Masnavi* 2: 1750-1760

### The 2005 Barcelona summit: a lost opportunity

Until the very last moment of the Barcelona summit, the outcome of intense behind-the-scenes negotiations to produce a meaningful final declaration was uncertain. There was no consensus over final wording, and the sense of failure was compounded by the absence of the Southern heads of state with the exception of the Turkish Prime Minister and the President of the Palestinian Authority.<sup>100</sup> A last-minute compromise yielded the unanimous adoption of a five-year work programme and a code of conduct to combat terrorism.

The programme referred to promoting legal migration and movement of people, ‘recognising that these constitute an opportunity for economic growth and a means of improving links between countries,’ facilitating integration, remittances and addressing the brain drain. It also adopted identifiable and achievable medium-term goals, including a programme to eradicate illiteracy by 2010 and the guarantee of equal access to education for boys and girls and access to primary education for everyone by 2015, as well as the development of a road map for depolluting the Mediterranean by 2020. But this fell short of the EU declaration supporting a ‘common vision.’ And no measures were adopted to resolve conflicts in the region. The summit thus failed to be the hoped-for turning point that would re-launch the Barcelona Process.

### *Political reforms at the centre of the debate*

Barcelona’s summit took place seven months after Syria’s departure from Lebanon and five months after the Lebanese elections, at the time when the Equity and Reconciliation Commission in Morocco was debating the human rights violations committed under Hassan the Second. Furthermore, since September 11, the Mediterranean had taken

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100. Some felt that this absence was a reaction to the policy of Tony Blair in Iraq (Britain co-presided the summit with Spain). Assad, under pressure from France after the murder of the former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, which had forced Damascus to end an occupation that had lasted since 1976, was not made welcome at Barcelona. But the summit was well attended on the EU side.

centre stage in global strategic terms, becoming the ‘the tinderbox of the world’ as Edgar Morin said,<sup>101</sup> with the crisis in Iraq and related tensions, and the ongoing Palestinian conflict.

The central issue at the summit was therefore how to encourage political reform and democracy, in contrast with the 1995 focus on economic stability and development. This focus was also a response to the Bush administration’s claims to be promoting democracy in the region. In contrast with the pre-emptive force of the US, it was proposed that it was possible to promote a soft power approach of ‘unity within diversity’ as exemplified by the EU’s enlargement policy.<sup>102</sup> This ambitious goal was rejected or failed to persuade most states.

Despite this failure, democracy became part of the Euro-Mediterranean agenda. The work programme included EU funds to support human rights, free elections and political reform. Since 1995, the European Commission has backed the Barcelona Process with the provision of 16 billion euro from the Community budget to support development, human rights and democracy in the region.<sup>103</sup> The programme also provided for a human rights dialogue. The approved anti-terrorist code of conduct protected basic rights. Less positively, no specific goals or benchmarks were established due to lack of support from some Arab states.

The EC took on board many of these recommendations, promising measures to extend ‘political pluralism and participation by citizens, particularly women and youth, through the active promotion of a fair and competitive political environment, including fair and free elections.’<sup>104</sup> But the governments of most Southern countries blatantly ignored this commitment. Egypt, Tunisia and Syria made no progress at all; indeed, elections in these countries and Algeria returned entrenched leaders to power with over ninety percent of the vote and no real opposition. Libya never signed up to the Barcelona Process or to the UfM.

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101. Edgar Morin, *Homeland Earth: A Manifesto for the New Millennium* (New York: Hampton Press, 1999).

102. This was the recommendation of the EuroMeSCo report, *Barcelona Plus: Towards a Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States*, April 2005.

103. Moreover, in order to boost economic development, the Commission established cooperation instruments with financial institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the European Investment Bank (EIB). The EIB loaned about 2 billion euro per year for this purpose. The Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership Facility (FEMIP) established in 2002 has become the main lending institution in the Mediterranean. More than 6 billion euro have been invested since October 2002, to assist over 1,600 small and medium businesses. For the period between 2007-2013, 10.7 billion euro were earmarked to promote economic development in the Mediterranean.

104. Tenth Anniversary Euro-Mediterranean summit, Barcelona, 27-28 November 2005, *Five Year Work Programme*, Doc 15074/05 (Presse 327), Brussels, 28 November 2005, at: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/05/st15/st15074.en05.pdf>.

### *From the bottom up: civil society engagement*

If top-down measures failed to meet expectations, bottom-up engagement surpassed them. One of the most significant aspects of the preparations for the summit – indeed of the Barcelona Process as a whole – was the substantial involvement and interest of civil society organisations. The Civil Forum, the non-governmental Euro-Med platform and the Anna Lindh Foundation, all established in 2005, exemplifies this. In the year before the summit, dozens of meetings were held and studies published, generating an intellectual *acquis* on peace and democracy.

On the negative side, some states attempted to control civil society participation, and the exercise was often criticised for being a top-down process. The official bodies of some countries robbed civil society network leaders of their rightful role in the elections for the Anna Lindh Foundation, for example. During debates about the need to affirm the autonomy of civil society and its role within the Barcelona Process at the summit, some Southern states managed to impose a restricted definition of civil society – a clear attempt to control citizens' participation given the highly restrictive laws that exist in some countries on the official recognition and constitution of such organisations.

### *A European shift from the status quo*

At the start of 2005, many European governments were reluctant to address democracy, and clung to the old policy of supporting the *status quo*, but by the second half of 2005 there was a new awareness that political reform was necessary. This change came in response to liberalisation in some countries, which opened the door for the participation of Islamist forces. Various states liked the idea of aiming for a Community of Democratic States as proposed by EuroMeSCo; but others felt it required too high a financial commitment, or otherwise judged it utopian or dangerous. Some also feared that an ambitious integration programme with the South would force them to open their borders to immigration. Ultimately, the decision was to pursue an area of peace, security and stability – a continuation of prior policy, although a new emphasis was placed on the rule of law and judicial independence.

The EC issued a communication criticising the prioritisation of stability over reform, stating that 'advancing political reform towards human rights and democracy is key to achieving sustainable security and stability.'<sup>105</sup> The European Parliament (EP) also issued

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105. EC Communication to the Council, *Tenth Anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: A Work Programme to Meet the Challenges of the Next Five Years* COM (2005) 139 final, at [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga\\_doc?smartapi!celexplus!prod!DocNumber&lg=en&type\\_doc=COMfinal&an\\_doc=2005&nu\\_doc=139](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexplus!prod!DocNumber&lg=en&type_doc=COMfinal&an_doc=2005&nu_doc=139).

a resolution underlining the need to focus on human rights' violations.<sup>106</sup> The Commission argued that it was necessary to take on board Islamist political forces, an unprecedented and highly significant fact. Turkish participation in the process was particularly relevant in this regard, as Turkey is a democratic Islamist model that commands great interest in the Southern Mediterranean.

### *A step forward: positive differentiation*

Barcelona has produced little political and security cooperation, essentially because of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and its Israel-Syria-Lebanon dimension in particular. But there has been some progress. The approval of the Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism signalled a greater willingness of previously resistant states such as Syria to talk about security issues. Meanwhile, the proposal to set different goals with varying speeds of implementation for different countries opened up new avenues to pursue political aims. It allowed those wishing to reform to forge closer ties with the EU without being vetoed by other states. Action Plans were agreed with Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia (along with the Ukraine and Moldova in Eastern Europe) in 2005, within the framework of the ENP.<sup>107</sup> Positive differentiation was a step in the right direction, and most countries of the region accepted the democratic clause included in the plans.

### *The deficits*

The main reason why so many Southern heads of state were not present is because they disagreed with the proposed democratic goals, and perhaps because the EU did not adopt a firmer position towards Israel. Israeli government representatives (this was during election time in Israel) would not accept the inclusion of UN resolutions requiring Israel to withdraw to the pre-1967 borders in the common declaration at the summit. Then the British government questioned the anti-terrorist code of conduct and the common declaration, causing much irritation in the Spanish camp. It was thanks to Mahmoud Abbas and other Arab participants that the summit did not fail; they accepted the code of conduct even though there was no mention of the right to resist in reference to the Palestinians.

The summit failed to address the EMP institutional deficit. It is symptomatic that the briefing presenting the conclusions of the summit was an EU-only affair (with Blair, Zapatero, Barroso and Solana in attendance). It also failed to provide any answers to address

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106. It is worth mentioning that the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly established in 2005 also engaged in dialogue on human rights and democracy.

107. EuroMeSCo recommended that these plans should have particular EMP goals and enable Southern states to access, if only partially, the single market, but this was not accepted.

the political and security problems of the Mediterranean over the short term. Similarly, its response to immigration was primarily to control flows, without due consideration for the contribution that migrants can make to economic and political development. This summit confirmed what had happened over the previous ten years: that political and security issues and South-South conflict stand in the way of Euro-Mediterranean integration.

### *The Union for the Mediterranean: 'The road not taken'*<sup>108</sup>

The diplomatic failure of the Barcelona summit, the opposition of the Arab leaders to the democratic aims of the 1995 Declaration, the absence of any progress with the Israeli-Palestinian peace process or on the Libyan-Syrian front, divided Europeans as to what road to take. Some actors, particularly the Commission, believed that in that difficult context it would be best to implement the most advanced features of the summit declaration with the organisation of a ministerial meeting on the rights of women or to support the organisation of civil society initiatives on human rights,<sup>109</sup> whilst simultaneously reinforcing bilateral relations with the Southern states willing to engage in political reforms. Other players felt that the way forward was to establish a new initiative with Southern leaders that would empower them further. Ultimately, this was the road that was chosen.

The French-led initiative for the UfM was inaugurated at the diplomatically successful Paris summit of July 2008, attended by all chiefs of state from the Southern Mediterranean countries. The UfM re-launched the debate on Euro-Mediterranean relations with the affirmation that the EMP was a failure: prior democratic objectives were frozen and the main goal was to forge an alliance against political Islam, combating terrorism and controlling immigration. Democracy projects were replaced with initiatives to depollute the Mediterranean Sea, promote the production and use of renewable energies, and business cooperation.<sup>110</sup>

But while the summit may have been a diplomatic success, it was also a political failure. The UfM was a lost opportunity to identify what needed to be done to reinforce the original initiative. The Barcelona Process deserved closer scrutiny before it was summarily condemned as a failure. The major problem of the UfM was that it was launched without

108. This is the title of a poem by Robert Frost published in 1916.

109. A good example of this was the organisation by EuroMeSCo of two key conferences (in Meknes, Morocco and Alexandria, Egypt), which brought together human rights activists from all Southern countries, including an important delegation from Tunisia. This initiative was possible due to the support of the EC, in particular of Laura Baeza, who at the time was in charge of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership at DG Relex.

110. The EUJIS Report published before the 2008 summit of the UfM was not heeded. It argued that political reform incentives and positive conditionality should not be abandoned in the name of *realpolitik* and the main socio-economic and political issues in the Mediterranean region should not be ignored. See Roberto Aliboni et al, 'Union for the Mediterranean: Building on the Barcelona *acquis*', *EUJIS Report* no. 1, May 2008.

a real analysis of the achievements and shortcomings of the Barcelona Process, especially in view of its ambitious agenda. Simply ‘reinventing the wheel’ proved to be costly.

What is the *acquis* of the Barcelona Process that the UfM could have built on? There is not only a significant *acquis*,<sup>111</sup> but as Erwan Lannon has pointed out, there is also a ‘potential *acquis*’<sup>112</sup> such as a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area, a Mediterranean Free Trade Area (MEFTA), and the Pact for Stability and Security to be achieved in 2010. The EMP was much more than an exercise in intergovernmental political cooperation. It was about using the Community approach, successfully employed for enlargement, in Euro-Mediterranean relations. The Community approach is inherent in the association agreements, which are based on European norms and standards and on EU export policy.

But any free trade agreement implies political goals: rule of law stability, a social contract to protect the well-being of citizens and to mitigate the inequalities that are inevitably generated. The overriding interest should be to ensure social justice and end poverty and unemployment. It was vital to preserve the democratic gains of the Barcelona Process and resist *realpolitik* temptations, cultural relativism or a single-minded focus on trade gains. The Barcelona Declaration stated the aim of establishing ‘a common area of peace and stability based on essential principles of international law,’ and signatories made a commitment to the rule of law and democracy and human rights, ‘including freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of thought, conscience and religion ... without discrimination on grounds of race, nationality, language, religion or sex.’<sup>113</sup>

The communitarian approach of the Barcelona Process facilitated civil society cooperation, the flow of EU norms to the Southern Mediterranean, the discussion of women’s rights at the 2006 ministerial meeting, and paved the way for the approval of the governance facility in 2005. A regional security organisation was also established which, although weak, has generated a sense of solidarity among its members. Most importantly, the EMP includes both Israelis and Palestinians, implying a shared commitment to peace. In a sense, the EMP projects the principles and norms that are the basis for peace in Europe – political reform, citizens’ participation and economic interdependence to guarantee collective security – into the neighbourhood.

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111. This includes: the Barcelona Declaration; the EUROMED Association Agreements, protocols and legal annexes; secondary legislation (the MEDA I and II regulations and the ENP Instrument); decisions by the Court of Luxembourg; various ministerial declarations; EUROMED institutions; the 2005 Commission five-year work programme, which expanded the Barcelona Process, introduced the Arab Reform Process, and created the governance facility.

112. Erwan Lannon developed this concept in his contribution to Roberto Aliboni at al., ‘Union for the Mediterranean: Building on the Barcelona *acquis*’, op. cit. in note 110.

113. Final Declaration and Work Programme of the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference of 27 and 28 November 1995 at [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/external\\_relations/relations\\_with\\_third\\_countries/mediterranean\\_partner\\_countries/r15001\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/external_relations/relations_with_third_countries/mediterranean_partner_countries/r15001_en.htm).

Barcelona was based on the idea that regional security depended on enhancing relations among the peoples of the region, enabling them to live side-by-side despite their differences. It promoted the notion of unity within diversity, of people-to-people as well as government-to-government dialogue. Despite its achievements, the Process fell far short of European expectations. Meanwhile, relations changed significantly because of the global transformations wrought by September 11, the US response to that attack, the enlargement of the Union, and the failure of the European constitution. The UfM should have built on the Barcelona Process, but it followed a different road: it did not take into account that *acquis*, it undermined the communitarian approach, and it put all its hopes in an inter-governmental approach on the shaky premise that by gaining the goodwill of authoritarian leaders a new beginning would be possible.

### *No Euro-Mediterranean community without peace*

As the Barcelona Process and the UfM amply demonstrated, it is not possible to create a Euro-Mediterranean multilateral political and security structure without the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 1995, all European and Southern Mediterranean states present pledged their support for ‘a just, comprehensive and lasting peace settlement in the Middle East.’<sup>114</sup> It would indeed have been foolish to expect the Euro-Mediterranean framework to contribute meaningfully to the bilateral and multilateral efforts to achieve peace. It was originally predicated on the assumption that a lasting peace among all its members was within sight, including all the main actors in the conflicts in the Middle East and EU Member States and hopefuls. The reverse assumption – that inter-state cooperation could make up for the absence of peace and thrive in spite of outright war – also proved groundless.

In 1995, the EU-led effort to develop and strengthen cooperation in the contentious Euro-Mediterranean area seemed a sensible way to facilitate dialogue on issues of common concern between Israel and its neighbours, precisely because progress with peace efforts would help to identify shared interests. But it is now plain that meaningful progress depends on taking real steps towards a two-state solution.

Despite the huge diplomatic effort involved, the UfM became deadlocked just as it was set to take off, derailed by the events in Gaza in December 2008-January 2009 and the failure of all peace initiatives since then. Four years after its was launched, none of the different initiatives proposed by the UfM have been implemented.

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114. Ibid.

## The Gaza war: one mistake too many

The wars in Lebanon and Gaza inflicted heavy punishment on precisely those peoples who held fully free and fair elections in the region, and eroded the legitimacy of Israel's democracy.

After its Cedar Revolution in 2005, Lebanon was held up as the best example of democratisation in the Arab world. The enthusiasm with which the international community welcomed those changes is all but forgotten. The same applies to the Palestinian elections. The signal being sent was that it was preferable for Israel, the only state in the region that abides by the democratic rule of law, to be surrounded by predictable authoritarian regimes than by democracies where Islamists might rise to power. As a result, Arab nationalist governments felt justified in resisting serious political reform and vindicated in repressing all domestic opposition, particularly swelling Islamist movements.

But repressing political Islam, or attempting to 'erase' Islamists militarily with total disregard for national political processes (not to mention human life), is not the answer. It will not persuade electorates to turn away from Islamist movements. The efforts of reformist governments in the region to integrate such movements into the public sphere have been dealt a severe blow.

Democracies have long known that extreme and indiscriminate punishment – which by definition affects friend and foe, combatant and civilian alike – is a grave violation of international law, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, pointed out in 2006.<sup>115</sup> They also know that such action fuels radicalism, leading to the kind of tragic consequences that are all too familiar. Hezbollah is, after all, a creature of Lebanon's resistance to Israel's 1982 invasion, now trying to reassert its influence at home and in the wider region by portraying itself as a champion of the Arab-Islamic cause in Palestine. Any reinforcement of its power will necessarily weaken Lebanon and the region's democratic forces.

The prolonged absence of the United States from truly active engagement in the Middle East peace process is partly to blame for the current situation. For almost six years, there was no significant US diplomatic initiative to resolve the Palestinian question or deal with Syria (Israel still occupies the Golan Heights). Moreover, just when it seemed that the Iraqi tragedy had made clear the limits of unilateralism and pre-emptive strategies, the Bush administration encouraged Israeli military action – this time against Lebanon, a country that has been attempting to consolidate democratic reform and reaffirm its sovereignty in relation to Syria.

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115. UN Second Special Session of Human Rights Council, 11 August 2006, at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=3087&LangID=E>.

Bush's most promising initiative, promoting democracy across the Middle East, was dealt a crippling blow by US intervention in Iraq and the ensuing civil war. The project was buried under the weight of America's inability to protect Lebanon's fragile democracy and Palestine's democratic experiment. The feeble response of the EU to warfare in Gaza and Lebanon was to oscillate between 'understanding' and condemning the disproportionate use of force by Israel (described as 'twenty eyes for one' by the Finnish foreign minister Erkki Tuomioja in a blog on the Finnish EU presidency website).<sup>116</sup> Europeans failed to speak with one voice yet again.

With the US project in ruins, Europe could have promoted an initiative backed by a credible military deterrent, involving the dispatch of forces from the EU, Turkey and the Arab countries under UN mandate to Lebanon and Gaza. It should have demanded an immediate ceasefire and an end to Syrian and Iranian meddling in Lebanon, providing the means for enforcement of the ceasefire and for reconstruction. It should have supported the end of the embargo on Palestine and the creation of a Palestinian state. A common European front could have persuaded the US to give Lebanon and Palestine time to consolidate their national democratic processes, isolating the radical elements of Hamas and convincing Hezbollah to dissolve its private army.

#### *Europe's possible contribution*

Helping to bring about a peaceful and security Palestinian state has been the goal of EU Middle East policy since 1980. But this goal has failed to materialise and the chances for success were slimmer in 2006 than ever before. Why have those most closely involved in attempting to make good on the promise of helping create a Palestinian state inherent in the Oslo-Madrid process – the European Union, the United States and the Arab states – accumulated nothing but an enormous amount of frustration and the sense that they have so little to show for years and years of commitment? And how much longer will they insist on making the same diplomatic efforts in vain? (One is reminded of Einstein's definition of insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results).

The lack of meaningful progress on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the ever-receding goal of establishing a two-state solution puts a serious dent in the credibility of the EU as an international player. It has an obvious negative security impact in the Middle East and is a source of acute tensions and radicalisation on the Southern rim of the Union. The EU's Mediterranean policy has remained hostage to the conflict. The 2003 European Security Strategy states categorically that the 'Arab-Israeli conflict is a strategic priority

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116. Reported by Dan Bilefsky, 'Envoy says EU is "Ready to Help" End Fighting', *New York Times*, 18 July 2006, at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/18/world/africa/18iht-diplo.2232357.html>.

for Europe.’ It has recognised that as long as it remains unresolved, there is ‘little chance of dealing with other problems in the Middle East. The European Union must remain engaged and ready to commit resources to the problem until it is solved.’<sup>117</sup>

There is indeed no single topic in the international agenda that has mobilised such sustained European engagement, so much shuttle diplomacy, and an active presence in the Middle East Quartet since it was set up in 2002. In 2009 the US President extolled the virtues of peaceful resistance, and its potential to prevail over violence. ‘Palestinians must abandon violence. Resistance through violence and killing is wrong and does not succeed. For centuries, black people in America suffered the lash of the whip as slaves and the humiliation of segregation. But it was not violence that won full and equal rights. It was a peaceful and determined insistence upon the ideals at the centre of America’s founding.’<sup>118</sup> The central role of civic movements will become more evident once the battle for statehood is over and the focus shifts to the protection of basic rights. The emergence of mixed Palestinian-Israeli civic movements and grassroots organisations that reject violence is a step in this direction.

However, neither the commitment to the Quartet nor the scrupulous support of US initiatives have borne fruit or prevented the collapse of President Obama’s efforts to instigate direct talks in 2010. But there can be no success if the key issues are systematically sidestepped and indefinitely postponed. As far as the EU is concerned, it should work to foster Palestinian reconciliation and engage with Hamas. The refusal to recognise the victory of Hamas in the 2006 elections despite their being declared as free and fair by EU observers eroded Europe’s credibility. The EU should place its norms and international law at the heart of a multilateral strategy for peace. It should only identify and denounce Israeli and Palestinian behaviour that runs counter to international law, and impose penalties when rules are broken. Ultimately, Palestine is a key test of the EU’s credibility as a supporter of democratic reform.

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117. Council of the European Union, *European Security Strategy, A Secure Europe in a Better World*, at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>.

118. The White House Office of the Press Secretary, *The President’s Speech in Cairo: A New Beginning*, op. cit. in note 24.

## 4. The Arab alternative

‘One of the extraordinary things about human events is that the unthinkable becomes thinkable.’

Salman Rushdie, ‘Rushdie in Hiding,’ *New York Times*, 4 November 1990.

### Obama’s Cairo speech: the start of a new era?

The election of President Obama generated huge hopes in the Arab world. From his first day in office, Obama stressed that one of his mandates was to change the perceptions of the US in the countries where the majority of the population is Muslim. He established two major policies in pursuit of this goal: to give priority to the Palestinian question and to make it clear that the US sees no inherent incompatibility between Islam and democracy. This change has had a significant impact on the region and has certainly played a role in the Arab democratic revolutions

President Obama inherited two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (which has spread to Pakistan), where hundreds of thousands of Muslims were being killed by American soldiers, as well as a war on terror in which thousands of Muslims have been tortured and hundreds sent to Guantánamo Bay prison as enemy non-combatants. The most striking image of this war was not the staged toppling of the statue of Saddam Hussein in the middle of an empty square, but that of the victims and their abusers at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo. The war transformed a shoe that was thrown at President Bush’s face into a symbol of the fight against oppression. Obama was well aware of all this, which is why he unequivocally and repeatedly stated – in Ankara, Cairo and Jakarta – that America was not and would never be at war with Islam.<sup>119</sup>

The end of the Bush era and the post-September 11 world was not marked by the killing of bin Laden, but by the election of Obama, a US president favouring multilateral governance, and even more so by the Arab uprisings that are spreading democracy and the rule of law throughout North Africa and the Middle East.

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119. Obama stated this in his Cairo speech initially, but repeated similar words in Ankara and Jakarta. For the Turkish speech, see The White House Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by President Obama to the Turkish Parliament*, 6 April 2009, at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-obama-turkish-parliament>; and for Indonesia, see: The White House Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by the President in Jakarta, University of Indonesia*, 10 November 2010, at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/11/10/remarks-president-university-indonesia-jakarta-indonesia>.

The US policy that followed September 11 was not inevitable. Other choices were possible, and there were voices, particularly from Europe, calling not only for solidarity with the US but also for a response based on the principles of justice, human rights and multilateralism. These voices warned against the declaration of a war on terror, instead advising the US to give priority to intelligence gathering and civilian security in its response to terrorism. As recognised in the US *National Security Strategy 2010*, ‘this is not a global war against a tactic – terrorism – or a religion – Islam.’<sup>120</sup>

### *A new attitude towards Palestine*

Aware of the centrality of the Palestinian question, it is said that one of Obama’s first acts as President was to make his first call to a foreign leader to the President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas. The President also announced an important conceptual change in US policy. He placed the Palestinian question at the top of the American and international agenda. After years of Middle East policy dominated by an overriding concern with a narrow concept of the security of Israel and the war on terror understood interchangeably, this constituted a major change. Indeed, it is a precondition for a path to peace in the Middle East.

President Obama is the first American President in office to recognise that the key issue in the Middle East conflict is the suffering of the Palestinian people. In his Cairo speech in June 2009, he observed that they ‘have endured the pain of dislocation’ and ‘the daily humiliations ... that come with occupation,’ a situation which he described as ‘intolerable.’ He called on Palestinians and Israelis alike to back ‘the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity and a state of their own.’

To achieve this, he called on Palestinian political actors to abandon violence. As he put it, the Palestinian resistance movement had to learn from the American civil rights movement, the South African fight against apartheid, and democratic movements in Europe that violence is a ‘dead end.’ For Hamas, this would mean recognising that it must unify Palestinians if it wants to play a role in fulfilling their aspirations. He also called on Israel to stop settlement expansion, and put an end to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and to the humiliation of the Palestinians. Like the Palestinians, Israelis have to accept the relevant international agreements and Palestinian aspirations to a viable state. Finally, Obama appealed to the Arab states to build on the Arab Peace Initiative and act coherently and decisively to help the Palestinian people develop the institutions that can sustain their future state.

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120. The White House Office of the Press Secretary, *National Security Strategy 2010*, p. 20, at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf).

### *A European policy shift*

The European Union and its Member States should applaud the goals and strategy for action set out by Obama; they have been at the heart of the European approach for years. But the EU also needs to review some of its recent policy positions. First and foremost it must recognise Hamas as a legitimate political force. To play its part in the effort to support Palestinian aspirations, it must return to the belief that the road to peace is linked to the democratic process in Palestine. It must admit it made a mistake when it refused to accept the results of the 2006 elections. By doing so, Europe could set an example and thereby influence and facilitate the new US course of action.

One of the most far-reaching political dimensions of his speech was to affirm that democracy and human rights are the most effective way to promote stability and security. This turns on its head a Middle East policy that has traditionally been based on the authoritarian *status quo* and fear of Islamist forces.

As far as Palestine is concerned, the logical consequence of this statement is to accept that the reconciliation of Palestinian political forces must come from the organisation of free and fair elections (a difficult exercise under occupation), the results of which must be accepted by all international actors. This new policy direction will not succeed if it is left at the mercy of a creeping negotiation process. Experience shows that it is better to adopt a 'big bang' approach such as that used to attain the Balkans Dayton Agreements. As a matter of priority, the EU and Arab states should persuade the US that this is the right path.

The election of Obama and his administration's emphasis on peace seemed to herald a new opportunity for real progress. But at the time of writing there are still no results and hopes have vanished that Obama will be able to put an end to the Israeli-Arab conflict and resolve the Palestinian question.

### *A new era of democracy*

Obama's views about the Palestinian question reflect his general conviction that America's strength is its democratic diversity. He praised the strengths of the 'patchwork heritage' of America, saying that the US is 'shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth ... as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace.'<sup>121</sup> He advocated the responsibility to protect Libya on the grounds that 'some-

121. The White House Office of the Press Secretary, *President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address*, 20 January 2009, at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address/>.

times, the course of history poses challenges that threaten our common humanity and common security.’<sup>122</sup>

This belief in a common humanity is the liberal credo that was evoked by Roosevelt in his inaugural speech at the founding ceremony of the United Nations. It is the basis for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As Obama said in Cairo in front of Mubarak, social activists and members of the Muslim Brotherhood alike, ‘all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and doesn’t steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose.’ He added that these are not just American ideas but human rights that he would support everywhere, and that ‘governments that protect these rights are ultimately more stable, successful and secure. Suppressing ideas never succeeds in making them go away.’ He was heartily applauded and his clarity and transparency were much appreciated.<sup>123</sup>

Obama praised Indonesia as an example of how Islam and democracy are compatible and of unity in diversity. He noted that the force of example was more powerful than the example of force.<sup>124</sup> US policy has shifted from imposing its will by force to supporting democratic forces and civil society. This policy has been a success. Many of Obama’s promises have failed to materialise – Guantánamo remains open and his attempts to solve the Palestinian question have yet to succeed – but his ‘yes we can’ became a slogan of the Tunisian revolution and the Arab democratic wave may be considered the greatest success of ‘the Obama moment.’<sup>125</sup>

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122. The White House Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya*, 28 March 2011, at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya>.

123. For a report about the enthusiasm with which the US President was received, see the report by Amr Elshobaki, an Egyptian analyst who attended the speech. ‘Obama à l’université du Caire: une intervention historique,’ *ISS Opinion*, June 2009, at: [http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Obama\\_Universite\\_du\\_Caire.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Obama_Universite_du_Caire.pdf).

124. *Remarks by the President in Jakarta*, op. cit. in note 119.

125. Álvaro de Vasconcelos & Marcin Zaborowski (eds.), *The Obama Moment: European and American Perspectives* (Paris: EUISS, 2009).

## The Arab democratic wave: monitoring the revolutions

‘Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people.’

Thucydides, Pericles’ Funeral Oration, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book II, Chapter VI

### *Tunisia: the start of a new wave of democracy*

What started in Tunisia on 17 December 2010 as an explosion of anger and frustration over a dramatic rise in unemployment and a rapidly deteriorating economic situation – driving thousands onto the streets to protest against corruption and demand work and a decent wage, in defiance of the regime and fierce police brutality – developed into a widespread call for political rights, and ultimately forced Ben Ali to step down. The uprising revealed the existence of an underground civil society of sorts, spearheaded by trade unions, human rights and lawyers’ associations. It also signalled the beginning of the end of the ‘Arab exception’ and the start of a new era of democracy that challenged the *status quo* in North Africa and beyond.

Ben Ali’s regime clung to power for over two decades thanks to a combination of moderate economic success and the stability argument, whereby the regime portrayed itself as the sole guarantor of security and a peaceful society, untainted by the horrors of neighbouring Algeria in the 1990s. This ‘peace’ was achieved through fierce repression of the meekest signs of opposition. Tunisia was conspicuous among its Maghreb neighbours for the total absence of even a vague semblance of press freedom.

But suddenly, the inherent fragility of Tunisia’s much praised ‘economic miracle’ became apparent as the country was hit by the aftershocks of the eurozone crisis. The government was powerless to shore up the economy against the repercussions of the slump in European demand. This quickly depressed the more vulnerable south-east, where the fuse was lit. Growth fell by virtually one third and the cost of basic commodities rose (according to official figures, in 2010 growth and inflation were at 3.4 and 4.5 percent respectively). According to Tunisian experts, the 4.5 percent growth rate of recent years was 2.5 percent below the rate necessary to create enough jobs for the 85,000 new entrants to the job market every year. And there was corruption on an unimaginable scale, part of the harsh reality underlying the ‘economic miracle.’

At first, the regime resorted to violent repression to try to stop the protest. It made a fatal miscalculation. The magnitude of the social crisis had dealt a lethal blow to the regime’s legitimacy. Desperation freed Tunisians from the fear that had paralysed them for over

two decades. *Al Jazeera* and internet coverage made up for the absence of a Tunisian free press. Tunisian citizens showed how illusory is the idea that economic growth can be a substitute for political reform. The explosive social situation is not specific to Tunisia but a feature of most if not all Southern Mediterranean states. In Algeria, for instance, unemployment among university graduates was 21.4 percent and real growth 2.2 percent in 2010, well below the level required to meet new arrivals to the labour market.

The chances for success looked good. There was an educated youth craving for change; there were civil society organisations with strong links to European counterparts; there were trade unions who under the pressure of their grassroots members finally renounced their allegiance to the regime; and there was an army that refused to kill unarmed civilians and was instrumental in persuading Ben Ali to leave the country. The army guaranteed the initial stages of the transitional period offering protection to civilians from militiamen on the rampage.

Events in Tunisia have presented Europe with a unique opportunity to uphold democratic values and regain the credibility it has lost in Mediterranean societies. The democratisation of Tunisia is of vital importance. Demands for social justice in Algeria, thus far stifled by military repression, have gained impetus; reform and liberalisation in Morocco has accelerated. What is more, it can help to dispel the fears of Islamist democracy within the European political establishment. Democratic transition and democratisation could be made the top priority. A Euro-Mediterranean community of democratic states as proposed by EuroMeSCo can no longer be considered a dangerous utopia by Europe's politicians; it is a credible goal.

### *After Tunisia, Egypt*

The thousands of demonstrators who gathered in Tahrir Square from 25 January 2011 onwards finally ousted the thirty-year-old regime of Hosni Mubarak and the ruling National Democratic Party (*Al-Hizb al-Wataniy ad-Dimuqratiy*, hereafter NDP). The uprising was an extraordinary event that was greeted with enthusiasm and hope all over the world. But power is not yet in the hands of the people. In Thucydides's rendering of Pericles's words, 'our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people.'<sup>126</sup> The Higher Military Council has taken over, and only when power is transferred to an elected civilian establishment will the transition truly take off. If popular demands for democracy are not met, this will lead to deeper crisis and pave the way for extreme alternatives to take hold.

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126. Thucydides, Pericles' Funeral Oration, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book II, Chapter VI.

Initially, the US and Europe wanted a bottom-down process rather than upheaval leading to sudden collapse, but carried by the force of events, they stepped up pressure on Egypt's powers that be to make good on promises of a better democracy. The US, Egypt's main Western ally, stopped short of siding with the rebellious secular 'street,' but announced that the \$1.5 billion largely military aid to Egypt was under review and would be withheld in the event of unacceptable levels of repression.

### *Not yet Portugal*

On the day that Mubarak fell from power on 21 November 2011, I spoke on the telephone with Amr Elshobaki who was in Tahrir Square. He said that Egypt was following the Portuguese model.<sup>127</sup> By this he meant that the military was taking power to oust a dictator. My response was that Egypt was 'not yet' following the Portuguese model, because the military has yet to hand over power to elected civilian authorities as happened in Portugal.

In part because of the crucial role of the military, there is now keen interest in Egypt in the transitional experience of Portugal where the military took power in 1974 after the overthrow of the long-standing Salazar dictatorship. While each country has its own trajectory, it is still useful to know how other countries have moved from dictatorship to democracy, and how they overcame the difficulties inherent in a process that is usually marked by setbacks and fraught with crises.

In Portugal, the officers that overthrew the dictatorial regime were from the middle ranks of the military, who played an active role in the revolutionary process, and the power structures they set in place reflected a mix of many different political tendencies. By contrast, in Egypt it was the top brass that forced Mubarak to step aside and who assumed the reins of power. However, as in Egypt, a junta took power in Portugal to oversee the transition to civilian rule. It is too early to say whether the Egyptian military will actually transfer power to the people.

The transition from a dictatorial regime to democracy only came about in Portugal because of massive popular mobilisation, which led to the establishment of a transitional government of national unity and free elections for a constituent assembly in April 1975. The road to full civilian control of political life was long and difficult, and the pro-democratic parties played a crucial role here. During the dictatorship, the only functioning opposition force was the outlawed Communist Party, established in 1921. This is why a fearful Nixon administration was quick to brand post-authoritarian Portugal a lost cause.

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127. Amr Elshobaki is an Egyptian opposition activist, a political scientist and was elected to the Egyptian parliament.

Three other parties came to play a key role in the transition to a fully-fledged democracy. First, the Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista*, PS) which was founded in exile barely a year before the *coup*. It emerged victorious from the first free elections in 1975, under the leadership of Mário Soares, who became the first post-transition civilian president in 1986. Then there was the liberal Popular Democratic Party (*Partido Popular Democrático*, PPD) and the Christian Democrats (*Centro Democrático e Social*, CDS). Both of these emerged in the first months after the *coup*, from opposition groups that the regime had tolerated. These democratic parties staged huge demonstrations, mobilised thousands of people, and kept the transition on track, opposing the undemocratic thrust of the Communist Party, which was supported by the Soviet Union and part of the military.

At that time, international cooperation, particularly from the party internationals and German party foundations, focused on supporting pro-democracy political parties. The fact that both Mubarak's NDP and Ben Ali's Constitutional Democratic Rally (*Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique*, RCD) were members of the Socialist International for years speaks volumes about the need for a radical re-examination of Europe's approach to the Mediterranean.

Europeans and Americans must accept that the future of Egypt will be decided by the Egyptian people and prepare to accept their electoral verdict. European integration allowed the newly reinstated Portuguese democracy to emerge from isolation and find a new destiny in Europe. In the case of Egypt, the EU must reach out not only to officers but all political forces, including the Muslim Brotherhood. Nobody can predict, and even less dictate, how the political landscape will evolve. The future of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well of all political parties, will depend on their ability to respond to the demands of the population. In Portugal, the Communist Party lost most of its influence, electoral strength and prestige because it opposed broad democratic aspirations and European integration. Islamist forces in Egypt must adapt to social demands and follow a democratic path as Turkey's AKP and Morocco's PJD have done. As for Europe, it must be as supportive of democracy in the neighbouring South as it was within Europe itself. The Egyptian people will remember who stood by them in solidarity and who did not.

### *Libya*

With the end of the forty-two year long dictatorship in Libya when rebel forces took full control of Tripoli on 23 August 2011, it is important to get it right in the post-Gaddafi era as the process moves from military confrontation to democratic transition. A democratic Libya is perceived as an important new driving force in the Arab democratic wave,

building on the momentum of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, and making it increasingly more difficult for authoritarian leaders in North Africa and the Middle East to survive, as the Syrian revolt shows.

The international community and Europe played an important role in hastening the end of Gaddafi's regime. NATO military action was essential to implement UNSC Resolution 1973 on the responsibility to protect. However, liberation was essentially the result of the determined struggle of Libyan opposition forces. One reason for Obama's cautious approach to military engagement was doubtless to ensure that the conflict would not be seen as another foreign military intervention in an Arab state. However the urgent need to protect the people of Benghazi from Gaddafi's tanks overrode such concerns and allowed the UN Security Council resolution to legitimate NATO's military intervention under French and British leadership with the backing of the US.

The way in which the conflict developed created the impression of a divided opposition. The EU needed then and now to avoid becoming associated with one group over another, in particular with those in Cyrenaica and Benghazi. No external force should pick and choose who the good guys and the bad guys are. Gaddafi was defeated not only by opposition forces from Cyrenaica, with its centre in Benghazi, but also by opposition fighters from Tripolitania – a case in point being the heroic defence of Misrata, Tripolitania's second city, as well as the push on Tripoli by opposition fighters from the Jabel Nafusa mountains to the South-West of Tripoli. The Islamists were an important part of the military struggle against Gaddafi and will be important actors in Libya's transition and in its democratic future.

### *The responsibility to protect*

As Rwanda and other genocides have proved, after mass murder has begun it is usually too late to act. The massacre of civilians in Libya led to the establishment of a no-fly zone to prevent mass atrocities, on the basis of the responsibility to protect. The no-fly zone prevented the need for full military intervention, which might have allowed the dictatorship to make the case that national democratic forces in Libya were the creation of foreign powers. It was also very positive that the no-fly zone was not the result of an *ad hoc* alliance of Western powers, as was the case with the 1991 no-fly zone to protect Shiites and Kurds from Saddam's bombing raids. However the evolution of the NATO campaign – the bombing and siege of Gaddafi's home town of Sirte and the subsequent killing of Gaddafi – persuaded some key actors that the mission had evolved from the responsibility to protect to regime change.

Despite the shift in perspective, not only has Libya added to the democratic impetus in the Arab world; it has played a key role in re-activating international commitment to the protection of civilians from mass atrocities, a commitment that had become badly discredited as a result of the intervention in Iraq. Libya produced the first UN Security Council resolution based on the responsibility to protect.<sup>128</sup>

### *Syria*

After the largely peaceful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, a new and much more perilous phase in the process of democratic transition is unfolding in the Arab world. Now that Gaddafi is gone, it is essential to step up pressure on Syria, which has been under the dictatorship of the Baath party since 1963 and where anti-regime demonstrations began on 15 March 2011.

It was as urgent for the international community to issue a firm condemnation of the Assad regime as it was in the case of Ben Ali and Mubarak. The objective was clear: to prevent the regime from ordering the killing of more demonstrators and to show international solidarity with the people of Syria. International pressure could also help to deepen divisions within the regime; this was my reasoning in the first days of the brutal repression.

It was hard to read Bashar al-Assad in the first months of the uprising. He announced the end of the state of emergency that has existed in Syria for nearly fifty years but state security forces have continued to fire on demonstrators. This could have been a sign of divisions within the regime on how to deal with the popular uprising. It must be remembered that when al-Assad came to power in 2000 after the death of his father Hafez al-Assad he released hundreds of political prisoners but was subsequently forced to back-track from pursuing a reformist agenda by the old guard. Today things are unfortunately much clearer: thousands of people have been killed (more than 5,000 according to Human Rights Watch). The brutal repression of peaceful demonstrators, particularly in Homs, and the rejection of all the Arab League proposals to solve the crisis show that the regime has decided to quash all aspirations for freedom and democracy.

Members of the regime may have thought that while the international community focused on Libya, Syria had a window of opportunity to repress opposition forces, as Hafez

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128. UNSC Resolution 1970 on Libya, unanimously adopted on 26 February 2011, explicitly referred to the R2P, a principle unanimously adopted by the General Assembly in 2005. The UNSC recognised this by referring Libya to the ICC in February of that year, invoking 'possible crimes against humanity.' Human Rights Watch, 'UN Security Council Press for Cooperation with the ICC,' 1 November 2011, at: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/11/01/un-security-council-press-cooperation-icc>.

al-Assad, the founder of the dynasty, did in 1982, when tens of thousands were killed during the popular uprising led by the Muslim Brotherhood. The international community must show that this is not the case.

However, the democratic wave extends beyond Syria to the entire Arab region. For the European Union, the Arab democratic wave must be seen in context, from Morocco to Yemen. Each political transition is a particular case and democracy is always a national endeavour, but the EU should respond effectively to changing circumstances.

At a recent informal event held in Cairo a young Egyptian politician from the liberal wing of the Muslim Brotherhood spoke of ‘democratic patriotism’, a view echoed by a number of secular Egyptian intellectuals who participated in what was a lively debate about the future of the Arab world.<sup>129</sup> The concept of democratic patriotism is emerging as a positive alternative to the historic failures of both Arab nationalism and political Islam. The democratic revolutions promise a brighter future to the citizens of the Arab nations. But the decisions of outside powers can either facilitate or put more obstacles in the way of the democratisation of the Arab world.

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129. This was one of a series of meetings organised in the framework of the ESPAS project, with focus groups of young leaders, and some of its findings will be published in the Report *Global Trends 2030 – Citizens in an interconnected and polycentric world*.



## 5. Europe and the Arab revolutions: a year on

'Purchasing stability at the cost of freedom, that era is over'.

Hoda Youssef on her Facebook page, 10 February 2011

### The difficult quest for democratic legitimacy

The Arab democratic wave is the result of a revolutionary movement. It did not happen because authoritarian regimes decided to engage in reform to bolster declining levels of legitimacy or due to international pressure; even less did it result from the invasion of Iraq. On the contrary: Arab dictators clung to power and found solace in the support they received from a number of Western governments, in particular as good allies in President Bush's ill-conceived war on terror.

The Iraq invasion may have weakened the regimes due to their links with the Bush administration; but they fell as a result of peaceful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, and an armed one in Libya. In Syria the revolutionary movement is essentially peaceful, although some soldiers are abandoning the regime and opting to take up arms in response to the brutal repression of demonstrators by the military and the incapacity of the international community to protect Syrian civilians.

One year after the fall of Ben Ali it is now possible to assess the situation in the Arab world and the options open to the EU and other international actors to support the democratic wave there. The achievements of this first year are as considerable as the difficulties that lie ahead.

There are three developments or dispensations in place at present - transitions to democracy, liberal monarchies and dictatorships. Each has evolved quite differently from country to country but everywhere there is a tension between different and even conflicting legitimacies. The option that has clearly lost all its legitimacy is Arab nationalism, born with the struggle for independence from the colonial powers. The new dispensation will be marked by what many call a position of democratic patriotism.

It will take a long time to consolidate systems of rule in which democratic legitimacy is the central defining factor of political life; indeed, it could take over a decade and the

process will be marked by setbacks and (as is already the case) cost lives. But there has been a crucial change: many people not only want to live under a democratic regime but are even prepared to die fighting for one. International actors will be judged by the citizens of the Southern Mediterranean according to whether they support those democratic aspirations.

## *Egypt and Tunisia*

### **The politics of transition and the military**

The transitions to democracy in Tunisia and Egypt are moving forward and have yet to suffer major setbacks. In Tunisia, the Constitutional Assembly began work after free and fair elections. The political problems in Tunisia are quite different from those in Egypt, although the economic and social issues are similar. Tunisia appears to be on track to become the first modern consolidated Arab democracy. The army played an important role in the peaceful demise of the dictatorship and accepted full civilian control over the process of transition. By contrast, the Egyptian army took power and while it has stated its intention to hand over to a democratically elected government, it is not clear what role they will want to play after the Constitutional Assembly is in place. It seems that the Egyptian army are tempted by the pre-AKP Turkish model, in which the army exercised tutelage over the political process and protected their special privileges. It remains to be seen whether the army will accept a fully civilian system, as the armies ultimately did in transitional processes in Brazil, Chile, Portugal and Spain, among others. There are fears that the Egyptian army may ransom the democratic revolution, given military repression of peaceful demonstrators since the October 2011 demonstration against the army's hold on power.

### **Revolutionary and democratic legitimacy: the danger of bipolarisation**

A key determining factor in both Egypt and Tunisia is the relationship between the Islamic parties and the secular liberal movement that played a critical role in the revolution. The Islamic parties are rightly perceived as having been the only real alternative to secular authoritarian regimes for years. Consequently, they have been the natural winners of the first free elections and it is likely that this trend will continue. This was the case in Tunisia and during the first round of the complicated electoral process in Egypt, although *Ennahda* (RP) and the Muslim Brotherhood are regarded with suspicion by secular liberal activists.

Polarisation is already underway in Egypt where it appears to pose the greatest threat to democratisation. There is currently a confrontation between two different and conflict-

ing legitimacies: one revolutionary and the other electoral. On the one hand, for many of those who have demonstrated at Tahrir Square for months the only acceptable result of the revolution is a secular regime. They feel they have been entrusted with that task by the people, and they believe they have revolutionary legitimacy on their side, anointed by the blood of the martyrs. On the other hand, for the Islamic political parties what matters is electoral legitimacy. The army derives its legitimacy from the role it played in bringing down the Mubarak regime and for a while it was perceived – albeit ambiguously – as being close to the revolutionary option. But it now risks losing any legitimacy, as its conflict with the Tahrir revolutionary movement deepens.<sup>130</sup>

Paradoxically, it is the Islamists, long perceived as revolutionary, who favour the path of electoral democratic legitimacy. One cannot help but be struck by the irony that it is the Islamist bogeyman that is opting for the policy that best fulfils the criteria of Western democracy promotion programmes, which say much about free and fair elections and have nothing favourable to say about revolutionary action. The victory of RP in Tunisia and of the Freedom and Justice Party (*Hizb al-hurriya wa al-'Adala*, FJP) created by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the first free elections has confirmed the rightness of this choice.

The tension between these different sources of legitimacy was already clear in the run-up to the referendum on constitutional reform in March 2012 to allow for the election of a Constitutional Assembly with constituent powers. The liberals and large sectors of the youth movement called for a no vote, and the Muslim Brotherhood supported the yes vote. The revolutionaries have been unable to accept the victory of the yes vote, and are trying to prevent the electoral victory of the FJP. They have even gone so far as to express the hope that the military will overturn the result of the first referendum.

In Tunisia, the more radical liberals tend to perceive the electoral victory of RP as illegitimate, and are challenging the party's democratic credentials. The most radical among them, which adhere to a French Jacobin-inspired concept of *laïcité* (secularism), believe that the Islamic tenets of RP are incompatible with the party's democratic discourse and electoral programme. They echo a similar debate in France, where Jean Daniel has written that what has been happening in Tunisia can be described as 'a counterrevolution.'<sup>131</sup>

Having visited Tunisia and after an in-depth conversation with the leader of the RP, Rached Ghannouchi, I am fully persuaded that Tunisia is on its way to becoming the

130. Moaaz Elzoughby, 'Egypt: Will Parliamentary Elections Unleash a Conflict of Legitimacies?', ARI, 21 December 2011, at: <http://www.arab-reform.net/spip.php?article5103>.

131. See Jean Daniel, 'Tunisie, Nous nous sommes trompés...', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 2 November 2011, at: <http://temp-sreel.nouvelobs.com/jean-daniel/20111102.OBS3670/tunisie-nous-nous-sommes-trompes.html>.

first modern Arab democracy, and that this is the political project of the leadership of this Islamist party. The best way to define the RP is not as a moderate Islamic party but as a democratic Islamic party – a party that, as Ghannouchi affirmed during our talk, seeks to prove that Islam and democracy are compatible. Their ambition is to make Tunisia a model for the entire Arab world and to influence the evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Libyan Islamic movement. Although Ennahda members consider the governmental experience of the Turkish AKP to be their model, they are proud that the writings of Ghannouchi were influential in the development of the AKP and the Islamist movement in Turkey. The reaction of French intellectuals such as Jean Daniel, however, is feeding radicalism and thus contributing to a dangerous bipolarisation between Islamists and radical secular groups that question whether RP has the legitimacy to govern Tunisia and feel that the party poses a threat to the democratic process. It is important to mention that the RP has willingly formed a governing coalition with two secular parties.

The consensus between liberals and Islamists is essential for the success of the democratic transition and for drafting a democratic constitution, one that reflects the will of the whole ‘people’ and not just the views of a small majority. That is what other experiences of democratic transitions suggest. In Tunisia this will happen because new constitutional articles require a two-thirds vote in the legislature and no party is in a position to vote alone. Thus the major parties will be forced to forge a consensus.

For Amr Elshobaki,<sup>132</sup> in the short run the main challenge now for the democratic transition is social unrest and sectarian violence. This could lead to a situation that might, in the eyes of the population, legitimise the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces’ grip on power, bringing Egypt to a situation close to that of Turkey before the AKP came to government. This danger seems to be recognised by almost all parliamentary actors, including the Salafist Al-Nour party, who have instructed their supporters to protect the Christian Copts from sectarian violence carried out by radical extra-parliamentarian Salafist elements. In the long run, for Elshobaki, the major challenge to Egyptian democracy would arise if the almost 5-million strong state bureaucracy fell under the control of political parties, a temptation that ideas about political quotas in state institutions seem to show is present. The new constitution should, however, prevent such a state of affairs from coming about.

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132. Amr Elshobaki, conversation with the author, February 2012.

## *Jordan and Morocco*

### **The liberal monarchies: can reform alone save these regimes?**

The monarchies of Jordan and Morocco have determined the pace of reform with the aim of protecting the regimes from crumbling under pressure from revolutionary movements. The legitimacy of these monarchies is recognised by many in the opposition, which is a crucial factor explaining the specificity of the political processes in the two kingdoms. Constitutional reform in Morocco has not been followed by similar changes in Jordan, although the King has promised to deliver.

Mohammed VI, the King of Morocco, paid close attention to the revolutionary uprisings in the Arab countries and its impact at home, which led to the establishment of the 20 February Movement and to demonstrations that spread from fifty to more than one hundred Moroccan cities between February and May of 2011. The movement called for a parliamentary monarchy along the lines of the Spanish model, in which the King would remain in charge of religious affairs and the military.

A constitutional referendum was held on 1 July 2011 on a text drafted by a commission of sages, which reinforced the power of the parliament and made it obligatory for the prime minister to be chosen from the party winning the elections. But this is far from being a parliamentary monarchy: the King maintains control of internal security, retains major influence over the judiciary, and chairs the Council of Ministers when strategic matters are discussed. Indeed, the constitution establishes a semi-presidential system of sorts, whereby presidents have the legitimacy of the direct popular vote. This reform does not meet the demands of the 20 February movement, but was supported by most political groups, with the notable exception of the Islamist Justice and Welfare movement, which is not officially recognised but is a real opposition force.

The first result of the reforms was felt with the first free elections in November 2011, which culminated in the victory to the PJD. The PJD won 107 seats in the National Assembly and *Istiqlal*, the party that came second, gained only 60 seats. The remainder of the Assembly is fragmented into a large number of parties. The PJD, which is inspired by the Turkish AKP, got 27.1 percent of the vote in the first almost free election. It had called for a 'yes' vote in the referendum even though this position does not commend consensus among its members. The 20 February and the Justice and Welfare movements both called for a boycott of the elections, although the latter abandoned the 20 February group after the elections, another example of a split between Islamists and a radical secular movement.

According to Moroccan analyst Abdallah Saaf,<sup>133</sup> the success of the reformist approach and the new constitution or what he calls the ‘road map’ depends on the ability of the monarchy to respond to social and economic demands and to engage all political forces and civil society in the reform process. In order to do this, the monarchy must avoid adopting a security approach to the 20 February Movement, and it must fully respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of protesters and activists.

In Jordan, the King has promised free and fair elections in a bid to save the regime through a top-down approach to reform. The monarch defines the pace and extent of reform to allow the government to be chosen from the parliamentary majority after elections. Not only is there a contradiction between announcing democratic reforms and attempting to control the whole process, but this clearly goes against the dominant trend of the Arab democratic revolutions, which are based on the principle that ‘governance happens with the consent of the governed, and ultimate authority rests with the will of the people – expressed through the legitimate constitutional institutions of the rule of law.’<sup>134</sup>

The King has declared that he cannot allow free elections arguing, along traditional Arab nationalist lines, that this will lead to the victory of the Muslim Brotherhood and its political party, the Islamic Action Front (*Jabhat al-’Amal al-Islami*, hereafter IAF). The legitimacy of the King is based on his personal popularity and the legacy of his father King Hussein, who preserved a peaceful and relatively liberal state in a region riddled with conflict. But the challenge to the King’s legitimacy today is enormous and it is far from certain whether he will be able to maintain the slow pace of reform. As in Morocco, the popular movement is not dead and may erupt again if democratic aspirations are not met soon. The King of Morocco seems to have paid more heed than his Jordanian counterpart to the famous maxim in Giuseppe di Lampedusa’s *The Leopard*: as the aristocratic Tancredi who is engaged in the liberal revolution says to his uncle, the Prince of Salina, ‘If we want things to stay as they are things will have to change.’ If not, he warns, ‘They will foist a republic on us.’<sup>135</sup>

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133. Abdallah Saaf, ‘Une nouvelle constitution au Maroc: sortie de monarchie exécutive,’ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6 July 2011.

134. Rami G. Khouri, ‘Real Change or Illusion?’, *The Daily Star*, 18 June 2011.

135. Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), p. 40.

## *Libya and Syria*

### **The dictators that kill their own people**

The dictators that fight for the survival of their regimes by killing their own people have either fallen or are doomed. In Libya and Syria, the two most brutal regimes of the Southern Mediterranean, the regimes reacted as they have always done, violently repressing peaceful demonstrators.

Mass murder was avoided in Libya with the support of the international community but the transition from an international coalition to a NATO-led operation has not facilitated the international consensus that is a necessary prerequisite for the involvement of non-Western states. It may now be harder to forge a consensus for the international community to protect civilians in Syria. But the end of Gaddafi does not mean that a democracy will be consolidated in Libya. The opposition forces had to take up arms, so there are now various political-military groups and increased tension. It will be necessary to disarm these groups and the opposition forces of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. It is up to the Libyans to decide what assistance and support they need. The European Union must be prepared for all eventualities, be it a civilian mission, technical assistance to reconstruct the oil industry, or cooperation to develop education and the health sector. Europe must also provide technical support and training to the Libyan security forces, police and military. It should coordinate such efforts with Turkey and the Arab League.

The extraordinarily courageous peaceful demonstrators in Syria have been targeted by criminal violence. The opposition has gained strength over the past year and has organised itself into the National Council of Syria (NCS), which brings together all significant actors opposed to the Assad regime, including the Muslim Brotherhood. Thus far, the NCS has been recognised by Tunis and Libya. The regime has reacted to the expression of the democratic aspirations of its people in the most brutal fashion. Until now, like part of the Libyan armed forces, the Syrian military have chosen to fire on their own citizens to prevent another Tunisia or Egypt. This support is partially a result of strong nationalistic feeling based on the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights after 1967, but also derives from the fear of some minorities that they will share the fate of Iraqi minorities. But this is likely to change as the situation deteriorates, including for the Alawites, the main supporters of the regime. Not only is political and security instability growing, but the economic situation is worsening, with minus two percent growth in 2011 compounded by the effects of sanctions.

This partly explains why the Syrian opposition has not yet evolved into an armed force as it did in Libya. However, there is a rapid shift towards armed conflict underway, with the

formation of the Free Syrian Army established by army defectors, who in reaction to the crimes committed by the regime challenged the peaceful strategy of the National Council of Syria, even though they recognise the Council's legitimacy. At the time of writing, there is a humanitarian crisis unfolding in Syria that has no precedent, not even in Libya, as the Assad regime has been mercilessly bombing the city of Homs and denying access to humanitarian relief.

Like those committed by Gaddafi, the killings in Syria are crimes against humanity. However the international community has been unable to protect Syrian citizens thus far, since the Security Council is blocked by the Russian and Chinese veto, not least because of the backlash generated by the Libyan precedent, with the non-Western powers considering that NATO abused the R2P resolution to promote regime change. Even so it is very unlikely that the regime will survive beyond 2012 given the determination of the opposition and the regime's increasing isolation.

The fact that Libyan and Syrian opposition forces of all stripes have united in the face of repression may facilitate the post-Gaddafi and Assad transition processes, as all groups share the same revolutionary legitimacy. Nonetheless, transforming a revolutionary into a democratic legitimacy will be a difficult challenge, particularly in Libya.

The Union has shown that it is not prepared to assume the high end of a military operation in Libya. But it should plan for the military mission that is likely to become necessary to maintain peace in Syria. It should prepare for that under the aegis of the UN and act in collaboration with other Arab and African states and powers such as India, which has a very large migrant community in the Gulf. It would be a great mistake to again leave the peace-building operation to NATO, particularly in the Middle East and after the Libyan intervention. The process must remain in the hands of the UN not only to guarantee public support in the Arab world but also to ensure the goodwill of the newly emerging powers that feel they were trapped by the resolution on Libya but want to put an end to the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

### *Algeria, Lebanon and Palestine*

#### **An eerie calm**

Strangely, at least two Southern Mediterranean Arab nations seem to have remained immune to the contagion effect of the Arab revolutions: Algeria and Lebanon. The Palestinians have been affected but quite differently. This calm is all the stranger when one observes that the factors encouraging the uprisings elsewhere are at work in these countries

too: the loss of legitimacy of Arab nationalism, rising youth unemployment (in Gaza it hit a record 47.7 percent in 2009) and disaffection,<sup>136</sup> and unaccountable political leaders. All this could generate a buildup of frustration that could lead to revolt. But the specific national conditions in each of these countries make revolt more difficult.

In Algeria, there are many minor but regular demonstrations against socio-economic hardship. According to Luis Martínez,<sup>137</sup> three factors explain the absence of a unified mass revolutionary movement thus far: the memory of the traumatic civil war in the 1990s, the revenue that Algeria derives from its energy sector, which makes the country more able to resist international pressure, and the fact that overthrowing President Bouteflika would make little difference, since real power lies with the military. Algeria's ruling elite is clearly worried about events just outside their borders. They fear losing legitimacy as a result of the constitutional reform in Morocco, the fall of Gaddafi, and the victory of the RP in free elections in Tunisia. They are apparently aware that if the democratic movement stabilises, it will be difficult to sustain current policies. This explains why Tunisia fears the potential destabilising actions of Algerian security forces along its border, and the visit paid by the spiritual leader of the RP, Rached Ghannouchi, to Bouteflika just after his movement's electoral victory.

Lebanon is quite a different case. Some would go so far as to say that the Cedar Revolution of 2005, which brought millions out onto the streets well before the demonstrations in Tunisia began, initiated the Arab wave. The Cedar Revolution created the conditions for a more open system and an active civil society, although the Israeli invasion of 2006 put a stop to the process of democratisation. Further progress towards democracy is blocked today by the confessional nature of the political system and the destabilising actions of Lebanon's neighbours, in particular Iran, Syria and Israel. Iran and the Assad regime, which is under pressure from the revolution at home, are trying to prove they can destabilise Lebanon.

In Palestine, the Arab democratic revolutions are seen as the possible trigger for a new dynamic in the region that may contribute to intra-Palestinian reconciliation and a return to the democratic process that was halted when Israel, the US and the EU failed to recognise the Hamas victory in the 2006 legislative elections. The youth movement that emerged in Palestine in 2011, the 14 March movement, was repressed by Hamas security forces in Gaza and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) forces in the West Bank. Al-

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136. UNRWA Report, *Socio-economic Developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory 2010*, at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011110145715.pdf>, p. 6.

137. Luiz Martínez, 'Algérie: un calme trompeur,' in 'The Arab democratic wave: How the EU can seize the moment,' *EUISS Report no. 9*, June 2011.

though the mobilisation was not enormous, its political impact was quite important, as it helped to restart the negotiations between Hamas and Fatah and led to the announcement of elections and of a unity agreement between them in early February 2012. But it will be close to impossible to attain democracy without creating a Palestinian state first, and this seems increasingly beyond reach. But the EU can contribute to reorienting the Palestinian resistance movement towards peaceful civic action, following in the footsteps of peaceful Arab demonstrators elsewhere.

*The socio-economic challenges of transition*

The objectives of the Arab revolutions are not just political but also social. The proportion of people living in poverty ranges from 26.5 percent in Egypt to 9 percent in Morocco, with all countries in the region located in the middle range of the Human Development Index. This has not changed dramatically over the years of rising inequality, notably due to the application of the standard Washington Consensus economic recipe. The socio-economic crisis that acted as one of the triggers of revolt in Egypt and Tunisia has worsened since those early days. In the first semester of 2011, GDP growth in Egypt and Tunisia was negative (-7 percent and -3.3 percent respectively). If one considers that growth was positive the previous year (5.1 percent in Egypt and 3.7 percent in Tunisia in 2010) we have an idea of the dimension of the crisis. Youth unemployment is high (27.2 percent in Tunisia and 29 percent in Egypt in 2010), and overall unemployment rose from 15 to 18 percent in 2011, and is increasing. The prospects for growth in 2012 are weak: according to the IMF they will not exceed one or two percentage points (for Tunisia it may reach half a percent but growth has been negative – in 2010 it was minus 4.4 percent, while in Egypt GDP is likely to decrease to minus 0.5 percent). A deteriorating social situation could, of course, undermine the political support needed to push forward democratic transition. The potential of the Egyptian and Tunisian economies to grow, based on their past record, should not be underestimated.<sup>138</sup>

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138. For Egypt, see 'Egypt's Democratic Transition: Five Important Myths about the Economy and International Assistance', Legatum Institute and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in association with the Atlantic Council, July 2011.

**Table 3: The socio-economic situation in the Southern Mediterranean (in %)**

	GDP growth		Unemployment		Population growth	Total trade with the EU
	2011*	2010	2011*	2010	2010	2010
<b>Syria</b>	0.2	3.2	8.1	8.3	2.03	21.6
<b>Lebanon</b>	1.3	7	9.2	9.2	0.72	28.9
<b>Israel</b>	4.3	4.7	5.8	6.7	1.83	30.7
<b>Egypt</b>	1.2	5.1	12.2	9	1.74	31.9
<b>Libya</b>		10.6	N/A	20.7	1.46	64.9
<b>Tunisia</b>	-0.7	3.7	16	13	1.04	69.7
<b>Algeria</b>	4.6	3	9.7	10	1.47	50
<b>Morocco</b>	3.8	3.7	9.2	9.1	0.99	53.1
<b>Palestine</b>	N/A	9.3	22.8	23.4	2.65	1.7 (2008)
- Gaza				37.4		
- West Bank				16.9		

\* Provisional figures

Sources: World Bank, FEMISE, EIU, The Institute of International Finance, DG-Trade, IMF, UNCTAD, UNDP

In Morocco, inequality and corruption and rising youth unemployment (16.7 percent in 2011), including among university-educated youths, are major problems. The privileges of people close to the palace and members of the Party of Authenticity and Modernity (*Parti Authenticité et Modernité-PAM*), were key issues. The 20 February Movement seems to have lost some of its momentum with the constitutional referendum, but if the social dimension of the Arab revolutions is not addressed it may re-emerge with greater force.

## A post-Western Middle East

A new Middle East will arise from the democratic revolutions in the Arab world, fundamentally altering the strategic equation in the region. Change in the Middle East is part of a broader trend: the emergence of a post-Western world. This is not to say that the scales will tip in favour of regional powers that are hostile to the West. Indeed, Iran, locked in the grip of an autocratic and repressive regime, is losing its main ally in the re-

gion thanks to its outright support for Bashar al-Assad's brutal repression of the Syrian people. Rather, the democratic middle powers in the region will begin to exert a decisive influence and play a major international role. The strategic future of the region will be shaped more by Turkey and, in all probability, Egypt, than by the United States.

In the first two decades of the post-Cold War era, US predominance in the region was unparalleled: its influence extended to all countries from Morocco to Yemen and the Gulf. Rising American influence was accompanied by dwindling opposition to Israel's policies by most Arab regimes, who responded to hostile domestic public opinion by periodically engaging in empty rhetoric. This was accentuated after the 'neutralisation' of Iraq in 2003, and the heightened fears of Iran that it inevitably sparked among Arab regimes, in particular in the Gulf.

The alignment between the US, Arab regimes and Israel (symbolised by the Annapolis meeting, which was ultimately more about isolating America's enemies than about negotiating peace terms) became a reality under the presidency of George W. Bush. But support for the American agenda in the region remained hugely unpopular with Arab public opinion. Although this was particularly acute during the Bush administration (due to the Iraq war, human rights abuses during the war on terror, and the two wars visited by Israel on Lebanon and Gaza in 2006 and 2008-09), sympathy towards Obama and the hopes raised by his Cairo speech in 2009 did not translate into a popular groundswell of support for US policy. The view was that US policy had not shifted significantly, particularly because of the perceived inherent inability of the US to pressure Israel to halt settlement expansion and engage in meaningful peace negotiations.

In this context, the feeling grew among Arab citizens that their dictators were allies of Israel. Egypt's government enforced the blockade on Gaza imposed by Tel Aviv, and many in the Arab world were outraged when it was not lifted during the 2008-2009 war in Gaza for humanitarian reasons. An 'axis of rejection' was formed by Iran and Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon against American and Israeli policies in the region. But the fortunes of these contrarians were not favourable either, as their public popularity – once high for voicing support for the Palestinian cause – waned as the result of their unquestioning backing for the Syrian regime's brutal repression of peaceful protest.

For many in the Middle East the great model is Turkey. It is a democracy under Islamist leadership, with an increasingly prosperous economy and it has an independent foreign policy. But it is Egypt's success or failure that will decisively shape the new strategic landscape in the Middle East. If it undergoes a successful transition to democracy, the new regional strategic configuration will centre on Egypt in close strategic convergence with

Turkey. There is a broad foreign policy consensus between the Muslim Brotherhood and other major Egyptian political forces, which is very close to Turkey's. The Muslim Brotherhood and the liberals believe that Egypt should respect the peace treaty with Israel, but oppose Israel's policy towards the Palestinians and in particular the Gaza blockade, which has been eased but not yet fully lifted by Egypt because of a shared concern about Israel's possible nervous reactions. It was perceived that Mubarak aligned Egypt with US policy towards Israel. It is an auspicious sign that Palestinian reconciliation has come about as a result of Egypt's new foreign policy posture.

Israel and Iran will be the greatest losers in the new strategic dispensation. Israel will not be able to claim that it is the sole beacon of democracy in the region; it will no longer be able to count on compliant Arab dictators but will have to face democratic leaders emboldened by real popular legitimacy. If it persists in denying the Palestinian right to statehood, it will become increasingly isolated. Iran will suffer a similar fate. Its autocratic regime will become even more isolated as it loses Syria as an ally. Protesters demanding that Assad be overthrown are not likely to forget that Ahmadinejad supplied weapons to the regime to support its murderous repression of demonstrators.

### *What about Iran?*

Regardless of its role, Iran will be a major player in a post-Western Middle East: it can either establish an influential hub of middle powers in the region with Turkey and Egypt over the next twenty years or become an increasingly isolated anti-democratic state. Iran ranks second only to Saudi Arabia in oil exports, and it is among the world's top three holders of proven oil and gas reserves. It wields a great deal of regional influence, and its stakes in resolving crisis in two war-ravaged bordering neighbours, Iraq and Afghanistan, are immensely high. Iran is a signatory of the NPT and its additional protocol. However, its nuclear programme, purportedly civilian but suspected of a barely disguised military ambition (especially since uranium enrichment capability was allegedly achieved), is viewed by the United States and by the European Union as a potential threat to world peace.

When it comes to Iran, lucid analysis is often clouded by distaste for the theocratic nature of the regime, and a mixture of a culturally-prejudiced attitude towards political Islam and puzzlement in the face of the mysterious opacity and unpredictability of Iran's decision-making system. Saudi Arabia is championing a dangerous anti-Shiite front and it would be a terrible mistake to adopt policies in the region that are based on the Shiite-Sunni division. One of the consequences of such an approach was the absence of international condemnation of the Saudi crackdown on peaceful Shiite demonstrators in

Bahrain. This revolt was not the result of an Iranian conspiracy but a legitimate protest against the violation of basic human rights.

Israel is trying to regain the upper hand in the region by attempting to engage the US and Europe in a policy of confrontation with Iran requiring Western powers to participate in a military operation to stop the Iranian nuclear programme. In this regard, Israel and Saudi Arabia have similar strategic interests. Both fear they may be the losers in a post-Western Middle East dominated by Islamist democracies or regimes.

The consequences of renewed war in a region so severely ravaged by conflict would be too devastating to contemplate and would be an enormous blow to the democratic process, in particular complicating even more the situation in Syria and Lebanon. The priority for Europe and the US should not be Iran's nuclear programme but the repression of the green movement by the regime in power in Teheran and their support to Assad. But indiscriminate sanctions are likely to be counterproductive and may solidify support for the regime.

#### *Other players*

In the Maghreb, the democratic uprising in Tunisia led to the introduction of reforms by Morocco but these this has had no real impact on regional cooperation to date because Algeria has failed to shift. Without political change in Algeria the Moroccan-Algerian border may remain closed and a solution for the Western Sahara will be improbable to say the least. Tensions along the Algerian-Tunisian border put the Tunisian political process at risk and provide the Algerian regime with a means of limiting the domestic impact of neighbouring democratisation processes, although the visit of RP spiritual leader Ghannouchi to Algeria may have eased the tensions somewhat. In this context, the Maghreb Union remains a distant dream as each country seeks bilateral arrangements with Europe, the US and Africa.

In Libya, the downfall of the Gaddafi regime will be followed by a period of uncertainty and will keep the international community and Europe in particular busy with the task of ensuring a successful transition. The international implications of events in the Maghreb may be slightly different from those in the Middle East. The sense of proximity with Europe is stronger and the UAM can be revived if Morocco and Algeria make the transition to democracy. The ideological influence of Turkey and Egypt will be felt, but the Maghreb is likely to develop its own regional project.

### *The new emerging powers: a growing presence*

The presence of some of the new emerging powers – China, India and Brazil – is growing in the post-Western Arab world. The Middle East is a major foreign policy priority for these countries given their ambition to play a greater role on the world stage. No state can aspire to great power status without a role in the Middle East. This is true for China, the main importer of oil from and the primary exporter of goods to the region, and also India, which imports seventy percent of its oil from the region and has around five million migrants living in what is often referred to as West Asia. Both China and India have an important presence in the Gulf and will reinforce their economic interests in a very dynamic region that is close to the European market. In China there is a debate between those who classify the events as a ‘revolution’ and argue that China should reinforce its presence in the region and those who negatively classify the same events as ‘turmoil’ and are more concerned with the potential impact on Chinese youth. India is trying to reinforce its presence by sharing its democratic experience, particularly where relations between state and religion are concerned.

There is a sizeable population of Arab origin in Brazil (twelve million or around seven percent of the population),<sup>139</sup> which further encourages that country’s economic and strategic interest in the region. This was demonstrated by President Lula da Silva’s visit to the region in 2003, and the Arab-South American summit of 2005. Finally, for Russia strategic ambitions are at stake in the region, as the Middle East is one of the few places in the world where its foreign policy positions still matter. Under Putin, Russia developed close energy and military ties with Syria, including building a military naval base that should be operational in 2012. Russia has also maintained good relations with Israel (albeit disrupted by the Georgia war in 2008), and is a member of the Middle East Peace Quartet.

Until now, the BRICS countries have been prudent about the changes in the region. They have taken a particular interest in the Syrian conflict as evidenced by the (ultimately abortive) Brazilian, Indian and South African attempt to mediate in the conflict. But while they supported the implementation of the doctrine of the responsibility to protect in the case of Libya, they are reluctant to do the same for Syrians. In recent discussions I held in China, Brazil and India it became clear that they did not like the way events have unfolded in Libya (the shift in the NATO operation from R2P to regime change) and so have opposed any UNSC resolution on Syria. This is the case with India (which

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139. Ghazi Omar Tadmouri, ‘The Arab World,’ Centre for Arab Genomic Studies, at: <http://www.cags.org.ae/cbc01ar.pdf>. See also: Simon Schwartzman, ‘Fora de foco: diversidade e identidades étnicas no Brasil,’ *Novos Estudos CEBRAP* 55, November 1999, pp. 83-96.

overwhelmingly opposed the Libyan intervention), Russia (where Putin has played the nationalist card with an eye on the presidency) and, to a lesser degree, with China and Brazil. Europe and the US have adopted a similar non-interventionist position in the past but the BRICs are currently showing that they find it more difficult to adapt to the Arab democratic wave than the Western powers.

## Listening to unfamiliar voices

In 2011, political Islam took centre-stage in international diplomacy with the victories of the RP in Tunisia and of the FJP in Egypt, with a strong showing by the Salafists, repeating what happened in 2006 when Hamas won free and fair elections in Palestine. However, then as now, a one-size-fits-all response was inadequate to address the issue of ‘political Islam.’ There was and is no such thing as a global Islamist movement.

Political Islam has emerged as the main alternative to secular Arab nationalist regimes whose legitimacy – long based on the struggle for national liberation – evaporated due to their inability to resolve economic and social problems, to establish the rule of law and guarantee fundamental freedoms. In Palestine, for example, the Islamists triumphed over Fatah because of years of bad governance, aggravated by the harsh conditions imposed by Israeli occupation.

### *Waking up to Islamist governments and the wide spectrum of Islamist politics*

Successive European and American governments have shared an atavistic fear of the ‘Islamic alternative’ to Arab secular nationalists and so have defended the *status quo*. But repression of all Arab opposition movements by the region’s monarchs and secular dictators turned ‘the Mosque’ into the only umbrella under which to mobilise politically. The fact is that political Islam can no longer be contained, and democracy cannot be built by driving underground parties that have a strong social base. This was tragically demonstrated in Algeria nearly two decades ago. The only alternative to authoritarianism was to craft a transition that allows Islamists to participate in public life and encourages them to unequivocally accept the rules of the democratic game.

Before 2011 there were already various examples of more or less conservative Islamist parties willing to play according to democratic game rules. There were Islamists in the legislatures of all the countries undergoing some form of political reform, including Lebanon, where Hezbollah is part of a freely elected government, Jordan and Morocco. Free elections in Iraq have revealed the enormous influence of Islamist currents. The Turkish transition to democracy brought the AKP to power. The AKP government has under-

taken various important democratic reforms and reinitiated accession negotiations with the EU.

These Islamist parties had nothing to do with al-Qaeda, even if some of the most extreme elements within them have adopted radical ideological positions. In this, they differ little from mainstream European parties, which are predominantly moderate but also have extremist fringes of one sort or another.<sup>140</sup> These parties are also very different from each other, so one cannot speak of an Islamist movement, but rather of many Islamist currents and parties. The same can be said of European socialism or Christian democracy; the party internationals serve as an umbrella for many and varied positions.

### *The democratic paradox*

The risk that political transitions may lead to the victory of Islamist parties is perceived as a democratic paradox. Europe and the US must learn to live with it if they are to devise effective policies to support democratic reform and economic integration. Indeed, they must come up with policies that are the polar opposite of the 'democratisation by force' practised in occupied Iraq. That intervention backfired badly: one of its less fortunate consequences was to reinforce the notion of a clash of civilisations between the West and Islam, which in turn has served to create a climate even more favourable for Islamist movements. If such policies were to continue the West would only succeed in fostering the success of the more extremist political Islamist options.

Political reform movements emerged in the Muslim world long before the US-led war on terror. Reformists have not been waiting for the EU to become stronger to press for change. These movements were not created in the US or Europe because of September 11, and they did not wait for or depend on the US or the EU to act.

Accepting the right of non-violent Islamists to participate in public life does not mean giving up on the political and ideological struggle to defeat ultra-conservative, and in some cases extremist, totalitarian conceptions of society. Combating racism, promoting tolerance and respecting the religious beliefs of others does not mean that we need to question press freedom or accept Islamist demands for censorship, even when real religious sentiments are offended, as in the case of the Danish cartoons. The social conceptions of Islamic parties that violate individual rights must be rebutted politically. That political challenge is one of the paradoxes of democracy, which allows the free flow

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140. In fact, the situation is somewhat worse than this. As one reporter notes, Breivik's 'Islamophobic beliefs are in line with those of Geert Wilders' Freedom Party, the Sweden Democrats, the Danish People's Party and Norway's Progress Party (the second largest group in parliament) ... Breivik adheres to an ideology represented in parliaments, even governments.' Lisa Bjurwald, 'Europe's New Racist Threat,' op. cit. in note 47.

and competition of ideas, including radical ones. Some political Islamic trends present risks, but we can minimise them only by devising intelligent, case-sensitive strategies that promote democracy, not by denouncing and disowning the results of free democratic choice.

### *Overcoming the European dilemma*

I would argue that the most important issue on the EU's foreign policy agenda is how to contribute to a fully free, democratic and peaceful Arab world. In order to respond to this challenge, European policy-makers must design a strategy to deal with new regimes, including governments and political parties with which the EU is not familiar and several EU Member States have regarded with suspicion and even as threats over the years. First and foremost, it is essential for the EU to gain a better understanding of Islamist forces, understand how their political trajectories have been shaped by authoritarian and sometimes democratic institutions and processes, and how they may evolve in the future. This will provide a sound basis to judge the prospects for democracy in the region. This applies to EU relations with the RP, now in power in Tunisia, and with the PJD, which won the Moroccan legislative elections and, in accordance with the revised constitution, is leading the government there. And given how high the stakes are in Egypt, it is particularly important for Europeans to understand the nature and role of the newly-founded Freedom and Justice Party, which has been established by the oldest and most influential Islamist movement in the region, the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>141</sup>

This dilemma is not new for Europe. In 1991, when the FIS won the elections in Algeria, European leaders either supported or turned a blind eye to the fierce military crackdown on the Islamists. In 2006, when Hamas emerged victorious in legislative elections that EU election monitors deemed fair and free, Europe responded by refusing to recognise the new government. This time Europe must do much better if it hopes to engage with the Arab world constructively. Ignoring Islamist parties and excoriating Islam is no longer viable, as the victory of the RP Party in Tunisia's first free elections demonstrates.

The FJP has thus far emerged as the winner of the 28 November 2011-January 2012 electoral process, with a forty percent share of the seats. They will therefore be forced to form a coalition to run the country, and an even larger consensus must be forged for the drafting of a new constitution. What will be the general political orientation of the FJP? The Islamists are ambiguous about this, as they are confronted for the first time with the

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141. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, and has influenced parties around the world. It first rose to political prominence in the anti-colonial struggle against Britain.

need to define their position on a broad set of political and not just social and religious issues. This is particularly the case of the more conservative Salafists, who came second in the election with twenty-four percent of the seats.

The adaptation is proving difficult and painful. The Muslim Brotherhood now has the space to resolve its ambiguity, and replace its religious discourse with one of commitment to democratic citizenship and constitutional politics, even as it retains its Islamic identity. To integrate Islamist forces in a pro-democratic direction it will be essential to forge a new constitutional framework that establishes democratic game rules. But first the military must agree to relinquish power and set out a clear timetable for a transition to civilian rule. Just as Europeans must listen to the unfamiliar voice of political Islam, so too the Muslim Brotherhood will have to listen to the unfamiliar voice of the whole Egyptian people and find a way to meet their democratic aspirations – aspirations that may well pose challenges to a conservative Islamist agenda. Equally, Egyptian liberals who are adamantly opposed to the Brotherhood are having difficulty in finding common ground with them but will have to find a way of doing so to avoid polarising politics, endangering the democratic process and legitimising the continuation of military rule. Even more difficult, they will need to reach out to the Salafists, who are now a parliamentary force to be reckoned with. The greatest problem is not the Islamists, as some in Europe seem to feel, but the danger that the military may carve out a permanent and autonomous role for itself, which would mean a return of the old regime through ‘the back door.’<sup>142</sup>

A broad consensus that includes both liberal and Islamist parties is essential for the drafting of a truly democratic constitution that is not dictated by a small majority but is representative of all Egyptians. Although the influence of the EU on the Muslim Brotherhood is, at this stage, likely to be negligible, the EU should not discount its own influence among some liberal sectors of society, and should craft its policies accordingly.

For Rached Ghannouchi,<sup>143</sup> the Europeans’ top priorities to support the democratic transitions should be: (i) not to divide the protagonists; and (ii) to contribute to the resolution of the huge problem of youth unemployment. It would be difficult to better define what should be the main priorities of the EU but also the US and other relevant external actors.

So far the US government has shown a greater capacity to reach out to the Islamist political parties than the EU, but this may change dramatically if Obama is not re-elected in

142. Kristina Kausch, ‘The Muslim Brotherhood, post-election scenarios and policy options in Egypt: A European perspective,’ in ‘Egyptian Democracy and the Muslim Brotherhood,’ *EUISS Report* no. 10, November 2011, at: [http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Egyptian\\_democracy\\_and\\_the\\_Muslim\\_Brotherhood.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Egyptian_democracy_and_the_Muslim_Brotherhood.pdf).

143. Conversation with the author.

November 2012. Republicans in the Congress are already making the case for the danger that the outcome of the elections in Egypt and Tunisia and the new political landscape of post-Gaddafi Libya represent for the US and Israel, as well as warning about the negative repercussions of Palestinian reconciliation and the potential victory of Hamas in elections to come as a result of an agreement between the PLO and Hamas.

Those who are sceptical about Arab democracy are to be found not just among the ranks of secular Europeans (whether liberal secularists or conservatives); they are also plentiful among conservative American circles where the victory of Islamic parties is described as ‘the Islamic winter.’ In Israel the uneasiness with the democratic changes in the region has been vividly conveyed by IDF Home Front Command Chief Major General Eyal Eisenberg. In an address to the National Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv, he declared: ‘It looks like the Arab Spring, but it can also be a radical Islamic winter,’ and went so far as to predict that ‘this leads us to the conclusion that through a long-term process, the likelihood of an all-out war is increasingly growing.’<sup>144</sup> These anti-Islamic overtones should not come as a surprise given the current radicalisation of the political climate in America. President Obama is being accused by conservatives of being too soft on Islam: he has been criticised for apologising for the burning of the Koran by American soldiers in Afghanistan and for having lost the Arab world by not having given the necessary support to the pro-Western dictators, in particular Mubarak.

The attitude of the EU towards democratic norms, democratic reform and the Islamists may prove crucial to the democratic future of Egypt. If, in the context of a future FJP government, the EU were to fail to develop cooperative relations with the new authorities, this would be interpreted not just as opposing the Islamists but as denying the right of the Arabs to choose their own leaders. The EU would be perceived as preferring to shore up authoritarian regimes due to its fear of political Islam. Such a course of action would condemn the EU’s Mediterranean policy to irrelevance and spell disaster for its relations with the most important Arab country in the region, and by extension for its relations with others.

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144. Speech given by Major General Eyal Eisenberg at the National Institute for Security Studies, Tel Aviv, 12 September 2011. See: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4118220,00.html>.

## Conclusion

The essential challenge facing the European Union is to define a coherent policy to support democratic processes in the Arab world. One would think this would be easy given that Europe's states are democratic; but, paradoxically, this is not the case. Old prejudices explain why some European politicians supported authoritarian regimes until the fall of Ben Ali and Mubarak. This was recognised by Commission President Barroso, who stated in Cairo in July 2011 that 'in the past, too many have traded democracy for stability.' The same was declared by Pierre Vimont<sup>145</sup> during the EUISS Washington Forum in October 2011, which shows that EU institutions are beginning to reflect on what went wrong.

Recent events have proven that lasting stability can only be achieved through democratic and accountable governments.<sup>146</sup> It is essential to recognise that this must be the starting point of EU policy to build relations with the region on solid ground. But some EU governments still view Islamic parties with suspicion and question their democratic legitimacy even when they participate in free elections and win.

This attitude is fundamentally flawed and inconsistent with the putative ideals of liberal democracies, and it leads Arab citizens to believe that Europeans are hypocritical about democracy, wishing it for those who are 'like them' and not for those who are different. This is the perception not only of those who support the Islamists but also of many in the liberal parties. As stated by political analyst and activist Azzam Mahjoub, a Tunisian secular intellectual, 'the evolution of the liberal [camp] is essential for the consolidation of the democratic process, and this includes recognition [by liberals] of the democratic evolution of RP, the creation of alliances with the Islamists for government, and the formation of a liberal axis.'<sup>147</sup> He believes that Europeans can contribute to the positive evolution of the RP and the liberal camp by recognising the democratic nature of the Tunisian revolution, gaining an understanding of the country's major political parties, and by treating all political forces equally.

The first thing European governments must do is to recognise that they have not always supported Arab democratic aspirations in the past, and work to overcome the causes of this past reticence. Only then will Europe be in a position to play a role supporting demo-

145. See: <http://www.iss.europa.eu/activities/detail/article/eu-washington-forum-2011/>

146. Speech of EC President José Manuel Durão Barroso, *Partners in Freedom: The EU Response to the Arab Spring*, Opera House Cairo, 14 July 2011, at: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/523>.

147. Interview with the author, January 2012.

cratic transition in the Southern Mediterranean. Second, the EU must become a force for reconciliation between Islamic democratic forces and secular liberal groups. Third, it should provide economic and social support for the countries undergoing transitions, targeting Tunisia first, and Egypt and Libya when elected governments are in place. Finally, it should impose tough sanctions on Syria, recognise the National Council of Syria, and work with UN humanitarian organisations to protect the civilian population, particularly displaced people and refugees (around one million people have been thus affected, according to international humanitarian organisations). It should also work with the BRIC countries to overcome their resistance to the UNSC taking action to protect civilians.

## **The Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States in a new context**

The democratic uprisings in North Africa call for a radical shift in the EU approach to Euro-Mediterranean relations. Today, this approach needs to be essentially political and give a clear priority to the countries undergoing processes of regime change and democratisation. The UfM strategy of ignoring the political and social dimensions in order to ensure the goodwill of authoritarian leaders is no longer viable. The revision of the neighbourhood policy was a step in the right direction as it underlined the priority attached by the EU to politics and to democratic goals. The EU Joint Communication on ‘A Partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean’<sup>148</sup> went in the same direction with the introduction of a new form of conditionality, ‘based on more differentiation (“more for more”): those that go further and faster with reforms will be able to count on greater support from the EU.’

But the EU also needs to take into account that the leaders of today’s revolutions for dignity will not perceive relations with Europe in the same way that their predecessors did. They will be reluctant to agree to most forms of conditionality, even under the ‘more for more’ formula, and will attempt to assert their foreign policy autonomy, perhaps establishing deeper intra-regional relations, including with Turkey. This will appear an attractive option as they face what they consider to be an unfair international economic system. It is interesting to note the popularity of the theories that propose a change of development model that no longer appeal primarily to the neo-liberal recipes of the 1990s; they pay special attention to the need to generate employment and provide citizens with adequate social services. Gone are the days when Tunisia was seen as ‘the tiger of the Mediterranean.’ The citizenries of these states are all too aware of the pervasive

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148. See: [http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/docs/com2011\\_200\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/docs/com2011_200_en.pdf).

corruption that contributed to the fall of Ben Ali and so dramatically skewed the distribution of economic benefits.

So the concept of neighbourhood may not be very attractive anymore. It only makes sense for countries that believe they have a European destiny, so it is inappropriate for Egypt or for others in the Middle East. It may be considered by Morocco and Tunisia (and some Eastern European states), even if they fall short of full membership, if the Union supports political reform and democratic transition and offers the prospect of the free circulation of goods, services and people. But even this may not be attractive enough for new emerging leaders.

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is being challenged today, as there is a need to differentiate between the Eastern and Southern countries, thus dividing the policy itself at least in two. The ENP needs also to give substance to its more political and pro-democracy orientation and to avoid economic models that can further deteriorate social conditions. The UfM must be replaced by a new initiative that can be built on by reforming and democratising countries. The priority must be strong political and economic support for democratic transition. The project of establishing a Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States must be discussed. Given the current crisis in Europe, it is not certain this is viable over the short term, but as a long-term aim it is the best option for the EU.

To be credible, Europe's proposal must offer the prospect of freedom of movement of people. This will require a radical change in the migration policies of most EU Member States to address the mismatch between growing demand for (migrant) labour across the continent and an overly restrictive legal framework. The tendency to focus on selective policies that give preference to highly qualified migrants and/or students should also be reconsidered; most European countries will need low-skilled workers in years to come as a result of the demographic crisis among other factors.<sup>149</sup> The 'quotas' policies of various European countries to protect their labour markets need to be adjusted to meet Europe's real and persistent need for both highly qualified and low-skilled migrant workers.

A Euro-Mediterranean community of democracies would help bring about peace. Membership should only be extended to the Israelis and Palestinians on condition that the two-state solution is well on track. A community of democracies of this kind would be supported by the Obama administration, as it reflects the President's vision of a 'shared

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149. IOM World Migration Report 2010, *The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change*, at: [http://www.jcp.ge/iom/pdf/WMR\\_2010\\_ENGLISH.pdf](http://www.jcp.ge/iom/pdf/WMR_2010_ENGLISH.pdf).

spirit of humanity' in a post-Huntington Arab world. The goal of establishing a Euro-Mediterranean Community of Democratic States could find support in the transitional democracies and in the liberal monarchies, and would certainly be welcomed by sectors of Southern civil societies, but a particular effort would be necessary to interest new sectors that are not the traditional secular interlocutors of the European NGOs. This proposal could help to restore EU credibility with Arab public opinion, showing that Europe has heard the call for freedom and democracy and is ready to respond.

# Annexes

## About the author

Álvaro de Vasconcelos has been the director of the EUISS since 2007.

Álvaro de Vasconcelos was born in Porto on 4 April 1944. From 1953 to 1966 he lived in Mozambique and South Africa. Opposed to the Salazar dictatorship and to the Portuguese colonial war, as well as to apartheid, he was forced into exile first in Brussels and later in Paris, where he lived from 1969 to 1974. During his years in exile he was active in anti-fascist movements as coordinator of a number of civil society activities and opposition newspapers like *O Salto*, published in Paris. Back in Portugal after the Carnation Revolution he was politically active during the Portuguese democratic transition. Afterwards he was co-founder of the Institute for International and Strategic Studies (IEEI), with his late wife Maria do Rosario de Moraes Vaz. He was director of the IEEI from 1980 until 2007. During his years as director of the IEEI he founded a number of networks, in particular EuroMeSCo, and engaged actively in Euro-Mediterranean relations from the early 1980s. During the same period, Álvaro de Vasconcelos was advisor to the Minister of Defence and the Minister of the Interior. As well as being a regular columnist in the Portuguese and international press, especially through Project Syndicate, he is the author and co-editor of many books, articles and reports, notably in the areas of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Euro-Mediterranean relations and on the theme of world order: *La PESC: Ouvrir l'Europe au Monde*, *The European Union, Mercosul and the New World Order*; *What ambitions for European defence in 2020?*; *The Obama Moment – European and American perspectives* and the ESPAS Report *Global Trends 2030 – Citizens in an interconnected and polycentric world* (forthcoming). Álvaro de Vasconcelos's full bibliography on Euro-Mediterranean relations is published in a separate annex to this book.



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- Global Governance: Building on the Civil Society Agenda*. (Paris: EUISS – co-author).
- The Agenda for the EU-US Strategic Partnership*. (Paris: EUISS – editor).
- Perspektiven für die europäische Verteidigung 2020*. (Paris: EUISS – co-author).

## Timeline

1980, 13 June – Venice Declaration: the European Economic Community acknowledged the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and recognised the PLO as a legitimate interlocutor.

1988, February – First Mediterranean Forum held in Marseilles.

1988, 21 December – Lockerbie bombing.

1989, 14 February – Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a *fatwa* against British novelist Salman Rushdie for *The Satanic Verses*.

1989, 4 October – Controversy over the ban on wearing Islamic headscarf began in France: three female students were suspended from a secondary school in Creil.

1990 – '4+5' intergovernmental grouping of Western Mediterranean countries first met in Rome; later became '5+5'.

1991, 26 December – The FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) won the first round of the parliamentary elections in Algeria; subsequently the ruling FLN (National Liberation Party) cancelled the election results, leading to a civil war.

1993, Summer – Publication of article 'The Clash of Civilizations', by Samuel P. Huntington in *Foreign Affairs*, first introducing the concept.

1994, 3-4 July – Resurrection Mediterranean Forum, first called *Forum pour le dialogue et la coopération en Méditerranée* (FDCM), based on a Franco-Egyptian proposal.

1995, 2 February – NATO Secretary General Willy Claes was reported to have said that Islamic fundamentalism is at least as dangerous as communism was in an interview with *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*.

1995, July – Massacre of thousands of Muslim men by Serb forces in Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1995, 30 August – Launch of *Operation Deliberate Force*, the NATO air campaign against selected targets in Serb-held Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1995, 27-28 November – Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference; initiation of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP).

1998, 7 January – Iranian President Mohammad Khatami expresses his intention to hold dialogue with ‘all civilizations, Western and non-Western’ in an interview with CNN.

1998, 16 November – UN General Assembly decided to proclaim the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations in resolution 53/22.

1999, 12 December – Turkey named official EU candidate country.

2001, 20 January – Inauguration of George W. Bush as President of the United States.

2001, 11 September – ‘9/11’, terrorist attacks launched by the al-Qaeda network on targets in the United States.

2001, 13 November – Fall of Kabul, Afghanistan under pressure from U.S. military and anti-Taliban forces.

2003, 20 March – Invasion of Iraq by coalition forces led by the United States.

2004, 15 March – French legislation adopted banning conspicuous religious symbols in French public primary and secondary schools, generating a debate for similar legislation in other countries including the UK, Spain and Italy.

2004, 12 May – Launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

2005, 14 February – United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan announced the launch of the Alliance of Civilizations, following the invitation by Spanish President Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

2005, 30 September – Publication of 12 editorial cartoons depicting the Islamic prophet Muhammed in Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, leading to great controversy.

2005, 25-28 November – Euro-Mediterranean Summit in Barcelona; considered a diplomatic failure.

2006, 25 January – Hamas won legislative elections for the Palestinian National Authority, following which the US and EU halted financial assistance to the administration.

2006, 27 March – Publication of book *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, by Amartya Sen, in response to S. Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*.

2006, 12 June – EU accession talks with Turkey officially open, 35 'chapters' are laid down.

2006, 14 September – Pope Benedict XVI quoted a 14<sup>th</sup> Century Christian emperor who said Muhammad had brought the world only 'evil and inhuman' things in a speech at Regensburg University in Germany.

2008, 13 July – Creation of the Union for the Mediterranean.

2009, 20 January – Inauguration of Barack Obama as President of the United States.

2009, 4 June – U.S. President Barack Obama's 'A New Beginning' speech in Cairo, Egypt.

2009, 29 November – Referendum in Switzerland on a ban on the construction of new minarets.

2010, 23 September – World Interfaith Harmony Week introduced by HM King Abdullah II of Jordan, and later adopted as a UN General Assembly resolution.

2010, 16 October – German chancellor Angela Merkel denounced multiculturalism as a failure, followed in the next months by UK prime minister David Cameron, the deputy prime minister of the Netherlands, and French president Nicolas Sarkozy.

2010, 17 December – a young Tunisian street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, set himself on fire, triggering a wave of protests in Tunisia and throughout the Arab world.



## Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party ( <i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> )
AL	Arab League
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CERSS	Centre for Study and Research in Social Sciences
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EP	European Parliament
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EUISS	European Union Institute for Security Studies
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front ( <i>Front Islamique du Salut</i> )
FJP	Freedom and Justice Party ( <i>Hizb al-hurriya wa al-Adala</i> )
FN	Front National
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMEI	Greater Middle East Initiative
IAF	Islamic Action Front ( <i>Jabhat al-'Amal al-Islami</i> )
ICC	International Criminal Court
IEEI	Institute of Strategic and International Studies ( <i>Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais</i> )
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IEMed	European Institute of the Mediterranean
MERCOSUL	Common Market of the South
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCS	National Council of Syria
NDP	National Democratic Party ( <i>Al-Hizb al-Wataniy ad-Dimuqratiy</i> )
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PJD	Islamist Justice and Development Party ( <i>Morocco</i> )
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
R2P	Responsibility to protect
RP	Renaissance Party <i>Ennahda</i> (Tunisia)
UAM	Union of the Arab Maghreb
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC	United Nations Security Council





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In 2011, millions of citizens in the Southern Mediterranean took to the streets demanding an end to dictatorship and the right to choose their governments, as well as to express their cultural and religious identities. Within months this extraordinary popular movement led to the downfall of three dictators.

The Arab democratic wave is part of a wider shift towards a post-Western world in which the global agenda is no longer defined by the West alone and other ‘unfamiliar’ voices may be heard. This book assesses the democratic wave one year on, and what the options are for the EU in a post-Western international context. European initiatives, starting with the Barcelona summit in 2005, have given renewed impetus to the project of Euro-Mediterranean inclusion, and countered the view of Muslims as the enemy that has prevailed for too long in the West. Against this background, the challenge will be to accept the democratic choices of citizens in the South and to learn to live with the fact that Islamist parties are likely to come to power all over the region. In fact, the democratic revolutions in the Arab countries offer a unique opportunity for the EU to contribute to a peaceful and democratic neighbourhood and to give a new impetus and *raison d’être* to the European project.

*‘Not least among the merits of Álvaro de Vasconcelos’s essays is the fact that they provide us with rich and stimulating ideas on how to confront a future filled with challenges but also promises. This book should serve as a guide to our times, a reflection on the events unfolding daily before us, a rich fund of lessons learned and pointers for understanding the changing face of the Mediterranean world.’*

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*‘This book is the most insightful account of Europe’s role in the events of the Arab Awakening yet to emerge. Despite its sympathy for the European ideal, it does not hesitate to draw attention to the ways in which Europe has failed the Middle East and North Africa. At the same time, it highlights the immense potential for democratic change in the Arab world and the role that Europe could play in helping to bring this about.’*

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*‘Álvaro de Vasconcelos’ analyses in this book are based on a subtle reading of the situation drawn from a rare familiarity with the Euro-Mediterranean world, placed in a regional, global and strategic perspective. His approach reveals an intimate knowledge of the questions being explored, but also a personal involvement, as well as a lively and critical engagement with the main actors, their preoccupations, challenges, disappointments and hopes.’*

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*‘This is an important corrective to the many Western misconceptions about the rapidly transforming Middle East.’*

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