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EDITORIAL



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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. It is high time for advocates of Huntington's thesis to fully realise this and take on board the lessons to be learned from the end of the 'Arab exception'. There is no clash of civilisations. Such a clash never really existed.

The main reason why so many were taken by surprise by the millions of citizens, most of them of Islamic faith, thronging the streets demanding freedom is to be found in the enduring popularity of the Huntingtonian vision of the Arab world. Not only did this so-called paradigm poison international politics, it poisoned domestic politics as well. In this context, it is hardly an exaggeration to observe that the reduction of Muslim identity to just this one uniquely defining element – religion – is yet another demonstration of the 'banality of evil', to borrow the famous phrase coined by Hanna Arendt. Muslims, especially the more devout, were designated as dangerous and by definition alien, unfit to live in any community based on the values of citizenship. Integrating Muslims into 'Western' societies was consequently presented as highly problematic.

Hani Mohammed/AP/SIPA



What is most disturbing is that Huntington's view of Muslims continues to influence political thinking, even as, before the eyes of the whole world, the citizens of North Africa have made it plain that they share the very same aspirations as their Western counterparts. Deconstructing Huntington's 'paradigm' is critical for the EU. This makes it necessary to revisit the interpretation of a number of events. It would be wise perhaps to begin with Algeria in 1991, and recognise that, no, it was not the victory of the FIS in the first round of the elections that triggered

a civil war that killed over 200,000 people, but rather a combination of two factors: first, the fact that the elections were not part of a transition process including a revision of the constitution; second, that the Algerian military refused to accept the results and thereupon cancelled the election, engaging instead in a violent crackdown on the opposition using methods not unlike those currently being deployed by Gaddafi and al-Assad.

Secondly, the Bush administration's

response to September 11 should also be re-examined. No, it was not merely a group of Muslims that attacked the twin highest towers in the most cosmopolitan of cities, but a gang of murderers, fuelled by extremist hate-based ideologies, not unlike those who perpetrated the Srebrenica massacre. Yes, the so-called 'war on terror' that has targeted Muslims all over the world was a terrible and colossal blunder, which later led Obama to say in Cairo that 'America is not at war with Islam'. The death of bin Laden does not mark the end of the influence of al-Qaeda extremists in the Arab world, because they have never been influential in any Arab country: it just serves as a reminder of how bin Laden's own 'clash of civilisations' project was a complete failure.

The soul-searching exercise must also include the so-called 'cartoon crisis' of 2005, and deconstruct the interpretations that draw on the 'clash of civilisations' paradigm, obscuring political realities. This crisis was not created and hyped by Islamic parties, but by the very same 'moderate regimes' who the West regarded as such staunch allies. It was not the Muslim Brotherhood's idea but the

Egyptian government's to bring the issue before the Organisation of Islamic States and the Arab League in Cairo; in the same vein, calls for boycotting Danish products came not from the Muslim Brotherhood but rather from Al-Azhar, an official institution. The omnipresent Syrian secret services under al-Assad were behind attacks against European embassies in Damascus.

All this to try to gain the upper hand over the Islamists, put pressure on their European allies and present their own regimes as a 'bulwark against chaos' – just as a human rights agenda for Euro-Mediterranean relations was taking shape and when Syria was under strong international pressure following the assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri.

Finally, it might be a good idea to take a harder look at women's rights. Many of the most active women fighting for political rights and for equality wear a headscarf.

We have all seen them in Tahrir Square and, whatever happens in Bahrain, *abbeya*-clad women have carved out a new political role for women in the Gulf. No, forcing women not to wear a headscarf is not a way of protecting women's rights – on the contrary. Women's rights are indissociable from human rights. For example, there was an inherent contradiction between the official policy of emancipation of women in Tunisia and the way that Ben Ali's police state consistently repressed women's fundamental human rights.

It would be useful to bear these and other events in mind when revisiting Samuel Huntington's original article (published

any human being inside the straitjacket of a single, uniquely defining identity.

To regain its credibility as a model for the realisation of the Arab revolutions' democratic aspirations, Europe needs to do some homework.

First, Europe needs to adopt a more generous migration policy, as well as overcome the nasty xenophobic strands in its own midst which are already permeating government policies, due to alarming electoral gains by right-wing populist parties. Second, Europe must recognise that the Arab revolutions are not only directed against those in power but also against those who supported them.

And yet, despite all our failures, there is in North Africa an enormous desire for Europe. In Egypt and in Tunisia, the Portuguese, the Spanish or the Polish experiences of transition to democracy serve as powerful examples. We have seen in Libya how European action to prevent the massacre of the population of Benghazi was welcomed and

how the French flag was waved in demonstrations as a symbol of the revolution for liberty.

Today, and this is an enormous change, there is a demand coming from Arab civic society for direct support. It is time for the democratic leaders of Europe to jettison their ideological baggage, characterised by stereotypical images and irrational fears of 'the other', and show that they have heard the roar of democracy. If they do so, they will be fondly remembered in the Arab world, like those who spearheaded events in the 1970s in Portugal, Spain or Greece or in the 1990s in Central Europe. If this happens, we will be able to say in ten years' time that EU foreign policy was ultimately born in response to the wave of democratic uprisings in the Arab world. But Europe needs first to cast aside the racist Huntington paradigm and replace it with a vision of common humanity based on the shared desire for freedom and dignity.



Women chant slogans and wave the Egyptian flag during a rally in Tahrir Square, March 11, 2011

in 1993), later expanded to book-length (1996), on the clash of civilisations. His much less famous last book, *Who Are We? Challenges to America's National Identity* (2004) elaborates further on the real threat behind the clash: Muslims and the rest of the world, Confucianists from China and Catholics from Latin America are unable to adhere to the liberal democratic credo of the American Revolution, and their growing presence constitutes an existential challenge to American democracy. This ethnic-based dogma projects the image of an extremist few onto a whole community.

The demonstrators, in Tunisia and in Egypt, just like everywhere else, have a plurality of identities. A Tunisian can be a democrat or an anti-democrat, a religious believer or a political radical, an Egyptian can be a social activist, a blogger, a doctor or a workman, just like any American or Frenchman or Finn. As Amartya Sen has so powerfully argued, it is wrong and politically unwise to imprison

Côte d'Ivoire : quelle sortie de crise ?

Séminaire

Paris, 25 janvier 2011

Un briefing, organisé dans le cadre de l'Observatoire de l'Afrique, a été organisé à l'IESUE le 25 janvier 2011 pour discuter des options possibles de sortie de crise.

La crise ivoirienne n'appelle pas de voies de sortie immédiate. Le problème dépasse désormais le cadre électoral et politique et interroge la société ivoirienne dans son ensemble : la récente montée des tensions intercommunautaires fait craindre le basculement dans une situation beaucoup plus dramatique, laquelle affecterait en première ligne les populations civiles. En toile de fond de cette crise, la partition du pays entre le nord et le sud depuis maintenant plus de huit ans. Bien qu'aucune des forces politiques ivoiriennes n'ait jamais porté de revendications autonomistes ou séparatistes, cette division de fait, qui risque de s'installer encore plus dans la durée, obère le rétablissement d'un climat de confiance et de sécurité à l'intérieur du pays.

Presentation of *Chaillot Papers* 122 and 124

Book Launch

1 February 2011, Brussels



Azzam Mahjoub speaks about Tunisia's role in the Arab uprisings

At this book launch, two of the Institute's latest *Chaillot Papers* were presented. *Chaillot Paper* 122 (in French) deals with autocracy in the Arab world, while 124 looks at Europe's role in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Afghanistan 2011-2014 and beyond: transforming international support operations for sustainable peace

Seminar

22-23 February 2011, Washington

The seminar, held in Washington D.C. on 22-23 February 2011, addressed the most critical questions confronting the international community with respect to the impending transition of Afghanistan from a military-led international response zone to a sphere characterised by responsible local ownership of peacebuilding.

Preview presentation of ISS Report n° 9

Book Launch

1 March 2011, Brussels



Amr Eishobaki comments on the Egyptian revolution

The EUISS gave a preview presentation in Brussels on 1 March 2011 of its latest timely report "The Arab democratic wave: how the EU can seize the moment". The publication was released as part of an EUISS project on the democratic transformations in the Arab world

Expériences de transition démocratique :

Tunisie, quelle voie ?

Séminaire

9-10 mars 2011, Tunis



Antonio Vitorino discusses democratic transitions in Tunisia

Tenu à Tunis les 9 et 10 mars 2011, ce séminaire a abordé des thèmes tels le rôle de la constitution et le processus de réforme, le processus électoral et la décentralisation, la refonte des lois qui régissent la vie publique, la réforme du système de sécurité, le pacte social, l'inclusion des acteurs politiques et la justice transitionnelle.

L'idée qui a présidé à ce séminaire international était de partir des interrogations et des défis relatifs au processus de transition en Tunisie en questionnant d'autres expériences de transition démocratique.

Les co-organisateurs ont identifié 7 axes majeurs relatifs à la problématique de la transition démocratique en Tunisie mais aussi en Espagne, au Portugal, en Pologne, en Afrique du Sud et en Amérique Latine. Les participants ont tenté de faire ressortir les aspects les plus utiles de ces expériences en rapport avec le processus de transition démocratique en cours en Tunisie.

The role of external actors in political reforms in the Arab world

Seminar

11-12 April 2011, Paris



Mustafa Hamarneh, left, and Ayman Ayoub, right.

This seminar took place on 11-12 April 2011 at the EUISS in Paris and organised by the Arab Reform Initiative in collaboration with the EUISS and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, this conference examined the role of external actors in political reforms in the Arab world.

Facing up to the challenge of democracy in the Southern Mediterranean: economic and societal trends

Workshop

12 May 2011, Brussels

Held on 12 May in Brussels in cooperation with the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA), this workshop focused on the economic and societal trends facing democracy in the Southern Mediterranean.

Book Launch: *Perspektiven für die europäische Verteidigung 2020*

Book Launch

20 May 2011, Berlin



Karl Kaiser discusses the future of European defence

Held on 20 May in Berlin, the German translation of the book "What ambitions for European defence in 2020?" was presented by EUISS Director, Álvaro de Vasconcelos. Professor Karl Kaiser of Harvard University gave a keynote speech at the launch. Following the book launch, a brainstorming session took place involving members of the German Federal Foreign Office and the EUISS.

Franco-British military cooperation: a new engine for European defence?

Occasional Paper - N°88

February 2011

by Ben Jones

In November 2010 France and Britain embarked on a new era of defence cooperation. Why did they do so? How will it work? And what impact will it have on wider European defence cooperation? In the first in-depth analysis of its kind, the author explores these questions in detail and looks at how Franco-British cooperation can be of benefit to all European states.



The internal-external security nexus: more coherence under Lisbon?

Occasional Paper - N°89

March 2011

by Florian Trauner



Can internal and foreign policy actors develop a shared understanding of European security challenges? What are the political and institutional challenges in establishing a 'holistic' approach towards European security? The author argues that the EU can strengthen its existing

coordination mechanisms by exploiting the possibilities offered by the Lisbon Treaty.

Security developments in East Asia: what implications for the EU?

Policy Brief - N°7

February 2011

by Nicola Casarini



Recent security developments in East Asia have raised questions about peace and stability in a part of the world accounting for over a quarter of EU global trade. This Policy Brief assesses the changing power relations in East Asia and highlights potential

implications of the region's security flashpoints for the EU.

The G-20: a pathway to effective multilateralism?

Chaillot Paper - N°125

April 2011

by Juha Jokela



What role is the G-20 playing on the global stage? And how does it fit in with the changing dynamics of multilateralism? The author argues that while its role is important to the EU's multilateral vision of the international order, there is a danger it could damage traditional multilateralism by favouring the most powerful players.

The Arab democratic wave: how the EU can seize the moment

ISS Report - N°9

March 2011

edited by Álvaro de Vasconcelos

This multi-author report, edited by Álvaro de Vasconcelos, was conceived as a response to the recent uprisings in Tunisia and in Egypt and the 'democratic wave' that has struck the Arab world. Clearly, these democratic uprisings call for a radical shift in the way in which Euro-Mediterranean relations are formulated and conducted.



The report seeks to examine the significance of these events in this context. The first part of the report focuses on individual countries in the region, in the following sequence: Morocco (Abdallah Saaf), Algeria (Luis Martinez), Tunisia (Azzam Mahjoub), Libya (George Joffé), Egypt (Amr Elshobaki), Palestine (Mouin Rabbani), Jordan (Mohammed Al Masri), Lebanon (Paul Salem), and Syria (Sami Kamil).

The second part of the report consists of three chapters addressing the question of human rights and the rule of law in the region (Gema Martin-Muñoz), the social and economic aspects of the democratic transition process (George Joffé), and the European Neighbourhood Policy (Erwan Lannon).

Iran in the shadow of the 2009 presidential elections

Occasional Paper - N°90

April 2011

by Rouzbeh Parsi



The West needs to return to the drawing board over its dysfunctional relationship with Iran. The author argues that there is no convincing evidence of a link between the negative impact of sanctions on the Iranian economy and an inducement of popular discontent and a change in

nuclear policy.

The role of EU defence policy in the Eastern neighbourhood

Occasional Paper - N°91

May 2011

by Ariella Huff

Can internal and foreign policy actors develop a shared understanding of European security challenges? What are the political and institutional challenges in establishing a 'holistic' approach towards European security? The author argues that the EU can strengthen its existing coordination mechanisms by exploiting the possibilities offered by the Lisbon Treaty.





THE ARAB WORLD: THE GREAT TUNISIAN BALANCING ACT

Three and a half months after the Jasmine Revolution, the tide of democratic transition in Tunisia has ebbed and flowed. A Constituent Assembly responsible for drafting a new constitution is set to be elected on 24 July. But the current interim government, lead by Beji Caid Essebi, is swamped with obstacles. It is a thankless task.

Tunisia's democratic transition is a precarious tightrope walk. The goals of the revolution – banishing the old regime and building a genuine democracy – need to be carefully developed while at the same time maintaining stability in a delicate transition period. If the new leaders pay too much attention to one they risk tumbling off completely.

Firstly, the real policy challenge lies in successfully striking this balance. But that chiefly depends on both politicians and civil society agreeing on things; consensus needs to be built and compromises need to be made.

The interim government thrashed out one such consensus between the Supervisory Body, a political reform commission, and the Council for the Protection of the Revolution, a grouping of political and civilian actors. The Supervisory Body, which is (disputably) in charge of overseeing political reform and democratic transition, is made up of 155 members from dozens of political parties, civil society organisations, lawyers, and national and regional representatives.

On 11 April the Supervisory Body voted almost unanimously to draft two preliminary decrees – one to do with creating a higher electoral body (to monitor the overall electoral process), the second to do with elections (reforming electoral law). The second decree emphasised the equal representation of women – a first in the Arab world. It also prohibited members of Ben Ali's government who had served in senior and management roles from standing as candidates.

But secondly, there is a danger that the forces still acting against the revolution might well seize any opportunity for troublemaking, threatening the already fragile security situation. While security has certainly improved in the country, ordinary citizens are intensely concerned about it breaking down again.

One unpleasant dilemma lies in the investigations into police brutality during the mass protests. The interim government needs the police force to maintain law and order, yet the Accountability and Reconciliation processes with the security

But the economy looks sluggish. Forecasts from the first quarter of 2011 predict the economy will grow by less than 1%. The number of unemployed is expected to rise in 2011 to 700,000 from 500,000 in 2010, with the unemployment rate estimated to reach around 20%.

Turning these statistics around will be demanding. The interim government needs to implement economic policies to boost employment and create jobs (particularly in poorer regions), as well as finding the institutional and financial resources to do so.



Tunisian demonstrators, carrying a national flag, March 17, 2011

Can foreign aid packages, though, particularly from Europe, help alleviate the financial burden on the Tunisian economy, and will they help avert a downturn in the already dire socio-economic conditions? Help in the form of aid packages and the conversion of debt into investment projects that create jobs seems a fair deal. It would at least prevent a nightmare scenario.

Yet a more nuanced challenge lurks in Tunisia. Islamist parties are being

forces remains a crucial component of the ongoing democratic transition.

Thirdly, the dire socio-economic situation needs to be dealt with. Making headway here is crucial in pulling the country through its democratic transition. The revolution grimly exposed Tunisia's endemic socio-economic problems; unemployment is high (14-15% of young graduates are out of work) and job security is fragile (many workers are on temporary contracts). These were powerful triggers to the waves of social protest during the revolution.

Tunisians are anxiously anticipating some sort of compromise to keep things from getting worse in the transitional period. These hazardous social conditions present another challenge: the interim government needs to maintain a peaceful social climate to have any success in fostering a thriving democracy.

included in the new vision of Tunisia, but they represent an entirely different challenge to the typical political, social and economic challenges a country in transition usually faces. Can Salafism be accommodated in the very modern vision of Tunisia that the country's new interim leaders are trying to project? How can the practices of the main Islamist party, Ennahda, match up with the values, principles and achievements of the Tunisian revolution? These bridges will have to be crossed as they arise.

And, completing this exhaustive list of hurdles, the revolution-turned-civil-war in neighbouring Libya will certainly put a strain on any progress in Tunisia. Although it is hard just yet to quantify the impact of the war in Libya on Tunisia, it is clear that Tunisia's democratic transition faces very real external challenges. Whatever the outcome, Tunisia's interim government has a formidable balancing act to perform.



THE PERSIAN GULF: THE GROUND BENEATH THEIR FEET

In the Persian Gulf the power game is generally played out in straightforward power politics, but more often in dressed-up ideological or sectarian divisions.

When Iran was a monarchy, the alliances and divisions were often described as monarchies versus republics, or Arab versus non-Arab. After the Iranian Revolution, the Islamic Republic managed to alienate both monarchies and republics, and, for all its aspirations to lead the Islamic world, never gained much traction with its peculiar version of an ideal Islamist society. Its neighbouring countries feared the ambitions of Shahs and Ayatollahs alike, but what brought them together was their desperate need to stem the tide of the revolutionaries.

While the Islamic Republic embarked on a number of dangerous adventures aiming to overthrow or destabilise neighbouring countries (i.e. export the revolution), the principle of *maslehat* (expediency) eventually set in. This was for the very simple reason that it hearkened back to a basic survival instinct. Thus while there was ample revolutionary rhetoric, the temptation to lambast corrupt monarchies and godless republics was seldom resisted. The prudence of survival made the rulers of Tehran refrain from matching deed with word. This not to say that the Islamic republic was or is not willing or able to create mischief, but to take the Iranian rhetoric of willingness to act and support the 'righteous' at face value is a grave and unnecessary mistake.

For quite some time it has seemed that the preoccupation of both Israel and the Arab states neighbouring Iran has been with Tehran's nuclear program. It is often assumed that once Iran succeeds in its attempts to acquire nuclear weapons, it will either use them (Israel's view) or it will become even more belligerent in its attempt to establish a hegemonic role for itself in the region (Saudi Arabia's

view). The Wikileaks documents showed the depth of fear and loathing certain members of the ruling elites on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf felt for their northern neighbour. While the style of the sentiment expressed was undoubtedly tailored to the American interlocutors, the underlying notion remains the same. And the hyperbolic view of Iran as a regional threat both overestimates Iran's potential to become a regional heavyweight and also flatters hardliners in Tehran – who then manage to rattle many cages without committing too many of their actual resources.

that it is the tremors in the ground beneath their feet – at home – that presents the gravest risk to autocratic rule and complacent leadership in the Middle East.

The Islamic republic faces its greatest challenge exactly because the US threat is rightly perceived to be negligible. But the domestic situation and the lack of transparent governance in Iran is an acute problem for the Iranian people. What has left the Islamic Republic reeling is accountability at home, the internal contradictions of a theocracy and a republic, and the violent quashing of any form of criticism.



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, left, and Saudi King Abdullah, right.

Similarly, Iranian political discourse has been very much based on a revolutionary and anti-American agenda. In times of internal political crisis, this rhetoric is escalated as an ersatz for domestic consensus on crucial issues. For all this bluster, the Iranian calculation is also a simple zero-sum game. Any weakening of competition is automatically assumed to strengthen one's own position. There does not seem to be much more in terms of strategy and long-term thinking in Tehran's reactions to issues at hand.

Thus Iran perceives the gravest threat to the country as outside forces stirring up trouble among the mischievous or gullible at home. Danger always emanates from outside the city walls – easily understood in hard security terms. The developments in Iran over the last two years and the Arab world over the last six months have shown

sow discord in the countries. Refusing to acknowledge sectarian discrimination on a systemic scale, ideological stubbornness and ineptness at addressing demands and implementing reforms in a meaningful way has meant the Saudis continue to use the tool of repression as its instrument of choice.

No shortsighted assessment of the situation could determine sustainability as an outcome of this approach. Saudi Arabia now owns Bahrain in more ways than it necessarily wishes – it is now also responsible for finding a long-term solution to the problems inherent in Bahraini society (problems that have been exacerbated by the ruling style of the royal family). Neither Iran nor Saudi Arabia – and most certainly not the royals of Bahrain – can afford, literally or metaphorically, to buy their way out of this self-inflicted crisis.

In its handling of the uprising in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia has shown similar ineptitude at diagnosing the root causes of the problem. The long term stability of the kingdoms in the south is jeopardised by the inability of these countries to understand and provide for their own populations, yet to be seen Iranian nuclear weapons, and even Iranian attempts to