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The Shifting Hard and Soft Balance of Power in
the Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Complex¹

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Abstract

The current shifting balance of power in the Euro-Mediterranean is not only intra- and interregional (such as also involving the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Arab League), but also local, as the country revolutions since the winter of 2010/11 show. In this paper some of the regional and inter-regional dynamics of the Euro-Mediterranean regional security complex’ (e.g. Boening, 2008 and 2009) strategic shifts in hard and soft power are highlighted², such as the interplay between the EU’s soft power initiatives, e.g. through the European Neighborhood Policy/Union for the Mediterranean, and the continuing trans-Atlantic involvement in the region, e.g. through the Iran-Hezbollah trajectories in the “Americas”.

1. Introduction: Europe’s Ambivalence Towards the Euro-Med?

This paper aims to trace some of the macro strategic currents affecting power shifts in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It incorporates previous research (e.g. Boening 2008a, Boening 2008b, Boening 2009³), which assessed the Euro-Mediterranean region as a Regional Security Super Complex (representing a modification of work by Buzan and Waever (1998) pertaining to a Middle Eastern Regional Security Complex (see Appendix 1). The notable actors of a Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Super Complex would be to the north especially the EU, represented post-Lisbon formally via

¹ The author wishes to thank the external readers from the Europe and the Arab Region Post-January 2011 Workshop by the Kellogg Forschergruppe/The Transformative Power of Europe, Freie Universitaet Berlin, for their comments to parts of this paper.

² As an in-depth discussion would exceed the parameters of this paper

³ This was later independently recognized on a more general trans-Atlantic level by the “Euro-Atlantic Security Community”, a unique process created in 2009 called the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative (EASI) by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and reaffirmed on Feb. 3, 2012 at the Munich Security Conference by twenty-six former generals, senior policymakers, and businesspeople from Russia, North America, and Europe, who warned that the security situation in the Euro-Atlantic region is sliding backwards, and called for the creation of a new, more ambitious security dialogue in the region.

the European External Action Service (EEAS) as well as European Commission programs (specifically those geared to relations with the southern neighborhood, such as the European Neighborhood's EuroMed Partnership (EMP) formerly, and now the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)) as formal soft power projection in this region. Additionally, NATO would be one transatlantic link of a Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security *Super* Complex (EMRSSC), representing a soft⁴ as well as a hard power aspect. Additional "actors" of an EMRSSC are i.a. the national policies of the UfM member states (MSs), reflecting national historical and economic preferences and their political assertions externally, such as with neighboring states, or the EU or Arab League politics. These are outlined in this paper amidst the radically changing regional and inter-regional dynamics asserting themselves following the Arab Spring starting in the winter of 2010/11 (as a securitizing event to the EMRSSC) (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998), as well as the possible consequences of likely changed foreign and military capabilities of the EU and NATO following the reverberations of the Euro crisis, starting in 2010/11⁵.

The EU's immediate security concerns on its southern border involve many levels and sectors, such as uncontrolled immigration (such as during the violence accompanying Moammar Gaddafi's final months in power in Libya)⁶. Another example threatening Euro-Med security is the exacerbation of European economic fragility as nervous Asian and Middle Eastern investors reduced their exposure to the Stability Fund (EFSF) (Watkins and Wigglesworth 2012:1) – and with it the resources available to bolster the euro and all that money can buy for security, especially human security⁷

The transatlantic relationship of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Super Complex (compare Appendix 1) continues to be poignant in these dynamics. While some authors (e.g. Layne 2010:1) predicted the end to the *pax Americana* in general globally, i.e. the end to U.S. foreign policy primacy in favor of a more multipolar world, European reliance on NATO's security umbrella for Europe can certainly no longer be taken for granted⁸, as U.S. security priorities pivot west. Yet, the U.S.' role in the Mediterranean as a security actor remains significant. Operation Desert Dawn in the spring of 2011 demonstrated clearly that "European NATO" (i.e. specifically England and France) were not able to conduct even a relatively simple operation such as this

⁴ in terms of non-Article 5 missions, such as the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and the Mediterranean Dialogue

⁵ Such as the EU's "petitioner status" to the IMF for greater contributions by the U.S. and developing countries towards the global bailout fund (e.g. Hujer and Reiermann 2012:1).

⁶ for a "formal" list of EU policy responses to the Arab Spring see Appendix 2

⁷ Such as for the civilian populations threatened by the anciens regimes during the Arab Spring uprisings, not to mention the historical security challenges in the southern Mediterranean, such as high youth unemployment (and the social destabilization this brings with it), insufficiently developed economies, democracies and human rights, to name a few

⁸ Compare e.g. that "the prospect of sharp reductions in U.S. conventional forces in Europe could have a significant impact on the debate on the future of U.S nuclear weapons on the continent. The United States has made clear that it wishes Europe would become more of a 'provider' of security than a 'consumer' and that the role for residual Europe-based U.S. conventional forces is not just for NATO's defense but, perhaps more importantly, to deploy for operations in neighboring regions (such as the Middle East)" (Perkovich et al. 2012:8).

autonomously⁹: basic coordination between those two countries was a failure, leading President Obama to request the Canadians to take its lead to avoid the U.S. being involved a third time within a decade in an “Arabic” military exercise (and instead “lead from behind”, such as supplying nearly 90% of the missiles launched against Gaddafi’s installations, and hereby bearing the majority of the actual cost of this endeavor – either because the European NATO partners were unwilling to contribute their part, preferring lip-service against Gaddafi’s atrocities to putting their money where their words were, or they were simply unable to materially supply them). This lack of hard power “consolidation” in the EU is reflected in the PESCO/French-British military cooperation agreement – more “parallel to” than “within” the EU¹⁰. Either way, talk is cheap – and quite visible to everyone evaluating the EU for their own national security strategic purposes, even if the EU itself perhaps finds this strategy economically and politically clever¹¹.

As MENA uprisings continue, such as at the time of writing in Syria, with other countries in the region post-uprising not yet having consolidated their democracies, a free market economy, or stabilized internal socio¹²-economic challenges, U.S. foreign policy is shifting from the “Nixon doctrine¹³” to the “Obama doctrine¹⁴”.

2. The European External Action Service: Diplomacy and Hard Power in the Mediterranean¹⁵

As the EU’s External Action Service (EEAS) addresses both diplomatic and hard security concerns, the EU’s security *modus operandi* post-Lisbon Treaty continues to be soft power, in accordance generally with UN security mandates, with continuing “back-up” through its cooperation with NATO under the Berlin Plus-Treaty (mostly for crisis management during natural and man-made disasters, including cyber security, human security such as trafficking, piracy (e.g. Operation Atalanta), and other sectors affecting security, such as food and water security, and illegal immigration), and most recently of course Operation Odyssey Dawn.

⁹ This despite their military cooperation agreement in November 2010 – and indication that EU member state cooperation in defense matters is insufficient (Piris 2012:42).

¹⁰ Compare Military Permanent Structured Cooperation under the aegis of the European Union, which has stalled. Instead, a “two-speed Europe is going to be institutionalised on the field of military affairs, where the British-French ‘Euro-core’ will take the lead, and others will join only if London and Paris want it” (Nemeth 2012, 1).

¹¹ Although youthful exuberance has visions of “a British-French geostrategic axis spanning the southern maritime fringe of Western Eurasia and running from the Gulf of Guinea in the west, through the Mediterranean basin, to Somalia and the Arabian Sea in the east...is key to a balance of power favorable to European and Western interests in North Africa, West Africa, the Levant and the broader Middle East” (Simon 2012:1)...

¹² i.a. youth unemployment and regional sectarian struggles

¹³ The “use of military and economic assistance to help U.S. partners and allies resist Soviet-sponsored insurgencies without using U.S. troops in the kind of military interventions that had proved too costly and controversial in Korea and Vietnam” (Gates 2010:1)

¹⁴ Whereby a superpower considers both humanitarian *and* national interests before intervening overseas (McGregor 2011:1).

¹⁵ Compare Boeing 2012

The EU's role towards its southern neighbors was during the past couple of decades expressed mainly through soft power, such as in the harmonization of many EU policies vis-à-vis its southern neighborhood, such as in terms of environmental regulation pertaining to the clean-up of the Mediterranean, economic assistance as discussed in terms of formerly the EMP's and now EU's/UfM's Association Agreement process with southern MSs, and the social-cultural rapprochement, such as through the efforts of the Anna Lindh Foundation, or benchmarking standards attached to these projects in terms of civil liberty expansion in the southern partner countries, civil society capacity expansion, and education (besides e.g. gender equality enhanced i.a. through internet access, and the increase in freedom of speech this entails).

The EU had been critiqued for not addressing the human rights "compromises" and the democratic deficit in many countries in its southern neighborhood. Yet, I would argue that the benchmarking and conditionality of programs availed to these countries under the EMP/UfM did increase e.g. civil society capacity,¹⁶ by contributing relatively quietly in the background to i.a. developing civil society, democratic values, journalistic freedom (important not only on principle, but also to open the "public sphere" to democratic debates), as well as the development of human capital, which contributed to the consciousness and determination demonstrated in many of the democratic transitions witnessed currently in the MENA, especially e.g. in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Yemen.

During these ongoing democratic transitions in MENA, a unified EU-level response had initially been halting, as the EU "consolidated" a supranational response beyond the initial response at the EU MS-level, such as by France and Italy, who had moved quickly to ensure their privileged relationship with affected former colonies. However, very soon the EU on both the inter-governmental levels (the Council and the Parliament), as well as on the supranational level via the EEAS responded definitively in supporting Tunisia and Egypt in calling for a non-violent response by the existing regime, freezing the assets once the latter was deposed of, such as Ben-Ali's in Tunisia, Mubarak's in Egypt and Gadhafi's in Libya. Hence the EU, in the most challenging test for its EAS since its inception through the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009 has shown that its soft power has been quite pro-active (see Appendix 2) once the situation in its southern neighborhood became critical (even if the Union for the Mediterranean's potential in pro-actively easing a potential democratic transition since its inception 2008 was not capitalized on up to that point) – if not stunningly effective.

The EU's hard power (i.e. via the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP)) has also supranational and intergovernmental aspects: while EU defense falls technically (post-Lisbon) under the EEAS, national interests, such as the French-UK defense treaty of 2010, reflect the *sui generis* character of the EU overall, i.e. a mixture of the supranational, intergovernmental, and, in the case of the Euro-Mediterranean region, aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean regional security complex characteristics

¹⁶ For example, the three-year 2004 Egypt – EU Association Agreement and Action Plan entailed euro 558mil via the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for Egypt to support its reforms in the areas of democracy, human rights and justice (Abdel-latif 2010, 1), and to fight religious extremism and illegal immigration, while euro 120 mil/year in "MEDA funding is directed towards economic, trade and educational reform" (Ibid., 3).

(e.g. Boeing 2008 and 2009) in terms of EU-NATO defense cooperation within the 2002 Berlin Plus-agreements involved. The ESDP represents a relatively new structure for cooperation among EU MSs, still “a project in progress” (in terms of being as inclusive of all MSs as possible, to expand trust among all to contribute equally), has been successfully deployed in approx. twenty-seven civilian (peace-keeping, peace-making, and policing) missions, such as in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is in this sense that the EU has been acting consistently with the 2004 Consilium’s Strategic Partnership Policy with the Mediterranean and the Middle East, combining soft power both within the Three Baskets of the EMP (and now the UfM), and the ENP’s explicit agenda to promote “democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development”.

However, following the escalating popular revolts in the greater MENA region (i.e. including some Gulf Cooperation Council MSs), and the instability this represents for the EU’s southern border, the EU, both on the supranational level through the Commission, and on the inter-governmental level through the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, began hastily investigating approaches for greater security cooperation (i.e. on a larger number of security sectors and levels between the Northern and the Southern Mediterranean), as well as increasing and accelerating funding for many projects on a larger scale, and accelerating those, which had been stalled for years, such as the import of MENA agricultural products, more flexible business visa regimes for its citizens¹⁷.

One asks, that had these steps been taken at the latest upon the founding of the UfM within its mutually reinforcing three-basket structure, could some of the unrest in MENA have been pro-actively and more peacefully been avoided? And will now another new Mediterranean *modus operandi* by the EU start from “square one” in its security strategy towards its southern borders, one which expands High Politics diplomacy rather than bureaucratic piecemeal approaches perhaps, or will it satisfy itself with the Commission’s “Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean” of 8 March 2011, which represents simply “new wine in old bottles” (i.e. a new wording of previous EU/ENP approaches towards its southern border), rather than utilizing those detailed strategies, which were well-thought out (e.g. such as building on the Marseille Declaration of November 2008, which is much more sophisticated from an International Relations theory-perspective)?

3. The U.S. continuing as (the Benevolent) Hegemon in the Euro-Med Post-Arab Spring?

“The myth of the dumb and dangerous Other across the ocean served a transparent purpose in the elite European project of building a common, supranational identity. Alas, no myth can displace political and economic realities for long. Today’s reality is that the financial crash, whatever its origins,

¹⁷ Such as e.g. the 10 May 2012 MEP decision to promote trade and stability in MENA by boosting mutually-beneficial trade relations, focusing on small businesses as main drivers of job creation and wealth (EU Neighborhood Info Center 2012).

is stirring a potentially far-reaching crisis of legitimacy in Europe's political system" (Barber 2012:2).

Eight think and research institutes published in December 2009 a small book (Hamilton and Burwell 2009) of i.a. political, economic, environmental and defense policy recommendations to improve and maximize transatlantic cooperation in light of the challenges these players face in light of global competition in all of these areas. This impetus is to be lauded – although it seems quaint, one suspects that some Europeans at least have recognized the threats facing them, while at the same time many Europeans continue to jeer the country, which in essence still continued to guarantee their continent's security since World War II.

In this vacuum of words (and continued missing coordination Europe-wide as the euro zone threatens to dissolve and lead to the ultimate disintegration of the EU), and the severe human crises concomitant to the Arab Spring, President Obama's speech on May 19, 2011 outlined the U.S.' focal point to address the lack of opportunities in MENA¹⁸ as based on four pillars: a. Support for better economic management, b. support for economic stability, c. support for economic modernization and reform, and d. a framework for trade integration and investment (The White House May 18, 2011 from: http://www.isria.com/free/19_May_201174.php). Notice that ideological and/or political aspects are absent in this strategy, although in previous communications during the Arab Spring, "the White House has warned Hezbollah against coercion and intimidation" (Landler 2011:1). Nevertheless, President Obama walked a tight rope vis-à-vis the Israel lobby, when he declined to take sides in the recent Egyptian elections, which had a politically "mosaic" result¹⁹.

U.S. assistance in the first phase of the Arab Spring, i.e. late spring 2011, included encouragement of Tunisia and Egypt to develop a joint action plan with the IMF and the multilateral banks in preparation for the G8 summit 2011, with the U.S. i.a. forgiving USD1 bil. in debt, encouraging the Tunisian and Egyptian diasporas²⁰ in the U.S. to become involved in reconstruction in their countries of origin, with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to provide up to USD2 bil. in financial support throughout MENA to strengthen democratic consolidation in the region²¹ (White House Factsheet 2011).

As indicated earlier in this paper, when "decision time" arrives in MENA, one can expect the U.S. to make the decisive moves - although President Obama treads more subtly than many of his predecessors. Hence for example in the current Syrian struggles, while Kofi Annan had a chance to coordinate diplomatic alternatives with Russia and China to attempt to entice Bashar al-Assad to cease his atrocities towards his civilian population, once a dead-end to these efforts has been recognized by Russia, China and/or the Arab League, one might not be surprised if President Obama, post-

¹⁸ This is in addition to a relatively high birthrate without accompanying job market expansion, a history of political rights restrictions, as well as economic corruption as major sources for the Arab Spring uprisings.

¹⁹ Leading to some concern internationally whether the trend in Egypt post-Arab Spring is away from pluralism towards more polarized politics in favor of "more true Islam" (Kirkpatrick 2012).

²⁰ Compare "Expats trickle back to Libya but business remains slow" (Daragahi 2012:2).

²¹ Compare Kuru's (2012) findings, contrasting with those of other scholars, such as Huntington's, that democratization follows a *regional* phenomenon/critical juncture of democratization, rather than being a function of (absence of) rentierism, level of education, history of patriarchy, or level of income equality

presidential election in November 2012, makes a “hawkish” move, not unlikely with Turkish ground support (as Turkey will reach its absorption capacity for Syrian refugees in the foreseeable future). Again, the Europeans can be expected to pledge further financial support – which should be viewed as a gesture, as the EU is in no financial position to deliver in line with these promises, as appears to be the case with respect to post-Arab Spring countries of late.

In terms of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, President Obama utilized the early phase of the Arab Spring, when Tunisian and Egyptian euphoria were overshadowed by the violent crackdowns in Bahrain and Syria, a raging civil war in Libya, and a political stalemate in Yemen, to call a “moment of opportunity” to articulate a cohesive U.S. policy, including a deal based on the 1967 lines with a de-militarized Palestine (Myers and Landler 2011:1). While we know that at the time of writing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has not been settled, Libya and Yemen have made political “transitions” (if not consolidated their democracies). This lack of success²², despite President Obama’s earlier efforts to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, such as designating a special envoy, George J. Mitchell, is an example of what U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner referred to as “America’s dark side” (Luce 2012): the considerable bi-partisan deadlock during the Obama administration – a socio-political phenomenon, extraordinarily destructive to socio-economic progress domestically, as well as political progress in U.S. foreign policy: and this, one should remember, *is* part of its goal, i.e. favorable to Israel - but leading to e.g. less than 20 percent “favorable”-ratings of the U.S. in Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, and the Palestinian territories down from 2009 (Dombey 2011).

However, this tightrope is becoming more challenging towards the spring of 2012, as Israel is anxious to take out the Iranian nuclear program, President Obama seeking a diplomatic settlement through increased sanctions (with the Russians and Chinese attempting to water them down), and Teheran unhappy that the negotiations are taking place in Ankara²³ instead of a more “neutral” country like Iraq or China (Sanger and Erlanger 2012:1).

4. Intra-Regional Challenges to Euro-Med Stability Post-Arab Spring

U.S. involvement in MENA continues, as indicated earlier in this paper, for i.a. national energy security reasons, is exemplified by the recent increase in Saudi oil output (Naimi 2012) to assist i.a. the U.S.’ economic recovery – and political stability. As indicated above, the U.S. will also continue to work with old allies, such as Turkey²⁴ (having

²² Despite considerable progress in bombing al-Qaeda networks in Yemen and hereby empowering local resistance to its terrorist arms

²³ This represents one aspect in the Israeli-Turkish balance of power evolving in the Mediterranean, which President Obama is juggling between the two, as elaborated on in the following sections briefly

²⁴ Barak Obama recently cited “Tayyip Erdogan as one of the five world leaders with whom he works most closely” (Dombey 2012:7).

received a new NATO missile defense base), as a secular democracy²⁵ in the region, which is often held up as an example for the states in MENA democratizing after the Arab Spring. While Ankara continues to pursue a “zero problems with neighbors“-policy since 2009²⁶, the unfortunate war in Iraq has made relations with this former Sunni country with a now strongly strengthened Shia population²⁷ as well as with Teheran much more difficult. This might explain not only why Turkey did not avail air- or ground transit space to the U.S. during the Iraq war²⁸ - and also why Ankara appears to have given refuge to (Sunni) Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi in the spring of 2012 (Healy 2012)²⁹.

Turkey’s cooperation with the U.S. and NATO³⁰ remains mutually essential³¹ also in terms of the Teheran-Russia axis and vis-à-vis a solution to the current civil war in Syria. Indeed, Turkey might become the “order maker” – and soft power/bridge to the West (including Europe) with MENA in the future³². This would position it well with the policy of “asymmetrical deterrence” Iran practices in the region: it balances its nuclear deterrence capabilities with soft power towards its neighbors (though its accommodation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is deteriorating). Turkey’s value as an ally to both the EU and the U.S. continues to rise as “it can help steer transition in Europe’s Middle Eastern backyard” (Garnder 2012:1).

The topic of the current situation in Syria and the U.S.’ involvement has been referred to in another part of this paper. In terms of sectarian/religious conflicts becoming more pronounced, such as a greater role of al Qaeda in Syria (Panetta quoted in AP 2012) besides Yemen, understandably makes Israel – and Christians,

²⁵ The democratization process strengthened here through its EU-candidacy, even though some trends into the opposite direction are noticed, such as the incarceration of over hundred journalists, which Turkey claims are terrorist-related (Turkey’s struggle against Kurdish separatists continues).

²⁶ Leading i.a. to Turkey’s vote at the UN Security Council on June 9, 2010 (together with Brazil) *against* the U.S.-backed sanctions on Iran (compare Ustun 2010).

²⁷ Note the anti-Sunni sectarianism by Iraqi prime minister al-Maliki

²⁸ However, Turkey is paying the price for this lack of cooperation with the U.S. now, as it are left dancing with itself in asserting any rights to the new Cypriotic – Israeli gas finds in the Mediterranean... (compare Ogurlu 2012). Of course, one might surmise that Israel pointedly sought to provoke the “flotilla incident” to prove this point to Turkey.

²⁹ Although Interpol is assisting the Iraq government’s search by posting a “red notice” for al-Hasimi

³⁰ This is to be read literally: Turkey chose NATO, not automatically the West – hence the EU’s “resignation” about a genuine accession process for Turkey in light of the former’s abysmal demographics and markets (as China will not need EU products too much longer, having copied most everything soon, so that Europe will need China much more for cheap products than China needs Europe) may be interpreted by an opportunity the EU should not have missed and an expense worth it despite the economic climate

³¹ Note also that the EU’s requirement for a change from a military government in Turkey to a civilian one to comply with the *acquis communautaire* as part of Turkey’s EU-accession process left to the Turkish military weakened and more dependent on NATO. While Turkey invests substantially in its strategic sector, few can match the continuing exponential growth of the U.S. in this area.

³² Considering that the Arab Spring has not yet, understandably, resulted in consolidated democracies in the region (Tunisia held elections and delegations of different parties are holding different offices; Libya, at the time of writing is in disarray; and Egypt is “in process” in terms of finalizing the election process) (with skeptics questioning whether Egypt is “falling into the “wrong” Turkish model” (Ottaway and Brown 2012:1) - compare footnote # 32.

such as in Egypt – increasingly concerned^{33, 34}. It is also a part of the ideological debate that Turkey, as a regional hegemon (after the Iranian and Baathist models in the region crumbled), plays a significant part for U.S. interests (i.a. the U.S.’ motivation not to proceed in a unipolar world, but seek a balance of power globally).

5. Euro-Med Inter-Regional Effects on Post-Arab Spring Political and Economic Stabilization

While President Obama has ended the war in Iraq, G.W. Bush failed to foresee the extent in which this war would intensify the sectarian friction in the entire region likely for decades to come – likely contributing to a greater de-stabilized greater Mediterranean region than the EU, the U.S. or its allies would wish. After the Arab Spring additionally transformed the past “landscape of the Middle East into a new and uncharted territory for the United states,...[h]ow should the U.S. navigate in the post-Arab Spring” (ia-forum 2012:1)?

If the transatlantic relationship failed, how would the economies and political influence of many emerging countries benefit? Although the U.S. has managed to “reconstitute” itself following its own 2008/09 near financial melt-down, the percentages are shifting at the “global prosperity table,” and neither Germany nor the U.S. can expect to sit comfortably, as they need to stay on their toes while others are jockeying for a seat at the table. Some of these actors are Russia and its strategic maneuvers in the Mediterranean, such as through China’s strategic purchases and Iran through its continuing nuclear enrichment progress. President Obama agreed with Russia on a new START treaty, which was ratified by both the U.S. and Russia in 2011. Some aspects of the role Iran, Russia and China play in the Euro-Mediterranean were briefly referred to in preceding and subsequent sections of this paper (and as Europe is in a position to give more moral than material support, Turkey and the region as a whole rely on NATO, of which the U.S. continues to be the largest contributor for the moment only).

A few points below address some of these inter-regional shifts, in which the EU is both a direct and indirect soft and a hard security contributor.

5.1. *Iraq*

Iraq’s interregional significance in terms of the Euro-Med and the transatlantic tangent is, beyond the Iraq war, oil. After the overthrow the of Saddam Hussein’s authoritarian

³³ Some scholars have referred to the Arab Spring as a (Shia??) “Islamic Spring” (compare ISA conference 2012/roundtable on “Change and Continuity in Turkish Foreign Policy), and Huntington as the “Fourth Wave of Democratization” (quoted Ibid). The current sectarian shift in Turkish politics might likely be viewed in this context – as might the recent election implications in Egypt, where “the Coptic Orthodox Church has announced its withdrawal from a panel charged with writing the country’s new constitution” (Saleh 2012) (interestingly, the highest Sunni religious authority, al-Azhar, also removed their representatives amidst complaints of being sidelined).

³⁴ Italian foreign minister Franco Frattini (2010) stated in this context that it is an Italian foreign policy priority to “defend the freedom of worship, understood not only as a private, but also a public expression of one’s religious convictions” and speak out in defense of the rights of Christian minorities around the world.

government to bring a more democratic government to the country, the suspicion has been that the U.S. sought control of the country's petroleum resources. This perhaps simplistic plan by G.W. Bush was not to be such:

“U.S. oil groups were all but shut out of Iraq as the country completed the biggest oil field auction in history at the weekend. European groups, including Royal Dutch Shell, Lukoil, Gazprom, and Asian groups, such as China's CNPC and Malaysia's Petronas were the main winners at Iraq's second oil auction, which completed the sale of its large fields in April 2012” (Hoyos 2012).

5.2. *Iran*

President's Obama's “engagement policy” as a dominant foreign policy is especially evident in the U.S.'s negotiations with respect to Iranian nuclear disarmament, and the role Russia plays in it – or not. In terms of international sanctions, this approach has yielded considerable cooperation, though a definitive result is lacking at the time of writing. By some estimates, an Israeli strike against Iranian nuclear facilities would only delay their development by about two years, and a U.S. strike by no more than three years. Iran's influence in the EU's “backyard” hence continues to the alarm the U.S., though multi-lateral diplomatic efforts to end this stalemate have a chronic “on again, off again” character – at a time when Iran seeks to insert deeper in the Syrian conflict by “seeking a stake in Lebanon as Syria totters” (Rashbaum and Goldstein 2012: A1/11).

5.3. *China*

The U.S. National Security Strategy directive towards China overall is to “pursue a ‘positive, constructive, and comprehensive relationship’ and ‘prepare accordingly to ensure that U.S. interests and allies ... are not negatively affected’” (The White House 2010, quoted in Chen 2011:7). China's role in the Euro-Med and its interregional relations are by far more evolved than is appreciated generally in the West. While the official *modus operandi* was that China supports within the international consensus Palestinian rights – hereby seeking overall a political balance in the region (Zhiyue 2012), and at the moment through

“an unobtrusive and avoidance-based ... plan ... to keep [China] out of disputes and foster a balanced approach to strategic affairs in the Middle East. Because China's policy in the region is motivated more by economic interests, this foreign policy tactic serves an important goal. Essentially, China wants to do business with everyone in the region, regardless of individual countries' relations with each other” (Zhiyue 2012:1).

On the contrary, the *strategic importance* of this “peaceful trading relationship with everyone” is exemplified when one compares U.S. and Japanese vulnerability to high oil prices in the spring of 2012 compared to China's lack of vulnerability, largely because “it has become the primary beneficiary of OPEC's rising trade expenditure... [in terms of] [t]he recycling of large sums of petrodollars through rising imports of goods by oil

producers” (Blas 2012). This has been viewed as ‘the largest transfer of wealth in the history of the economy...from consuming to producing countries’ (Birol, quoted in Ibid.).

While Chinese foreign policy was in the past through trade, human assistance (such as building hospitals and sports areas in developing countries), and low level diplomacy (preferring to remain non-committal in regional political issues), regional strategic collaboration between China and e.g. Turkey, the UAE, the Arab League, and of course Iran are more substantial than is commonly known – as is Chinese military presence in terms of its navy for example. While public opinion globally ranked China a couple years ago higher than the U.S. (Burson-Marsteller 2010; Pew 2010; BBC 2010), both Europe and the U.S. cannot underestimate China’s foreign policy of acquiring equity stakes in strategic assets, including energy exploration and production projects (Chen 2011). However, in 2011, despite the continuing significance of the Arab-Chinese relationship, “Arab perceptions of China have deteriorated... [e.g. due to] China’s veto (along with Russia) of the UN Security Council resolution that called for Syrian president Bashar al-Asad to step down; and China’s behavior toward economic sanctions on Iran... [which resulted in] a more negative view of China” (Abdulla 2012:1), such as the burning of Chinese flags after the UN Security Council veto. This perspective was reinforced when China “highlighted its desire for access to arms technology and less criticism on human rights” (Rettman 2012:1) as conditions to deepen the relationship between the EU and China in the future.

From a U.S. perspective, the preceding belies strategic interests, as China’s role in the greater MENA will have to be managed very cautiously to reduce zero sum dynamics, such as for energy resources (China and the U.S. are the largest energy customers globally), and strategic access to the area. So far China has to a large extent been a free rider of the U.S.’s efforts to bolster reliability of energy exploration and production in the global market, and especially in MENA, including the long-term, although the U.S. has worked since 2009 at a tactical level with China to counter piracy in the Gulf of Aden – while simultaneously sabotaging global security, e.g. UN Security Council sanctions (e.g. by helping to militarize North Korea (Hoyos 2012:2).

In terms of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis China, President Obama “has begun to pursue the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which would ultimately link the Pacific coast countries of the Western Hemisphere with those of the Asia-Pacific in order to increase Pacific Basin trade and security and help offset China’s Influence in Latin America” (Kaufman Purcell 2011), indicating a significant geopolitical shift, as Latin American, especially Venezuelan President Chavez decries the U.S., as a declining power in the Western Hemisphere and China as a rising one, as the latter hungers for Latin America’s resources.

6. Conclusions: The Trans-Atlantic Relationship in the Euro-Med Post-Arab Spring

When Paul Kennedy wrote “the Rise and Fall of the Great Powers”, he had the U.S. in mind as being on the downswing. With endless economic, political, sociological³⁵ and

³⁵ Compare “China’s demography [for one] is unhelpful: the country will grow old before it grows rich” (Plender 2009:1).

technological variables affecting current and future hegemonies, Europe is awakening to the realization that its downward spiral may be even faster than the U.S.' - and with it its ability to protect neither current national borders nor the regional borders of the EU, or the welfare of its people. Some writers (e.g. Quinlan 2009:1) have indicated that the transatlantic economy alone is too large to fail. Extrapolating this "need", Quinlan (ibid) states that U.S.-EU cooperation is necessary to i.a. push through a global agenda reaching from Doha trade liberalization, to winning the War on Terrorism (whether in Afghanistan, as the May 2012 NATO summit debated, or in Yemen and its "tentacles" to the West), and find peace in the Middle East – and stability, freedom and prosperity in the southern Mediterranean (and reciprocally the northern Mediterranean...) – as the *levels* involved in this are global: the ideological (in terms of a Muslim Sunni vs. Shia) - Christian-Jewish axis) as well as the economic axes (e.g. reflected in terms of military hard as well soft power capabilities) span from the inter-regional Mediterranean both west and east (within the limits of this analysis).

While protectionism is abounding on both sides of the Atlantic as a result of the 2008-present financial crisis, they may have a transatlantic consequence, as indicated in the beginning of this paper: "The benefits of a projection of American power are never easier to appreciate than when it is absent" (Taylor 2012:12). The dispersal of power (Brzezinski 2012) away from the superpowers of the last decades, magnified by "the emergence of a volatile phenomenon: the worldwide political awakening of populations until recently politically passive or repressed" (Brzezinski 2012: 10) is leading to an increasingly unstable world, in which the U.S. might be considered to remain, in the words of former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, the indispensable nation (Brzezinski 2012)^{36, 37}. Indeed, at the time of writing President Obama just signed an agreement with Afghanistan for a timetable to formally end the NATO-Afghanistan war – and build a normalized relationship with this Muslim country.

Additionally, if neither Europe nor the U.S. wants to be left out of the economic opportunities available in MENA, such as issuance of (Sharia law-compliant) Sukuk bonds³⁸, which are used i.a. for large regional infrastructure projects, "the west" may well reconsider its isolationist stance towards the region and partake instead. Turkey and Hong Kong, in addition to Malaysia and Saudi Arabia are certainly not hesitating. On the other hand, some continue to take advantage of the opportunities, such as Aeroports de Paris, purchasing a 38 percent stake in Turkish airport operator TAV, with a total of 180mil passengers in thirty seven airports worldwide, such as during the expected privatization wave expected for Russian airports, and those in Central Asia and Saudi Arabia.

³⁶ Tocci's (2012) paper calling for a trilateral (EU-U.S.-Turkey strategy) for the neighborhood more desirable, which foresees diplomatic interventions, with a useful division of labor between the three: I am guessing, sarcastically admittedly, the "talking-part" and trade for the EU, and the assistance and hard security-aspects for the U.S. and Turkey??

³⁷ Especially in light of the "trio challenges" of the EU's current crises, which are according to Piris (2012:51), "the crisis due to the euro area's imbalances; the political gap between the EU and public opinion; and the dysfunctionality of the decision-making [of EU institutions]".

³⁸ This is also an example of "market liberalization" as a non-universally accepted "value": neither democratization nor free markets will necessarily be established in MENA following the Arab Spring according to the Washington Consensus (neither did e.g. China, nor is Cuba, following this "blueprint")

Even though the EU has more detailed “blueprints” towards MENA (e.g. from the Barcelona Process to the Union for the Mediterranean) than the U.S., the EU failed to leverage especially the latter program into an effective approach to maximize the economic, political and socio-cultural development, prosperity and stability of the entire region. NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiatives, as multilateral non-Article 5 tools also have not been as productive as they could have been during the preceding years, but give the impression of “recycling” feeble programs, rather projecting economic, political – and hard power strategies beyond “maintaining” the status quo through the “nice” norming of EU soft power. Just “going through the motions” on decisive issues, i.e. an overall attitude of “kicking the can up the street” reveals the lack of the EU’s external leadership – which may be a reflection of its lack of cohesion, and overall strength, internally.

Final Words

“On behalf of President Obama and the people of the United States, I am delighted to send best wishes to the people of the European Union as you celebrate Europe Day this May 9th,” U.S. Secretary of State Clinton said in a statement. “I am grateful for the vital role the EU plays around the world. From its leadership on bringing peace to the Middle East to its support for dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, to its commitment to isolating oppressive regimes and its support of the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, the EU continues to help solve global problems. As you pause to celebrate Europe Day, know that the United States stands with you as a partner and friend. Together, we will continue to work towards building a better and brighter future for all our people.”
(*U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels 2012*).

email sent by the Public Affairs Office of the (U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels)

While this paper sought to discuss some thoughts pertaining to the shifting hard and soft balance of power in the (greater) Euro-Mediterranean in the context of the Arab Spring, comparing event analyses with juxtapositions and speculations about possible future scenarios, a discussion of all possible future global constellations would by far exceed the parameters of this paper.

The EU, however, will maintain its relevance for its part in terms of an ever more rapidly changing world, as many of its member states are “geographically small, economically fragile, and demographically in a declining and ageing trend” (Piris 2012:146) to have to face accelerating globalization. This anxiety was most recently very visibly exemplified during the French presidential election “against such a background of foreboding and anxiety... [that] the EU economic crisis is threatening to bring the good times to an end” (Rachman 2012). Furthermore, the extent of the global competition between Chinese industrial champions and German technology became undeniable (Bryant 2012) in April 2012 at the world’s largest industrial fair, the Hannover Messe.

On the other hand, China's "rot at the top" was clearly exposed in the spring of 2012, not only exceeding previous sources of non-democratic legitimacy, but showcasing its current political meritocracy – possibly questioning future "performance legitimacy" (Bell 2012) and China's future fragility (Ibid.) and political effectiveness globally, whether towards the east or the west.

Hence, the world is not automatically going to be a G-2 or a G-zero world (with the power vacuum filled by a changing "cast" of governmental and non-governmental powers and movements, should no global cataclysm occur), or an age of non-polarity – a world post-Cold War which "could prove to be mostly negative, making it more difficult to generate collective responses to pressing regional and global challenges (Haass, quoted in Bremmer 2012). Nye (2011) views this diffusion of power in international politics as leading to a more complex world (similar to a "three-dimensional chess game").

Instead, one might envision a U.S. foreign policy globally, such as practiced by President Obama, which is not a zero-sum game (whether on China's periphery or elsewhere) – and as the transatlantic relationship can hardly afford a "tale of paralysis" (Stephens 2012) - and political gridlock, largely due to the widening expectations gap between what governments can do and what their voters expect (Ibid.). Maybe we need to revisit Dean Acheson's vision after World War II, when the U.S. struck a deal with the world whereby "it would provide secure trade routes, stability, and the opportunity for other countries to become prosperous" (Bremmer 2012), i.e. providing the public goods, and other countries would accept American preeminence and would play by American-designed rules (Ibid.). Only today, amidst a 'world of regions' ("to each his own") (Ibid.), a world with strong states but "without global leadership, one in which many of the rest will rise, but only to tackle local and regional issues" (Ibid.). The U.S. has always had second acts. Perhaps to believe in American decline as inevitable, choosing to ignore the history of the U.S. and its people (Ibid.).

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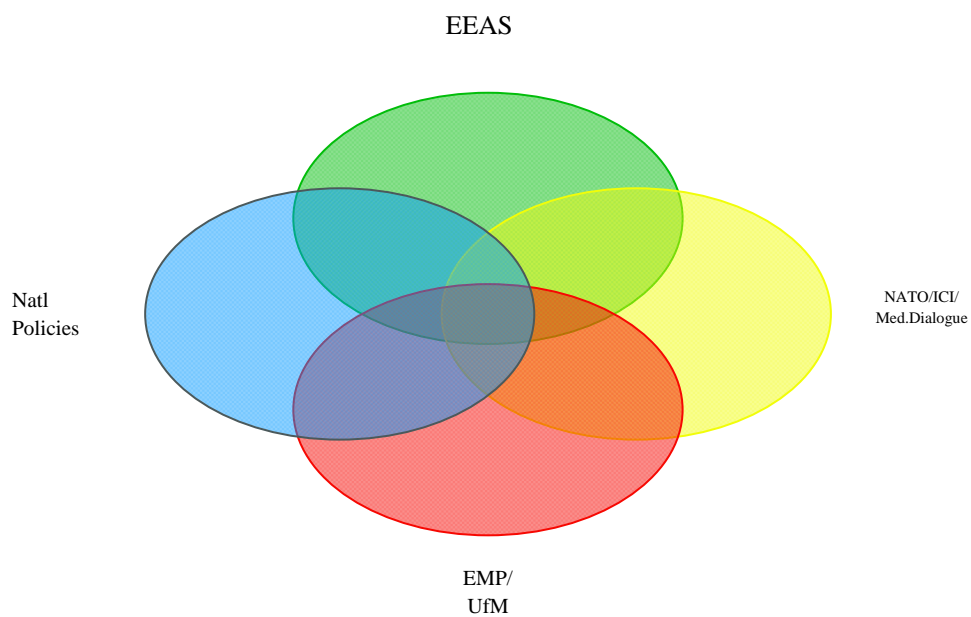
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Appendix 1: Euro-Mediterranean Regional Security Super Complex (adapted from Boening 2008b)



Appendix 2: EU Policy Responses to Arab Reforms (Behr 2012: 20)

TABLE 1: EU POLICY RESPONSES TO ARAB REFORMS

REFORMS	ALGERIA	EGYPT	JORDAN	LIBYA	MOROCCO	TUNISIA
REGIME CHANGE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS	PLANNED	NEW CONSTITUTION	Yes	NEW CONSTITUTION	Yes	NEW CONSTITUTION
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS	PLANNED	Yes	No	PLANNED	Yes	Yes
EU ELECTION OBSERVERS	Yes	No	n/A	n/A	Yes	Yes
HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD	MIXED	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
EU ACTIONS						
EU JOINT ACTION PLAN (JAP)	DISCUSSIONS INITIATED	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	NEW JAP DISCUSSED
ADVANCED STATUS	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	TALKS IN PROGRESS
EU TASK FORCE	No	PLANNED	Yes	No	No	Yes
ENPI PLANNED (2011-2013)	€172 MILLION	€449 MILLION	€223 MILLION	€60 MILLION	€580.5 MILLION	€240 MILLION
ENPI REVISED (2011-2013)	UNCHANGED	UNCHANGED	€293 MILLION	UNCHANGED	UNCHANGED	€400 MILLION
ECHO (2011-2013)	€10 MILLION	n/A	€107 MILLION	€155 MILLION	n/A	n/A
EIB CONTRACTS (2011-2012)	NONE	€50 MILLION	€86 MILLION	NONE	€245 MILLION	€303 MILLION
EBRD MEMBERSHIP	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
DCFTA NEGOTIATIONS	No	PLANNED	INITIATED	No	PLANNED	INITIATED
ACAA NEGOTIATIONS	PLANNED	PLANNED	PLANNED	No	PLANNED	INITIATED
MOBILITY DIALOGUE	PLANNED	PLANNED	ONGOING	No	ONGOING	ONGOING
AGRICULTURE NEGOTIATIONS	No	No	No	No	CONCLUDED	INITIATED