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REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ARAB SPRING

2011 revolutions in the Arab world sparked strong worldwide interest, mainly due to the easiness with which long-reigning dictators were renouncing their power. However, the shift of power did not make those who led to overthrowing the tyrants any better off. As the price of freedom seems incalculable, it is difficult to assess unequivocally all the costs of the so-called Arab revolutions: the number of people killed and displaced, changes to the size of economies and the standard of living, the impact on both the nearest neighbours and the situation in the region. Approximately 50,000 people died in total in the four most violent uprisings in Libya, Egypt, Yemen and Syria where one of them is still on-going. Yemen's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has decreased by 10% whereas in Libya it has plummeted to levels from the beginning of the 21st century. At the same time, Egypt and Tunisia have observed a negligible increase. No figures are available from Syria but estimates say about more than a 10% drop. In the above-mentioned countries, GDP *per capita* has not changed since 2010 whereas in Libya it has dropped by a staggering several dozen percent (in 2010 Libya had one of the highest GDP *per capita* in Africa).¹ In the 2012 edition of the annual *Failed States Index* issued by Foreign Policy, it was Libya and Syria where the most notable decrease was observed (rank 50th and 23rd respectively) with Yemen "moving up the scale" and being rated 8th in the world. One of the main issues touched upon in the *Failed States Index 2012* was the Arab Spring in particular, but the picture painted by its authors turned out to be quite pessimistic and its title: *Was the Arab Spring Worth It?* does not leave much room for misinterpretation.² The purpose of this article is to present the international implications of the Arab Spring. Detailed analysis will focus on the regional context, because the most important changes took place in the the nearest neighbours of these countries. Firstly, the Arab Spring toppled some myths about the changes in the region. Secondly, a change of government that took place in the Libya and Egypt, scared the other leaders in the region. As a result, the rulers undertook measures aimed at reducing social tensions (budget transfers for the poorest). Thirdly, the intervention in Libya showed that the West can intervene militarily in its nearest surroundings, when its interests are threatened.

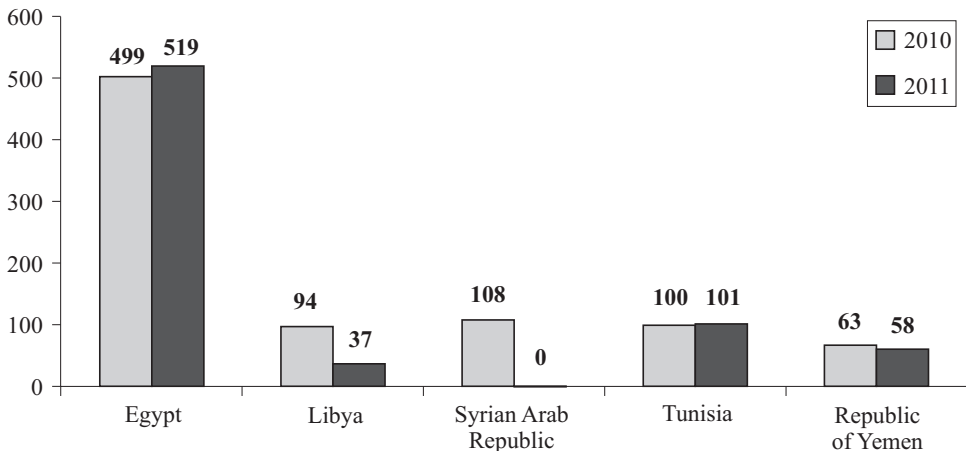
Each of the countries listed above has gone through changes in their own peculiar way. The civil war and the strategic defence chosen by Muammar al-Qaddafi claimed

¹ *World Economic Outlook Database*, 16 July 2012, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2012/01/weodata/index.aspx> (24.08.2012).

² H. Ibish, *Was the Arab Spring Worth It?*, "Foreign Policy", July/August 2012.

the highest death toll in Libya. In Egypt, growing political tensions and economic issues affected the average citizens more than clashes between the protesters and the security forces. Prior to 2011, Yemen had one of the worst economic and social indicators in the world, deteriorated economy and practically dysfunctional government agencies. Moreover, the benefits brought about by the protest movement did not yet materialize in any tangible way. Syria is a completely different story. With the revolution being far from the end, there are only mounting costs: thousands of people killed, tens of thousands displaced, an economic crash while the benefits are expected to come in a distant future and only on condition that favourable political changes take place (Bashar al-Assad stepping aside). With the majority of transformations under way, the onset of which was marked by the revolutions, it appears that there is no longing for the old days. Despite months of chaos and violence, no one in Libya feels truly nostalgic about Muammar al-Qaddafi. The same can be said about Egypt where the memory of Hosni Mubarak is cherished by very few. A much worse situation is in Yemen where the crisis continues and it is hard to acknowledge that the change of power will put an end to it. Although the ongoing civil war in Syria does weaken al-Assad's regime, the costs of his downfall, both human and material, are likely to be huge. However, the brutality of the current regime and repressions directed at the citizens urge the society to think that anyone will make a better ruler than al-Assad. Nevertheless, in the case of a prolonged war in Syria, there is already a risk that radical groups will take over at this stage.

Graph 1. GDP (ppp) of the Arab countries in the years 2010–2011 (bln USD)

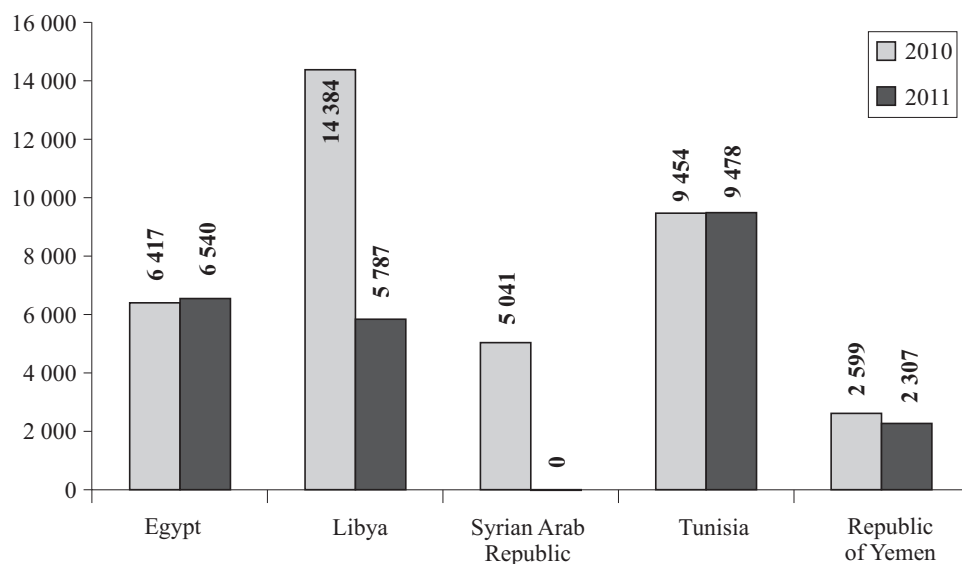


Source: *World Economic Outlook Database*, 16 July 2012, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2012/01/weodata/index.aspx> (24.08.2012).

Completely different issues are the subject of consideration in the context of the international implications of the Arab Spring. At the stage of revolutions themselves, the countries variously reacted to the unfolding course of events: from astonishment at the very fact of the outbreak of fightings (Tunisia), through favourable comments (Egypt) to a military intervention (Libya) and indecisiveness and quarrels (Syria). But only new governments, elected in a more or less democratic manner, are capable of determining

the development path of Arabic states and the international community will have to take an unequivocal stand.

Graph 2. GDP per capita (ppp) of the Arab countries in the years 2010–2011(bln USD)



Source: *World Economic Outlook Database*, 16 July 2012, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2012/01/weodata/index.aspx> (24.08.2012).

ARAB SPRING. MYTHS AND REALITY

The events of the Arab Spring have reverberated widely, not only in the region, but also all over the world, disproving on this occasion several prevailing misconceptions about the Arab world. One of them is a statement that Arabs do not go out on the streets to protest. Before the protests erupted in Tunisia and Egypt, numerous experts had claimed that no political reforms had been necessary to execute as there had been no social need for them. This kind of logic indicated that Arab societies would not demand any changes and any suggestions for reforms would be perceived as a threat to the public interest. However, it transpired that such arguments misfired completely as no one had envisaged the developments in Tunisia and Egypt. Therefore, it needs to be stated that no Arabic state is immune to such events (see, the *casus* of Syria).³ Governments do not have the luxury of waiting and should not abuse the myth of peace in order to avoid instigating essential reform processes. Since the events in Tunisia, the states of the Middle East have allocated vast sums of money for various social programmes, mainly with the aim to appease the public mood. The largest financial support was de-

³ N. Bubnova, P. Salem, *Arab Spring: View From Within the Region*, “Voenno-Promyshlennyi Kurier”, 1.06.2011.

clared by the Saudi Arabia authorities who implemented a 15% salary increase in the public sector with the final cost of the social programme reaching over \$36 milliards.⁴ Ideas about how to help varied among the countries: free food (Kuwait), additional allowance for each family (Bahrain), tax reductions (Jordan) or minimum wage increase (Oman).⁵

Secondly, there was a prevailing conviction that the liberalization of the economy should precede political reforms. Arabic governments and the representatives of the Western world alike had believed that liberalization and economic reforms should take a priority over political changes. The chief argument was that it is more important for people to satisfy their basic necessities of life. It transpired, however, that the attempts to liberalize the economy without the system of (democratic) control did not bring about an improvement in the economic well-being of the majority of the society.⁶ Since the benefits of privatization were enjoyed only by political and business elites, the Arabs had in consequence quite a negative disposition towards economic liberalism and globalization. It seems quite obvious that economic reforms should occur in parallel to political changes, so that the institutional mechanisms of responsibility could function and the economic benefits were more widely accessible.⁷ Another statement was related to the necessity for the closed (authoritarian) systems to function in order to prevent Islamists from seizing power. The West feared that democracy would open the door for extremist political parties to legally come into power and institute radical changes to their foreign policy. Ruling elites in Arabic states exploited the situation, creating an impression that they are the only possible alternative to a complete domination of extreme political forces. It transpired, however, that in spite of constituting a crucial element of Arabic communities and their political life (so far largely unrepresented), Islamists do not play such a significant role in Tunisia, Egypt or Libya. The claim that the only alternative to authoritarian regimes are Islamic extremists was also disproved. The protests of Arabic communities in 2011 and 2012 seem to have repelled corrupt elements, pretence of justice and arbitrary treatment. The participation of Islamists in the post-revolutionary governments of Tunisia and Egypt shows that it is possible to create a pluralist system since the majority of Arabic states cannot allow themselves to be isolated on the international scene and burdened with economic troubles (the tourist industry is a crucial economic sector for Tunisia and Egypt in particular).⁸

Prior to the revolution, in order to maintain their domination Arabic leaders had been proclaiming elections but parliaments (potential governments) created as a result

⁴ C. Murphy, *Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah promises \$36 billion in benefits*, "The Christian Science Monitor", 23.02.2011; D. Gardner, *Citizens not serfs can save Saudi Arabia*, "Financial Times", 27.02.2011.

⁵ *Arab economies. Throwing money at the street*, "The Economist", 10.03.2011.

⁶ I. Saif, *Economic Reform in Arab Countries and Escaping from the Trap of the 'Middle Income' Bracket*, "Al-Hayat", 25.10.2011.

⁷ M. Mausher, *Arab Myths and Realities*, The Project Syndicate, 8.03.2011, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/arab-myths-and-realities> (24.08.2012).

⁸ *Tunesian Islamist in power. Doing well on parole*, "The Economist", 7.04.2012; S. Hendrix, *For Egypt's new Islamist government, jobs is first priority*, "The Washington Post", 7 July 2012; and K. Fahim, *New Egyptian Cabinet Includes Many Holdovers*, "The New York Times", 2.08.2012.

of them were weak, unpopular and practically deprived of social support. Elections in the region were used to create a facade of democracy and legitimize autocratic rulers in the eyes of the world. The Arab public opinion is no longer capable of tolerating a situation like that. Instead of cosmetic remodelling of the manner of governing, the society expects authentic changes that will lead to the enhancement of the economic situation on the one hand, and a greater participation in ruling (democracy).⁹ Last but not least, the final problem refers to the role the international community plays in relation to the Arab Spring. The United States and other remaining Western countries should support democratic reforms but not impose certain solutions. President Obama has thrown aside many of President Bush's methods which were perceived by the Arab world as attempts to forcefully impose democracy. However, the silence surrounding the sprouting germs of young democracy can result in the fading of the reform process within the next several years. The West should enter into a discourse with new leaders of the Arabic countries about political and economic reforms that are being executed. Particularly these aims: increase of openness and separation of powers, should not be sacrificed by the Western leaders.

It is worth mentioning one other aspect of the Arab Spring that has been widely discussed all over the world – demography. It appears that it is impossible to explain the origins of the uprisings without pointing to the fact that Arab societies are very young: individuals less than 30 years old constitute approximately 65% of the population. In connection with a difficult economic situation (unemployment among young people in the region is the highest in the world, reaching 25%) it caused growing dissatisfaction and frustration.¹⁰ In this case, new technologies like mobile phones and the Internet were only the tools that accelerated the occurrence of certain events and facilitated communication. In addition, young Arabs are becoming increasingly better educated and knowledgeable about international events than ever before. They were noticing wealth and freedom enjoyed by the elites of the Arab states and felt angry and disenfranchised that they are unable to participate in all of that.¹¹

REACTION OF THE ARAB WORLD TO THE CHANGES

The sudden outburst of dissatisfaction in December 2010 (and its subsequent spreading to the North African states) took most of the observers and Arab governments alike by surprise. Mohammed Bouazizi's seemingly accidental act of self-immolation became a catalyst for change elicited by socio-economic difficulties and political coercion of the Arab people. On one side stood a generation of young people who had been exposed to the influence of modernising powers (television, Internet, social media);

⁹ M. Muasher, *How to Achieve Real Reform in the Arab World*, "Washington Post", 2.02.2011.

¹⁰ I. Drine, *Youth Unemployment in the Arab World: What Do We Know? What is the Way Forward?*, June 2012, http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/newsletter/articles-2012/en_GB/06-07-2012-Drine/ (24.08.2012).

¹¹ E. Knickmeyer, *The Arab World's Young Army*, "Foreign Policy", January 2011; and M. Hoffman, A. Jamal, *The Youth and the Arab Spring*, "Middle East Law and Governance" 2012, No. 4, p. 168–188.

and on the other – oppressive political regimes that were no longer capable of safeguarding a better life for that young generation in particular. New media and advanced communication technologies completely transformed terms of discussion between the ruling and the ruled, which in consequence led to an utter loss of control over the flow of information by the governments. Both in Tunisia and Egypt, mobile phones and Internet-enabled communication connected thousands of people with each other and provided a platform for the dissemination of information about coming protests, demonstrations and manifestations. We need to remember that political tensions in the Arab world had already been growing prior to the uprising in Tunisia in the middle of 2010; in Bahrain and Kuwait, local authorities had marginalized political activities of the opposition, narrowing the field of public discussion over the most important socio-economic issues. The first state of the Persian Gulf that experienced widespread protests against the Al-Khalifa royal family was Bahrain (Spring 2011).¹² Those protests, however, were stifled due to an intervention of states forming the *Gulf Cooperation Council* (GCC), namely with the forces of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Small-scale protests took place in Kuwait, Oman (where security forces opened fired on protesters in February 2011) and Saudi Arabia (Eastern provinces). Saudi Arabia's rulers arrested the founders of the first political party whereas in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) intellectuals calling for political reforms in the emirate were arrested and sentenced.¹³

Paradoxically, it was the GCC countries that became the supporters and inspirers of the intervention in Libya. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, *ipso facto*, were the first countries to unequivocally declare support for the Libyan opposition. On the one hand, it was a sign of “concern” for respecting political rights of the opposition; on the other hand, which appears more vital, it was dictated by the willingness to play a more significant role in the regional (or even international) policy. Other reasons for the ambitious plans of both Qatar and UAE were: diverting attention from their internal problems (the possibility for unrest to occur within these countries) as well as other, more prestige and image-related considerations (UAE forces had actively participated in suppressing riots in Bahrain). Thus, the fact of supporting the Libyan opposition was a clear signal that GCC regimes were not as conservative and repressive as they would have seemed and that they were capable of supporting opposition forces in the Arab states. Particular support for the concept of human rights protection and resolving the conflict in Libya in the fastest possible way was offered by Qatar. The Prime Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber al Thani, played a leading role in persuading the GCC countries and the Arab League to establish a no-fly zone over Libya and to recognize the Libyan National Transitional Council. He also argued that “Qatar will participate in military action because we believe there must be Arab states undertaking this action,

¹² E. Bronner, M. Slackman, *Saudi Troops Enter Bahrain to Help Put Down Unrest*, “The New York Times”, 14.03.2011, p. A1; and B. Friedman, *Battle for Bahrain: What One Uprising Meant for the Gulf States and Iran*, “World Affairs”, March/April 2012.

¹³ Saudi Arabia: *Free Political Activists. Secret Police Crackdown on Founders of First Political Party*, 20 February 2011, Human Rights Watch, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/19/saudi-arabia-free-political-activists> (28.09.2012); and Ch. Davidson, *Fear and Loathing in the Emirates*, 18 September 2012.

because the situation there is intolerable".¹⁴ In conjunction with UAE, Qatar had provided military and financial aid which became key for the international coalition forces and the success of the opposition in Libya. Qatari *Mirage 2000* jet fighters participated in the NATO operation in Libya, which at least partially dismissed voices about the intervention by the West (although their role was quite negligible).¹⁵ In addition, Qatar supplied weapons and the Qatari special forces provided the Libyan opposition with training and operational assistance, which to a large extent contributed to the ultimate victory of the opposition in Libya.¹⁶

Qatar and the UAE alike provided substantial material and logistic support for the Libyan National Transitional Council. In May 2011, the UAE hosted a meeting attended by the representatives of the Libyan tribes and national groups, and in June 2011 a meeting of the *International Contact Group* (ICG). Qatar's non-military aid was estimated to exceed \$400 million, comprising water, gas and basic necessities supplies as well as assistance with selling Libyan oil on the global markets. During the most intensive fights in Benghazi in June 2011, *Qatar Petroleum* covered most of the energy needs of the city and the neighbourhood area by supplying petrol and diesel oil. Furthermore, as mentioned above, Qatar was the first state to recognize the Libyan National Transitional Council as the legitimate representative of the Libyan nation and also a host of the first meeting of the ICG in April 2011.¹⁷ Amongst the remaining GCC states, it was Kuwait who had the greatest input in endorsing the Libyan revolution by donating \$260 million to support the mechanism of financing the Libyan National Transitional Council and providing both medical and humanitarian aid. Even Saudi Arabia added Libya to the list of regimes (including Syria and Yemen) for which the country had withdrawn its political support. It is clear that the changes experienced by the Arab states considerably affected the safety policy of the main players in the region, particularly of Saudi Arabia for which the Arab Spring could have had grave consequences in the area of their internal policy. It has to be noted, however, that the events of 2011 provided a perfect opportunity for the GCC countries to change their image of conservative regimes, although not all of the states took advantage of that in the same way Qatar did. Nevertheless, actions undertaken by the GCC states showed that in spite of their intervention in Bahrain, they are capable of maintaining, at least temporarily, the pretence of control over the societies and reconciling their internal conservative policy with political and economic reforms.

Following the diplomatic success regarding Libya, Qatari authorities intended to continue their engagement in resolving the conflict in Syria, even more so because Qatar held rotating leadership of the Arab League in 2011–2012. However, the attempts to find backing for solving regional problems ended in failure. Emir Sheikh Hamad be-

¹⁴ *Qatar to take part in military action over Libya*, Reuters, 20.03.2011.

¹⁵ R. Norton-Taylor, S. Rogers, N. Hopkins, *Arab states play limited role in battle against Muammar Gaddafi's regime*, "The Guardian", 22.05.2011; and *Qatar's air mission the first led by an Arab state*, Al-Arabyia News, 26.03.2011.

¹⁶ S. Kerr, *Gamble on Libya pays off for Qatar*, "Financial Times", 28.08.2011; and I. Black, *Qatar admits sending hundreds of troops to support Libya rebels*, "The Guardian", 26.10.2011.

¹⁷ D. Roberts, *Behind Qatar's Intervention In Libya*, "Foreign Affairs", September 2011.

came the first Arab leader who in the middle of January 2012 called for military intervention aiming at ending the bloodshed in Syria. His appeal, however, failed to produce any effect and attracted lesser attention than the Libyan case.¹⁸ Even if the Arab states themselves saw the necessity to reach an agreement over the revolution in Syria, they did not succeed in the form of the potential intervention itself (initially they had planned to send observer missions). Yet, the emir of Qatar was determined to perpetuate Qatar's role as the responsible and most actively engaged member of the Arab community. It turned out to be substantially more difficult than it had seemed as the balance of power in Syria was considerably less attainable and the opposition more divided than in Libya. Because of that, diplomatic, political as well as economic and media pressure was increased. In February 2012 the Prime Minister, Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al-Thani, publically declared his support for changing the regime and appealed to the international community for arming the Syrian opposition and assistance in overthrowing al-Assad by all possible means (the fact of providing material support to the Syrian opposition by Qatar and Saudi Arabia was not without significance).¹⁹ Due to the small population and vast oil and gas reserves, Qatar experiences neither socio-economic nor political pressure from its own citizens as is happening in the other states of North Africa and the Middle East. It transpires that Qatar sees the events of the Arab Spring more in terms of new prospects that are opening up for itself rather than a challenge. Perhaps it is about affirming its international reputation, even at the cost of good foreign relations with some of the Arab states.

One cannot help but notice a competition between Qatar and Saudi Arabia with regard to resolving the Syrian conflict, especially in the light of the fact that the calling of Qatari authorities for arming the Syrian opposition occurred a few days after a similar offer had been put forward by Saudi Arabia's prince Saud al-Faisal. It was also the Saudi Arabians who were the first to recognize the Syrian National Council as the legitimate representative of the Syrian nation and at the non-state level are the biggest weapon supplier for the Syrian opposition.²⁰ The behaviour of the GCC states towards Syria is, however, guided by entirely different and somewhat less noble motives. The protests of public opinion in the Arab countries and positive reactions of the Arab communities to the bloody events in Syria can hardly be applauded. On the other hand, it has to be noted that vetoing the UNSC draft resolution of 4 February by China and Russia²¹ sparked protests in the GCC countries (in Kuwait protesters even gathered in front

¹⁸ *Syria crisis: Qatar calls for Arabs to send in troops*, BBC, 14.01.2012; and F. Krause-Jackson, N. Gaouette, *Qatari Leader Calls for Arab-Led Intervention in Syria*, "Bloomberg Businessweek", 25.09.2012.

¹⁹ R. Worth, *Citing U.S. Fears, Arab Allies Limit Syrian Rebel Aid*, "New York Times", 6.10.2012, p. A1. See: K. Urlichsen, *Arab Solutions to Arab Problems?*, *The Changing Regional Role of the Gulf States*, "Russia in Global Affairs", 25.03.2012.

²⁰ R. Sherlock, *Saudi millions and special forces expertise turn Syria's rebels into a fighting force*, "The Telegraph", 21.09.2012; and R. Abouzeid, *Syria's Secular and Islamist Rebels: Who Are the Saudis and the Qataris Arming?*, "Time", 18.09.2012.

²¹ *Security Council Fails to Adopt Draft Resolution on Syria as Russia and China veto text supporting Arab League's proposed peace plan*, 4.02.2012, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/sc10536.doc.htm> (15.10.2012).

of the Russian Embassy).²² The main motive behind the steps undertaken by Saudi Arabia is to weaken the position of Iran as the regional power and the desire to further isolate the regime. Apart from that, there is reluctance from Saudi Arabia rulers towards Iraqi authorities who are being accused of collaboration with Iran and a concern that the potential cooperation of Iraq, Iran and Syria could lead to the shift in power in the Middle East and jeopardize the interests of the USA and Saudi Arabia. The support offered to the rebels in Syria averts such a possibility and strengthens the position of Saudi Arabia as the major regional power.²³

While recapitulating the attitudes of selected Arab states towards the problem of Libya and Syria, it is impossible to avoid the issue of double standards applied by some of them in their foreign and security policies. Such double standards are perfectly noticeable in actions undertaken by Saudi Arabia. On 14 March 2011, over 1000 soldiers of the Saudi Arabia National Guard together with the United Arab Emirates police contingent marched into Bahrain. Even though they probably did not participate in the suppression of the pro-democratic opposition, their presence itself was enough to contribute to the collapse of the uprising.²⁴ Yet a few days later, on 19 March, both Saudi Arabia and Qatar supported international intervention in Libya in order to protect civilians. After all, the Qatari authorities also found themselves in an awkward situation, especially that the intervention in Bahrain was undertaken on behalf of the *Gulf Cooperation Council* (GCC). The manner in which the changes in the Arab world were commented live by the *Al-Jazeera* television (broadcasting from Doha), where one could hear voices of unequivocal support for the uprisings in Libya and Syria, is also evidence of the degree of complexity of the international situation in the region. However, the journalists of the station are very restrained and wary in expressing their opinions about the problems in Bahrain or the eastern provinces of Saudi Arabia.²⁵

WESTERN COUNTRIES AND THE ARAB SPRING: NATO INTERVENTION IN LIBYA

There are at least several reasons for the engagement of NATO troops in the protection of civilians in Libya. First of all, considering al-Qaddafi's attitude, it was hard to rely on his voluntary resignation. A decided advantage of government forces must have

²² N. Mac Farquhar, A. Shadid, *Russia and China Block U.N. Action on Crisis in Syria*, "New York Times", 4.02.2012, p. A1.

²³ M. Gordon, *Iran's Master of Iraq Chaos Still Vexes U.S.*, "New York Times", 2.10.2012, p. A1; M. Eisenstadt, *Iran's Influence in Iraq*, April 2011, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus111.pdf>, Policy Focus#111 (17.09.2012); and B. Rahimi, *Iran's Declining Influence in Iraq*, "The Washington Quarterly", Winter 2012, p. 25–40.

²⁴ E. Bronner, M. Slackman, *Saudi Troops Enter Bahrain to Help Put Down Unrest*, "The New York Times", 14 March 2011, p. A1, *Saudi soldiers sent into Bahrain*, AlJazeera, 15.03.2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/03/2011314124928850647.html> (19.11.2012).

²⁵ K. Ulrichsen, *Small States with a Big Role: Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in the Wake of the Arab Spring*, October 2012, <http://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/alsabah/SmallStateswithaBigRole.pdf> (28.10.2012).

resulted in the rebels' defeat and they could not have escaped it without external support. Second, the social structure itself rooted in the tribal "esprit de corps" created conditions in which the tribes that rebelled against al-Qaddafi were not inclined to cease their actions until they achieved their primary aim. Needless to say, the revolt of tribal structures along with the government's reaction to it (the use of force against the rebels) led to the outbreak of the civil war. On 12 March 2011 the League of Arab States called for more radical actions with regard to the situation in Libya whereas on 17 March 2011 the UN Security Council adopted resolution no 1973 of 17 March 2011.²⁶ In the resolution Libya was denounced for not complying with a previous resolution of 26 February 2011. It was also condemned for attacks on civilians and breaching human rights. The resolution also stated that actions directed against the people in Libya could be classified as crimes against humanity. The UNSC's decision entitled the member states to take all the necessary measures to protect civilians (military occupation of Libya was, however, ruled out). The mechanisms leading to the accomplishment of these tasks were defined in the following way: firstly, by establishing a no-fly zone over the entire territory of Libya. Secondly, by introducing an embargo on all weapon supplies to Libya, including defining rules regarding cargo ship inspections. Thirdly, it opened the way to implementing a forcible solution however limited to establishing a no-fly zone (and compelling observance of it only) as well as protecting civilians. It is worth adding that the resolution did not give a mandate to support the offensive of the rebel forces from the air or engage land forces.²⁷

The military intervention under the code name *Odyssey Dawn* began on 19 March 2011 and was initially led by a group of states under the leadership of France, Great Britain and the USA. Despite the fact that it was the Europeans that had mostly insisted on the armed intervention, it transpired that they did not have sufficient military potential and greater engagement of the USA was required. However, the Americans announced from the very beginning that their participation in the mission would be gradually limited and the responsibility for it handed over to the Europeans). As a result of the talks, on 27 March 2011 it was decided that the North Atlantic Alliance would take over the leadership of the operation as a *Unified Protector* (the decision was put into effect on 31 March).²⁸ The primary aim of the operation was to force al-Qaddafi to fulfil UN's demands. It was eventually to become insufficient as the rebels intended to topple al-Qaddafi's regime, which received endorsement of the Arab world in particular.²⁹ Thus, the termination of intervention was in fact conditional upon the Libyan leader's stepping aside, which happened on 20 October 2011, and was a sufficient rea-

²⁶ *Resolution 1973 (2011) adopted by the Security Council at its 6498th meeting, on 17 March 2011*, S/RES/1973 (2011), 17.03.2011.

²⁷ *Russia accuses NATO of going beyond UN resolution on Libya*, "Russia Today", 17.04.2011; D. Paal, *China: Mugged by Reality in Libya, Again*, "Asia Pacific Brief", 11.04.2011; and Carnegie, J. Marcus, *Why China and Russia rebuffed the West on Syria*, BBC, 5.10.2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-15180732> (24.11.2012).

²⁸ *Odyssey Dawn, Unified Protector? Here's what it means...*, 28.03.2011, <http://www.aco.nato.int/page76501852.aspx> (25.11.2012).

²⁹ *Libya: Gaddafi must step down, says 'contact group'*, BBC, 13.04.2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-15180732> (24.11.2012).

son for NATO to announce the end of its mission.³⁰ The involvement of NATO troops came to an end on 1 November 2011 with an official termination of the *Unified Protector* operation. A few days earlier, on 27 October, the UNSC repealed the resolution of March 2011.³¹ The NATO military action can be considered a success not only because of the end of the civil war in Libya, but mainly due to the fact that it was non-U.S. forces who played a decisive role in the military operations (with France, Great Britain and Italy in the lead). In addition, the following Arab countries participated in the operation: UAE, Qatar, Jordan and Morocco.³²

Undoubtedly, the involvement of NATO troops in the conflict resolution in Libya indeed ended in success if one measures the successfulness of the mission by its effectiveness, i.e. regime change – even though it was not the primary justification of the UN resolution. Nevertheless, the following conclusions regarding the relations between the West and the Arab world can be drawn on the basis of the operation in Libya. The legality of the intervention has to be considered in the first place. The intervention was possible because of fulfilling three basic conditions: legality (approval of the UNSC), legitimacy (endorsement of Arab states, including the Arab League) and providing effectual assistance (weakening of al-Qaddafi's regime and existence of organized opposition). It is hard to believe that similar circumstances could occur in the future, which the conflict in Syria clearly proves; in addition, one has to take into account interests of other international players, such as Russia and China. Second, the case of Libya will certainly not become a new war model (conflict resolution). Bombarding regime armies by NATO air forces in order to protect civilians undoubtedly brought about a desired effect. However, the toppling of the regime and taking over power by the rebels was only possible thanks to the existence of strong and organized opposition forces. It appears that if an intervention of land forces (which obviously was not permitted) or special forces had been required, the conflict in Libya could have transformed into the "Afghan" model. Third, it seems that the situation from Iraq, let alone Afghanistan, will not be repeated in Libya. Organized opposition against al-Qaddafi actively operating for the last few years, relatively insignificant importance of extremist Islamic groups, little influence of the army (in comparison to Egypt, for instance), revenue yielded from exporting oil, relatively sparse population and fairly undamaged infrastructure – all these factors allow us to look to the future with optimism, perhaps even to venture a view that Libya has every chance to become one of the most developed African states. Fourth, the situation in the North Atlantic Alliance became complicated after Germany and Turkey raised a firm objection against the involvement of NATO in Libya. In fact, only a small number of European countries were engaged in military operations which would not have been possible anyway had it not been for the support of the U.S. troops

³⁰ *Statement by the NATO Secretary General on Libya*, 20 October 2011, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_79742.htm (25.11.2012); and *NATO Secretary General statement on end of Libya mission*, 28 October 2011, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_80052.htm (25.11.2012).

³¹ R. Gladstone, *U.N. Votes to End Foreign Intervention in Libya*, "New York Times", 27.10.2011, p. A10.

³² I. Daalder, J. Stavridis, *NATO's Success in Libya*, "The International Herald Tribune", 31.10.2011.

present in the Mediterranean region. Last, it is worth considering the role and tasks the European Union and individual member states could play and perform in the “new” Libya. On the one hand, one has to notice an essential role of this country in holding back the wave of international terrorism, issues related to migrations to the European continent or the safety of supplies of energy resources to the south of Europe. On the other hand, any form of pressure exerted by European countries on the new government may result in it distancing itself from the cooperation with Europe. From the onset, France and Italy have been expressing their interest in developing a close cooperation regarding economic or energy joint ventures.³³

The power shift in Libya also undermined the foundations on which the former cooperation between the West and the Arab states rested on. Supporting political stability in North Africa was supposed to resolve the problem of terrorism or migrations to Europe. However, the belief that the endeavours to attain economic liberalization will lead to moderating political regimes in North Africa proved to be an unsuccessful strategy which was challenged by the very citizens of Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. The rationale behind the EU policy (or the policy of the individual EU states) to support authoritarian but secular regimes (in the area of political and economic cooperation) was an attempt to give protection against radical Islamic groups being, mainly in Egypt, under the regime control. That assumption proved to be wrong as well as the revolutions in Tunisia, Libya or Egypt had more secular character although Islamic groups did come to power in Egypt. Even though the European policy towards the North African states generally needs to be assessed negatively, elaborating a new vision of policy related to this region will require completely different rules, assumptions and goals. Therefore, both the European Union’s policy and its instruments used with regard to the states of the region of North Africa and the Middle East (MENA) have to undergo a fundamental change. A step in the right direction is to come up with and define new priorities for assistance based on four pillars: conditionality, differentiation among the states, support of democracy and emphasis on sustainable socio-economic development. The new policy is supposed to be forged under the banner: more money, more access to the market and more mobility, and its primary aim is to conclude the so-called *Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement* (DCFTA). Among the new EU initiatives, one can mention the *SPRING programme* (Support for Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth) where about €350 million has been allocated for the states of the North African region whereas in years 2011–2013 within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument Tunisia and Egypt have been allocated €160 and €450 million respectively. Curiously enough, poor results yielded by previous programmes have certainly led to the resignation from rigidly laid down conditions for providing assistance and instead of putting forward a list of terms and conditions that the help-seeking countries should satisfy, the European Commission is suggesting a more lenient approach that involves a process of mutual listening (*listening mode*). The purpose of such behaviour is to draw the Arab countries into cooperation with the EU whereas a relaxation

³³ S. Joshi, *Six lessons from Libya*, in: *The Arab Spring. Implications for British Policy*, Middle East Council, October 2011, p. 16–19.

of procedures for providing assistance is aimed at encouraging partners to not give up efforts in favour of political and economic reforms.³⁴

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While attempting to perform an evaluation of the events in the Arab world, initiated by Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in December 2010, it is impossible to detach ourselves from the European perspective we adopt in order to assess political, social and economic changes. Certainly, it is difficult to be an impartial observer in a situation like that; however, it appears that the policy of the European countries regarding the Arab world was totally misguided. The supporting efforts provided by the European politicians to the regimes of Libya or Egypt proved to be myopic. The policy of Western partners was closely related to their belief that authoritarian regimes would secure certainty, stability and predictability, which would directly translate into good relations, both economic (supplies of energy resources from Libya) and political (the president of Egypt was perceived as a sufficient guarantee against Islamic extremism). It transpired, however, that the policy had weak foundations and the Western European politicians misconstrued the intentions of the Arab communities. The overthrow of president Ben Ali left the Western world utterly perplexed, in the same manner as the course of the revolution in Egypt did. It was in Libya where the West finally intervened. Yet the situation in Syria proves again to surpass the capabilities of collaboration amongst the leading global policy powers. Reservations of China and Russia, or rather their own interests, are the main stumbling blocks in the way of reaching an agreement over the conflict termination in Syria.

The situation in the Arab world is dynamic, and changes have not been completed. It is particularly relevant to the situation in Egypt where the society is dissatisfied with president Mursi's other authoritarian moves. Moreover, the underlying causes of the Arab revolutions, namely unemployment, corruption, lack of prospects for young generations, or unequal re-distribution of GDP are still largely unresolved. Changes, particularly in the North African states, appear to be a great opportunity for the European Union. More importantly, however, EU authorities are making an effort to notice the problem and are no longer as restrictive and uncompromising when assisting other countries of the region. It will be of paramount importance for the future of the European Union itself and its closest neighbouring countries.

ABSTRACT

2012 revolutions in the Arab world sparked strong worldwide interest, mainly due to the easiness with which long-reigning dictators were renouncing their power. However, the shift of power did not make those who led to overthrowing the tyrants any better off. As the price of free-

³⁴ R. Balfour, *Changes and Continuities in EU-Mediterranean Relations after the Arab Spring*, in: *An Arab Springboard for EU Foreign Policy*, eds. S. Biscop, R. Balfour, M. Emerson, Brussels, January 2012, p. 27–37.

dom seems incalculable, it is difficult to assess unequivocally all the costs of the so-called Arab revolutions: the number of people killed and displaced, changes to the size of economies and the standard of living, the impact on both the nearest neighbours and the situation in the region. The purpose of this article is to present the international implications of the Arab Spring. Detailed analysis will focus on the regional context, because the most important changes took place in the the nearest neighbours of these countries. Firstly, the Arab Spring toppled some myths about the changes in the region. Secondly, a change of government that took place in the Libya and Egypt, scared the other leaders in the region. As a result, the rulers undertook measures aimed at reducing social tensions (budget transfers for the poorest). Thirdly, the intervention in Libya showed that the West can intervene militarily in its nearest surroundings, when its interests are threatened.

ARABSKA WIOSNA – REGIONALNE IMPLIKACJE

STRESZCZENIE

Rewolucje w świecie arabskim wzbudzały ogromne zainteresowanie na całym świecie, głównie z powodu łatwości, z jaką panujący od lat dyktatorzy oddawali władzę. Jednak zmiana władzy nie oznaczała faktycznej poprawy bytu ludzi, którzy doprowadzili do upadku tyranów. Cena wolności wydaje się być niepoliczalna, trudno więc jednoznacznie oszacować wszystkie koszty tzw. arabskich rewolucji: ilość zabitych i wysiedlonych, zmiany wielkości gospodarek i poziomu życia, wpływ na najbliższych sąsiadów i sytuację w regionie. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie międzynarodowych implikacji arabskiej wiosny. Przedmiotem szczegółowej analizy będzie jednak kontekst regionalny, ponieważ konsekwencje arabskiej wiosny właśnie w najbliższym otoczeniu Tunezji, Libii i Egiptu spowodowały największe zmiany. Po pierwsze, arabska wiosna obaliła pewne mity dotyczące zmian w państwach regionu. Po drugie, sposób zmiany władzy, przstraszył pozostałych przywódców w regionie, co spowodowało pewne kroki z ich strony (polegające głównie na łagodzeniu napięć społecznych). Po trzecie, interwencja w Libii pokazała, że Zachód jest w stanie interweniować zbrojnie w swoim najbliższym otoczeniu, gdy zagrożone są jego interesy.