GLOBAL STRATEGY FORUM

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Seminar Proceedings

One Year On:
Turmoil And Transition - The Arab Uprisings And The Path Ahead

Wednesday 14th March 2012
House of Lords

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SEMINAR PROGRAMME:

'One Year On: Turmoil And Transition – The Arab Uprisings And The Path Ahead'

Wednesday 14th March 2012

4.15pm-6.15pm

venue:

Committee Room 2

House of Lords

London SW1A 0PW

Chairman

Lord Lothian, Chairman of Global Strategy Forum

Former Shadow Foreign Secretary and Chairman of the Conservative Party

SPEAKERS

Dr Maha Azzam
Associate Fellow, Chatham House

Sir Richard Dalton KCMG
Former UK Ambassador to Iran and to Libya

Rt Hon Alan Duncan MP
Minister of State for International Development, Department for International Development

Lindsey Hilsum
International Editor, Channel 4 News

Dr Eugene Rogan
Fellow, Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford

Rt Hon Jack Straw MP
Home Secretary (1997-2001); Foreign Secretary (2001-2006); Justice Secretary (2007-2010)

Lord Williams of Baglan
United Nations Under Secretary-General and Special Coordinator for Lebanon (2008–11); UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East (2006–07)

One Year On: Turmoil And Transition - The Arab Uprisings And The Path Ahead

Committee Room 2
House of Lords

Wednesday 14th March 2012

4.15pm **WELCOMING REMARKS**
Lord Lothian
Chairman of Global Strategy Forum

4.20pm **OPENING ADDRESS**
'Change and Upheaval In The Middle East And North Africa: Getting Western Policy Right'

Rt Hon Alan Duncan MP
Minister of State for International Development

4.35pm-4.45pm **Q&A**

FIRST SESSION: PERSPECTIVES ON THE ARAB UPRISINGS
4.45pm-5.30pm

Dr Eugene Rogan
Fellow, Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford
'Past Legacies: The Evolution Of The Arab Uprisings'

Lindsey Hilsum
International Editor, Channel 4 News
'A Journalist's Perspective: Reporting On Libya And Syria In A Time Of Revolution'

Dr Maha Azzam
Associate Fellow, Chatham House
'Egypt's Transition To Democracy: A Long Road To Reform?'

5.15pm-5.30pm **Q&A and audience remarks**

SECOND SESSION: THE WESTERN POLICY RESPONSE

5.30pm-6.15pm

Lord Williams of Baglan
UN Under Secretary-General and Special Coordinator for Lebanon (2008–11); UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East (2006–07)
'The UN Dimension: Is The International Community Responding Effectively?'

Sir Richard Dalton KCMG
Former UK Ambassador to Iran and to Libya
'Supporting Democratic Revolution: Intervention And Its Limits'

Rt Hon Jack Straw MP
Home Secretary (1997-2001); Foreign Secretary (2001-2006); Justice Secretary (2007-2010)
'Paradigm Shifts And Inflection Points In The MENA Region: How Can The UK Meet The Challenge?'

6pm-6.15pm **Q&A and audience remarks**

6.15pm **Chairman's concluding remarks and close**

SUMMARY OF SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS

On Wednesday 14th March 2012, Global Strategy Forum (GSF) held a seminar entitled *'One Year On: Turmoil and Transition – The Arab Uprisings And the Path Ahead.'* The seminar took place in Committee Room 2 of the House of Lords under the chairmanship of **Lord Lothian** (Chairman, Global Strategy Forum).

The seminar took the form of an opening address by the Rt Hon Alan Duncan MP, Minister for International Development, entitled *'Change and Upheaval In The Middle East And North Africa: Getting Western Policy Right',* followed by two panels. Respectively, these covered the perspectives on the Arab uprisings followed by presentations on the options for the Western policy response.

Speakers identified the following main themes:

OPENING ADDRESS

British policy is firmly aligned with its international partners. In particular it endorses the five points contained in the 12th March address to the UN Security Council by the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. In summary these are:

- Leaders must choose the path of meaningful reform, or make way for those who will.
- We must promote pluralism and protect the rights of minorities.
- Women have stood in the squares and streets demanding change, and now have a right to sit at the table.
- We must create opportunities for young people.
- There must be regional peace, most particularly between Israel and Palestine.

British experience and historical ties to the region have much to offer. But this will be by invitation. The key mistake to avoid is to imagine that one could 'flick a switch' and thus turn on democracy. All countries in the region are different and require individual approaches. It is important to temper expectations in accordance with realities.

PANEL 1: PERSPECTIVES ON THE ARAB UPRISINGS

Speakers in this panel (**Dr. Eugene Rogan, Lindsey Hilsum** and **Dr. Maha Azzam**) sought to set current events against a longer perspective.

Historical perspectives: A common mistake in analysing the Arab Spring is to overlook both its diversity – at least six separate revolutions are in progress today – and its historicity. There have been six decades of repressed resistance to autocratic rule and this was preceded by two centuries of opposition to absolutism. The Arab Spring thus

represents a contemporary point on a long continuum of protest. It is a new age of constitutional reform. The reform movement is likely to spread to other countries, including Algeria, Sudan, Lebanon, Iraq and the Palestinian Territories. Eventually, the Gulf monarchies will also be impacted.

Western media reporting: There are some well grounded criticisms of press coverage: it oversimplifies and it prefers accessible stories. Sometimes journalists act as cheerleaders. Libya, for example, was highly accessible to Western journalists and may, as a result, have received overexposure. Syria is much less accessible and much more dangerous and thus receives less coverage. Time and resource limitations constrain more difficult stories, like the Tuareg refugees in Mali. Overall, however, Western media has done well to cover "people wild for elections" in the Arab states and the superior organisation of the Islamist parties. The media takes special care to verify video stories of human rights abuses forwarded to them from insurgent groups, for example in Syria. However, there is no substitute for eyewitness reporting.

A focus on Egypt: After sixty years of dictatorship in Egypt, the institutions of civil society are severely damaged. However, a fundamental shift in the direction of democracy has taken place and, for the first time, the Egyptian people can hold their leaders responsible. Free and fair elections have brought the Muslim Brotherhood to power, but this is open to reform ideas like the free market. Relations between the political parties and the military will remain tense, but there is no evidence of a secret deal between the military and Muslim Brotherhood. The military wants to protect its economic and legal privileges, but is not seeking confrontation. Egypt's most pressing challenge is economic. Investment is urgently needed and could come from the Gulf states and the IMF.

PANEL 2: THE WESTERN POLICY RESPONSE

Speakers in this panel (**Lord Williams of Baglan, Sir Richard Dalton, Rt Hon Jack Straw MP**) generally took a cautious line on how Western intervention should play out. They warned of unintended consequences, but expressed deep concern about the failure to find a peaceful way forward in Syria.

The UN dimension: Outside observers, including the UN, need to be aware that current developments in the Arab Spring come from within Arab societies. They are not responses to external events like the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 or the 1967 Six Day War. The UN Arab Human Development Reports have highlighted the shortcomings in Arab governance and it was a mistake in Western appreciation not to recognise these. The succession plan in Egypt was, for example, ludicrous. Western intervention is now urgently needed for Syria, possibly in the form of an international conference to circumvent the impasse in the Security Council or by a "Uniting for Peace" initiative in the General Assembly.

The pros and cons of intervention: There are many ways of intervening, but attempts to impose change by coercion should be rare. It is important not to over-interpret the example of Libya as a template for action elsewhere. Special circumstances applied to Libya, such as the unpopularity of leaders, organised support for the revolt and generous funding from regional states like Qatar and UAE. But even Libya showed the limits to airpower. Occupations and the destruction of infrastructure should be avoided. It is important to remain engaged in post-conflict development and to avoid misusing intelligence to support a particular policy. With regard to the new UN doctrine of Responsibility to Protect, it is important to understand that this creates an opportunity to intervene, not a right to intervene. States should be cautious of stretching UN Security Council resolutions to suit their own purposes. However, states should continue to seek legitimacy and legality for interventions via the Security Council.

UK policy in a shifting context: British history contains many instances where policy makers have turned a blind eye to the absence of democracy, making specious claims that certain countries were not suited for democracy – an assertion made by in the 19th century by Lord Salisbury when Prime Minister about Ireland. Three principles are worth thinking about for British policy towards the Arab Spring. 1) Though local factors differ, universal principles need to be applied universally. We should support elections and their outcomes, even when they are uncomfortable. It had been a mistake not to recognise the Hamas electoral victory in 2006. 2) In Europe there is a considerable degree of intermingling of church and state. Against that background, we should accept the legitimacy of faith-based political parties in the Middle East. 3) The West has a checkered history in the Middle East. It should cultivate and listen to regional partners, especially Turkey.

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOMING REMARKS

Lord Lothian PC DL QC

First of all, welcome to what I think is a very interesting topic and we have got a very interesting panel to address it. We thought, having watched the events unfold last year in Tahrir Square in Cairo and the events in Tunisia, that the year has since gone by and it was time to try to take stock and to ask where we have got to now. The idea of today's seminar was to gather two expert panels together to address that particular question.

Secondly, I think that this is one of the most difficult questions to address in international affairs. When it started last year, I was very keen to try and suggest that we should avoid romanticism about what was happening, that we should look at the practicalities of what was happening and that we should try and understand some of the underlying features such as the divide between Shi'a and Sunni in many of these areas and the effect that that has on what I call the Arab Awakening or Arab Spring as it is often known. Islamism is often used as a cover-all description, but in fact, within Islamism there are many different strands and those strands can play very important parts in what is happening within that region, and it is vital that we try to understand the possible outcomes before we in the West become too involved in any of these particular areas. Those are my comments and I hope that we can seek to address the subject within that broad framework. We have called the seminar: *'One Year On: Turmoil and Transition, the Arab Uprisings and the Path Ahead'.*

We have two panels of expert and distinguished speakers whom we will come to later, but I am delighted that for our opening address, we have got the Right Honourable Alan Duncan MP, who is Minister of State for International Development, and who I have to say first introduced me to this particular region when I was Shadow Foreign Secretary. He is going to talk to us about *'Change And Upheaval In The Middle East And North Africa - Getting Western Policy Right'.* So I would ask him to talk to us and then to answer some questions if you would.

We will then begin the first session, which is the panel on my left and they are going to examine *'Perspectives On The Arab Uprisings',* after which there will be an opportunity for questions to our speakers. This will be followed by the second panel, which will look at *'The Western Policy Response',* before our final Q&A session.

OPENING ADDRESS

'CHANGE AND UPHEAVAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: GETTING WESTERN POLICY RIGHT'

Rt Hon Alan Duncan MP
Minister of State for International Development

I was asked about a year ago to talk to Global Strategy Forum and I hold the same view now that I held then, which at its simplest is: anyone who thinks you can just flick a switch and introduce democracy in any country needs their head examined - this was bound to be a process that was going to take a long time, but it is one of amazing historic and regional significance. The second point I made then, which I make again, is that all countries are different, and at its simplest, there is a massive difference between the GCC monarchies in the Gulf and the post Nasser-like, previously autocratic regimes in North Africa and people who simply lump them all together as Arabs are as ignorant as they are ill-advised. So: appreciate how complicated this is should be the all-encapsulating message.

Over the last couple of days, we have, now that we are holding the seat in the UN, initiated the debate in the UN Security Council on the Arab Spring and perhaps I can just read out the five points that were listed by Ban Ki-moon in that debate because I think they are extremely helpful in framing what people ought to think about the significance of the Arab Spring:

1. Leaders in the region should implement meaningful reform or make way for those who would.
2. The goal should be plural societies that protect the rights of minorities.
3. Women have been a driving force in transformation across the region and have a right to make decisions about the political future of their country.
4. Societies have to create opportunities for youth where 50 million new jobs are needed across the region in the next decade.
5. Change anywhere in the Middle East will not be complete without peace between Israel and Palestine.

I think those five points are very brilliantly put together. It is a defining moment and there are some key themes. There are calls for human rights, there are calls for elections, calls, of course, for regime change, but crucially, there are massive calls for jobs and economic opportunities. Perhaps the largest ingredient in those who took to the streets

is youth and that is why, a year ago, I dubbed it a 'youth quake'. It was not only such, but it is such an important element that anyone who ignores the young people of these countries will not understand their future.

You are looking at different categories of country. On a spectrum of optimism to pessimism, a spectrum of massive change to marginal change, in Tunisia the transition has been fairly impressive, where there have been free and fair elections and the formation of an inclusive coalition government.

Egypt is in transition, but I remain rather pessimistic about it. Whereas Libya has lots of oil and few people and a very clean departure from the past, Egypt has the opposite of all those things: few resources, lots of people and the army is pretty well still in control. So in those countries, there has been progress, but still much to be done.

I think there is gradual change, which means I do not quite share what I think is Eugene's view, that in the end, all of these countries are going to dramatically change (correct me if I have misinterpreted you). In the likes of Morocco and Jordan and indeed most of the GCC countries, with the possible exception of Saudi Arabia where I think the pressures are bigger than we might realise, there has been gradual change. A very good example - not of gradual change since the Arab Spring, but of gradual change which has been going on for nearly twenty years - is Oman, where they have a large elective element in much of their politics and a clear transition from the creation of a Basic Law in 1994 to ministers now being picked out of the elected Majlis A'Shura and things like that. So I do not quite share Eugene's pessimism and on the optimism-pessimism spectrum, I prefer evolution to revolution.

I have just come back from Yemen, where I met the new President. There are some grounds for hope, but there is a paradox there: nothing was going to change until Ali Abdullah Saleh had gone, but now that he has gone, nothing very much has changed. President Al-Hadi, who has been endorsed in an election (which in itself was a very good participative act) is there, but all of the apparatus around him is pretty well the same, much of them from the Saleh family. The key challenge in Yemen is to see whether there is going to be a constructive, well-structured and conclusive dialogue which the GCC initiative calls for over the next two years, or whether it is an ineffectual talking shop, which takes the country no further forward.

Then there are the problems and of course the greatest one is Syria. It is a very, very complicated country to analyse, but to see - just at the far end of the Mediterranean - 8,000 people killed by their own regime is contemptible and to see the United Nations Security Council obstructed as it has been, is a tragedy for what could be greater influence by the international community.

There are massive underlying issues, the biggest of which of course is the Middle East

Peace Process, which, sadly, is stalled. A key part of the Arab Spring must be the right of the Palestinians to have a viable state, but of course we have not seen in Palestine the same kind of vocal protest as has happened in the rest of the Arab Spring, which very clearly illustrates the essential need for a Palestinian state, complicated though that issue is.

The other underlying threat, of course, is Iran. Iran is the growing bogeyman for many Gulf countries. The UAE are very fearful of Iran and very, very concerned about their influence, as are the Bahrainis. In the nearer Middle East, it is thought that their malign influence in Syria is complicating what is already a very horrid state of affairs.

So what does this mean for Britain and for British policy? First of all it is important to understand: one size does not fit all. Secondly, British expertise and historic involvement is respected and it should be carefully and subtly deployed. I think that a lot of people who have been suppressed for a long time do look to us as an example of the exercise of the political values they would like to have for themselves.

We have done a number of things. Britain was a leading force in applying the United Nations resolution in Libya and without David Cameron's political leadership, it is quite conceivable that Gaddafi would still be there. Through our Arab Partnership, which is a joint DFID-Foreign Office fund, we are trying to exercise soft power, more or less by invitation, to try and build up some of the institutions and the capabilities of transforming countries (particularly in North Africa) to be able to participate in a democratic process, have voice within it and have the confidence and the understanding to know what political activity can and should be. That will also potentially require us to assist them with the process of elections and in guiding the rule of law, which will govern the freedom of the press and the conduct of the media. We have got some other funds as well, although there is a limit to what these funds will do to really inject economic life into these countries, but I think it is a very good start and working with the EU and with other major players, the UK's voice has been very effective in trying to turn a period full of turmoil into one that could have a constructive future.

So, just to recap: I would say it is like the Chinese Revolution – it is going to take a very, very long time to understand. We have to be realistic about our expectations and crucially, new regimes have to be very canny in the way they manage the expectations of their own people, because simply by removing one regime, you cannot flick a switch and get immediate prosperity, freedom and everything that has taken us many centuries to build here.

In response to the point raised by Lord Guthrie, commenting that we put elections very high up our agenda and asking whether elections always made things better and whether in the case of Libya it could make things harder, there is an honest, sensible answer to this: you cannot change a country's whole political make-up and expect it

to converge from nasty dictatorship to perfect democracy just like that. It has taken us many centuries – we have had our civil war, we have deposed and replaced a monarch. Three hundred and fifty years on from chopping off the head of a king, we still do not have an elected House of Lords - I remain neutral on that point, I was merely using it as an illustration.

But looking at our own backyard, surely it is clear to any intelligent person that you cannot just go and lecture another country about having to accept a template for perfect political life – there is much more to it than that. It would involve, if we were to do that, condemning immediately, essentially every GCC monarchy and that would be crazy, wrong and I think morally ill-advised. So it needs a lot of deep thought and less youthful judgementalism if you like, if we are properly to understand how the course of events of the last year can leave a legacy of hope and freedom.

In answer to whether it is encouraging elections at any price, just one thing: if you have deposed a dictator and there is a vacuum of governance, surely the first choice, if it is deliverable, should be elections, rather than the appointment of another unelected ruler? So there must be a presumption in favour of democracy where there is no properly working political system.

Chairman: I think it is worth just adding to that: there were elections in the Palestinian Authority, but the West did not like the result and did not actually carry it through and I think that was a great shame.

I think that one of the problems that we have on this whole issue of the Arab Awakening is that the news coverage has been very mixed. Some of it has been immensely good and detailed, but some it has been oversimplified for the headlines and I think there is a lot of misunderstanding about what is happening and therefore a lot of room for disappointment, because people's expectations are unrealistically high.

FIRST SESSION: PERSPECTIVES ON THE ARAB UPRISINGS

'Past Legacies: The Evolution Of The Arab Uprisings'

Dr Eugene Rogan
Fellow, Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford

'A Journalist's Perspective: Reporting On Libya And Syria In A Time Of Revolution'

Lindsey Hilsum
International Editor, Channel 4 News

'Egypt's Transition To Democracy: A Long Road To Reform?'

Dr Maha Azzam
Associate Fellow, Chatham House

'PAST LEGACIES: THE EVOLUTION OF THE ARAB UPRISINGS'

Dr. Eugene Rogan
Fellow, Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford

It is a pleasure to be back with the Global Strategy Forum talking about an issue that first brought me to the Forum, and it is still going to be with us for the next decade or so as a subject of current interest and evolving dynamic.

The past year has presented the international community with more change and more issues to confront in a region of vital strategic interest and I think everybody was left trying to catch up to the pace of events in the Arab world starting last January 2011 and coming right through to the present day.

Basically, six revolutions have rocked the region: four of them have led to a change in leadership and two have led to unfinished business, in Bahrain and in Syria. These six revolutions represent the single most important transformations of what has been called the Arab Spring and really have set out the architecture for a region-wide transformation.

These six revolutions brought to an end five to six decades of what has been pretty consistently across the region as a whole, autocratic rule. But I have been arguing that one can look to a two-century history of a region, which largely through constitutional reform movements, has tried to find a way to constrain absolutism. This runs contrary to the standard telling of a region, which, either because of the patriarchal nature of its society or because of some incompatibility with Islam, meant that people were not willing to engage with democratic forms of government. And I hate to say how widespread that view had become in Western policy circles, that the Arab world was seen as quirky. A global third way towards democratisation had already reshaped politics in Latin America, Eastern Europe and was at work in some of the countries of East Asia, so the Arabs were seen as a kind of exception to a global trend towards greater participatory politics.

But prior to these six decades of autocracy, people across the Arab world had experienced debates about constitutionalism going back to the 1830s and indeed the first effort to try and draft rules of a game that would constrain absolute rule and would allow citizens to have some say in their own governance, started with Tunisia in the 1860s, which drafted the first constitution of the Arab world. One might look at the Urabi revolt in Egypt in 1881-1882 as Egypt's national party trying to grapple with the questions of constitutional reform against the absolute rule of the Khedive: these were debates that were taken up by young Ottomans and led to a constitutional revolution - first off, the

application of the constitution of 1876, which the Ottoman Empire suspended a year later, a constitutional revolution in 1908 to restore it, and by that time Iran had already had its own constitutional revolution in 1906.

The interwar years were marked by a wide range of constitutional governments and elected parliamentary forms of governments right across states that were under colonial rule. That experiment in constitutional government was undermined by the fact that each of these countries witnessed nationalist movements against their colonial rulers that left parliamentary forms of government looking as though they were ineffective at achieving the most important goal that the nation had set for themselves. But nonetheless, we can point to, not just decades but centuries, of debates and experiments with constitutional government that in twenty years' time, let's say around 2030, will have historians looking back over the past two centuries and seeing that actually, with the exception of sixty years of autocracy in there, this struggle against absolutism had been a continuous feature of Arab political history and now we find ourselves back in a new age of constitutional reform, in the sense that the revolutions we are witnessing across the region are leading to the overthrow of Heads of State, the demand of the people being the fall of the regime, but what is coming in their wake is an attempt to try and create a new sense of a rule of law, with accountable government, and those two elements, the rules and the accountability are to be achieved through the drafting of new constitutions.

Tunisia has already embarked on this. It is a pleasure to have the Ambassador of Tunisia here and I am sure he can share the views of the challenges and the rethinking of the rules of politics in his country. Of course the parliamentary elections are to follow in Egypt, and Libya will be the next in line to try and draft a constitution to fill the great vacuum that Gaddafi's 42 years of non-statehood have left in Libya. And one suspects that there will be similar debates going on in Yemen as it approaches its two years of national dialogue to try and reform the government institutions in that state.

Looking over the Middle East then, we are seeing that the region has been shaped by six revolutions, four of which have led to regime change. What is striking is not where revolution has happened, but where it is yet to occur and what effect the revolutions that have taken place so far are going to have on countries where they have not.

I would like to leave you with an image of a region divided in three ways. Firstly, we have the six revolutionary states. Then secondly, we have a group of countries that might fit the demographic and political profile of countries that have witnessed revolutions in the past year, but for one reason or another, have not actually had mass demonstrations leading to a critical mass demanding change - I am thinking here of Algeria, Sudan, the Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Iraq. The one thing that unites these countries is, of course, the recent experience of civil war or violent domestic conflict, which I would argue has probably served as a constraint on citizen action to try and risk

it all by pushing for mass movements for social change. Thirdly we have the monarchies, which are divided between the more or less oil wealthy in the Gulf States and the resource-poor monarchies of Jordan and Morocco, but all of them having come under a degree of pressure that is forcing them to reconsider the terms of their social contract: the way in which they share power with their citizens.

I would argue that the pressure exercised by the revolutions in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and to some degree Yemen, and the forces at work in Syria and Bahrain for change, peaceful or violent, are nonetheless going to exercise tremendous pressure on every state across the region and that while we may not see such dramatic revolutions as were quick to sweep the region at the beginning of 2011, we are going to see continued pressure on every state across the region to reconsider and reform the institutions of statehood and to try and allow a greater degree of participation and a greater degree of accountability. I think the status quo will prove to be untenable just about everywhere, but the degree of change and the pace of change is going to vary quite dramatically according to the specific circumstances of each country, arguably according to the capacity of each country to provide for the needs and the expectations of their citizens.

With those sorts of thoughts in mind, I would like to pass the floor to colleagues who have more immediate experience or who are closer to the countries involved.

'A JOURNALIST'S PERSPECTIVE: REPORTING ON LIBYA AND SYRIA IN A TIME OF REVOLUTION'

Lindsey Hilsum
International Editor, Channel 4 News
Author of *'Sandstorm: Libya In The Time Of Revolution'*

With regard to the comments on the tendency for the press to oversimplify reporting: of course we journalists sometimes oversimplify. I am very lucky, I work for Channel 4 News and that means that I get to do my stories in 3½ or 4 minutes, and if you work for the BBC or ITV News or Sky, then you have to do it in 1½ or 2 minutes, or if it is a really big story, 2½ minutes, so yes, we simplify and sometimes we oversimplify and there are all sorts of problems with the shortening attention span of viewers and so on. But this is an age where people can find out more and more – it is a wonderful age for information and so although I think that is a valid criticism, quite often, people who get interested because they may see something exciting on the television, can then go and look online and find out far more and that is what young people increasingly do.

I am going to talk a bit about Libya and I am going to talk about Syria as well. And I will contrast the coverage of the two and also the policy, because I think in some ways, coverage and policy mirror each other.

I spoke to a senior UK official the other day, who said that Libya had no strategic importance to us in Britain, but it was a doable war, and that is why we did it, and it was partly to send a message. It was accessible, and for us as journalists, it was very accessible. You could cross the border, as I did on February 23rd last year, into the eastern area which fell to the rebels immediately and go straight up to the front line. It is the first war I have covered in a long time where they had the front line on the main road. It is so convenient, because it just meant that you could go up in your car, spend a few hours and go back to the hotel in Benghazi - it was not a great hotel, but it was a hotel - and send your story from there.

And in the west, some of my colleagues were in Tripoli - obviously very restrained in what they could do under Gaddafi - but still getting that side of the story. So it was super accessible and that meant, in some ways, that it was arguable that we covered it too much in comparison to the importance of other stories, for example, Bahrain and Egypt. In Egypt, it was not that it was not accessible, but it happened rather quickly – in 18 days, and then they got onto the boring bit, which is everybody quarrelling and it being terribly complicated and it did not have the excitement, which, of course, as journalists we like, and to some extent, I do not apologise for that – it's the news.

But likewise in policy, Syria is obviously much, much more difficult for us to cover, much more dangerous and, just as in policy terms, much harder to work out what to do, and I will come back to that.

There is also an argument that, to some extent, journalists acted as cheerleaders for NATO and for the rebels. I think that is a valid criticism, I think we did, a little bit. However, I have to say being there, it is awfully hard. You meet a bunch of young people, or some women, who tell you how their family members, their husbands, brothers and sons were murdered by Colonel Gaddafi, that they were in prison and they were assembled in the prison yard and 1,270 of them were gunned down, but from the roof of the prison and now they want to overthrow Colonel Gaddafi. I find it quite hard to say that is a bad idea, I really do. But that does not mean that one is then predicting that everything is going to be sweetness and light and everything is going to be fine.

We are not prophets, I cannot tell you what is going to happen, but certainly, obviously what Alan Duncan said about 'flicking switches' is absolutely correct. It is really difficult and the way one Libyan said to me just a few months ago, *'you know, we've all got a little Colonel Gaddafi in our heads',* I thought that was a really good way of putting it, because what is difficult now is the legacy. If you have lived for 42 years under that kind of system, the first thing you do is turn to violence, because that is how it is done. He divided people up between regions and tribes and so on and he cemented those divisions. And so that is what is happening. Now I do not necessarily think that Libya is going to break apart, but people's loyalties are to those groups and to families. I mean, the only people you could trust were your own family - that makes that network really strong and other networks very weak. There was no state: it is year zero.

All of this make things very difficult, but what I think is interesting about Libya is that you had this sclerotic regime and yet these people who were in many ways very modern, and the example I always give of that is from when I arrived and I asked what some graffiti meant and I was told it said *'Gaddafi, you are the weakest link – goodbye.'*

What is happening now in Libya? A new book has come out and I will not say by whom, but the first line is 'my heart sank when news broke that a popular uprising had broken out in Tunisia'. I did not read the second line, because how annoying can that be? Of course things are going to go wrong, of course Islamists are going to do well, what do you expect? What do you think is going to happen? The Islamists are the best organised force in Libya and so, in elections, they are likely to do very well. Secularists and liberals: they are too disorganised, they have to get their act together and that is up to them.

A gentleman asked about elections. They are so keen for elections that in Misrata they went ahead and held their own local elections anyway, even though the election was not forecast. They have got an election law – there is a lot of argument and discussion about it. People are *wild* for elections. It does not mean that the elections will be great

and it certainly does mean, I think, that the Islamists will get in and women are going to have to fight it: they are going to have to fight some of this stuff.

The other thing which I think is very worrying and which is going on, is this: because Gaddafi gave so many weapons to the Tuareg in the south and the Tuareg were very much seen as his supporters, they are now moving with those weapons across into Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and so on and we have a new Tuareg uprising which has not had much publicity, but there are already, I think, 120,000 refugees from that area in Mali just over the border from Libya and that is an outworking of the revolution in Libya. We have not yet seen where that is going, but you have also got Al Qaeda in the Maghreb in that area, so that is a very worrying development.

I will just say a few things about Syria.

Tomorrow is the anniversary of the beginning of the uprising in Syria, of the day when a group of schoolchildren in Daraa went out and wrote on a wall, 'The people demand the fall of the regime' and those schoolchildren were arrested and tortured. The Syrians have learnt from the Libyans. One of the things they have learnt is to try and stop journalists finding out what is going on. They have retaken Homs and now Idlib. There is a tendency for journalists to do 'something-must-be-done-ism', because it is so awful. And we are right: something must be done. It does not mean we know what it is. I think we know at the moment that humanitarian access is the first thing that has to happen.

The most important thing as journalists is to be an eyewitness. When we cannot be, increasingly we are relying on video which is coming out from activists and I just wanted to briefly tell you how we deal with that video, because I am worried that people think we just slam it on the television without looking at it – that is not true. We are getting increasingly sophisticated in evaluating the video that comes out, checking the weather - whether the weather today in the place is the weather which we see on the video. What the origin of the video is, who has sent it, whether it is somebody who has sent stuff before. There is a new organisation called Storyful in Dublin, which now specialises in verification of video through these different methods and we pay them to help us do this, so that we can do it in time. And we do doubt things and we do send things back. I got a video a little while back from the Free Syrian Army, which said 'these are five Iranian mercenaries who have been murdering women and children and they are confessing'. So I got a Persian speaker in and she listened and she translated and she said *'you know, these men are under duress and the way they phrase this isn't quite right and this doesn't sound right to me, this sounds if they're translating from the Arabic'* and then a friend of mine from Al Jazeera, Anita McNaught, put out on Twitter, 'anybody seen this video, anybody know anything about it?' and within ten minutes, somebody had come back saying 'those five are Iranian workers in the telecommunications works in Homs and they disappeared in January and these are pictures of them', so we were able to tell very quickly that the story which the Free Syrian Army gave us about these

men was not the true story, so we did not run with it. So we can do that.

The last thing I would say is that nothing, nothing for a journalist replaces being an eyewitness on the ground and the degree of danger in Syria is such that that has become almost impossible for us, and my friend and a friend of at least one other person here in the room, Marie Colvin, paid with her life for that, but that is what we have to carry on doing, because that, as journalists, is the most important role that we can play in this Arab Awakening.

'EGYPT'S TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY: A LONG ROAD TO REFORM?'

Dr Maha Azzam
Associate Fellow, Chatham House

It is a great pleasure to be here and to take part in the Global Strategy Forum meeting today. I want to place my comments against the background of what has been said before and especially the general context that Eugene has put forward. In a sense, the long road to reform in that part of the world has been a long time coming. The peoples of the region have waited for change from dictatorial regimes for a very long time and are still waiting.

But I think some momentous changes have happened and it is worthwhile reminding ourselves that the legacy and experience of dictatorship has meant that a very high price has been paid by the peoples of the region. In the particular context that I am addressing, in Egypt, for sixty years people have lived under one form of dictatorship or another. Some have said that the Mubarak years were perhaps milder than those that went before, the Sadat years were better than those of Nasser, but nonetheless, it was dictatorship. The damage of dictatorship has meant that the political institutions of that country, the economic welfare of that country and the very social fabric of that country have been gravely harmed and to pick up the pieces and do the repair work is going to take a very long time.

Ultimately it is not just about the acceptance of democratic values, it is the issue of rebuilding state and society. Dictatorship destroys states and it destroys societies and societies' well-being and, in reality, Egyptians feel this very, very strongly. As I returned to Egypt almost on a monthly basis over the last year, the despair and the anger that is felt by myself and by others is not just at the Mubarakeers, but at the level of damage. So everything you touch and everything you try to repair, whether for MPs, for the people working with civil society, for NGOs, you realise the depth of the damage that has been done. I think it is worthwhile, perhaps, to have that as some kind of background.

On a more optimist note, the uprisings, or protests or revolutions - I do not think it really matters what term we use - have meant that there has been a very fundamental shift in a society like Egypt. For example, the very fact, not just that Mubarak was put on trial, but for the very first time, people were able to come out onto the street and say 'we want to hold a leader of a country accountable'. Now whatever happens with that trial is another matter, we will not go into that today. But something much more fundamental also took place: to all intents and purposes, Egypt experienced free and fair elections. The result may not be to everyone's taste, but in reality, Egyptians did come out and

they voted overwhelmingly for the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist parties. Now that is a tremendous step, I believe, in the right direction.

Egypt has a parliamentary system now that has a lot of work to do. It has committees, foreign affairs committees and other committees that are functioning, that are questioning what the Interior Ministry has done, that are questioning individuals, that are throwing out MPs who are not behaving the right way or who are presumed to have lied over one issue or another, so it is moving in the right direction. One of the main challenges it faces as it builds its institutions, primarily that of Parliament and the judiciary, is the place of the military in society and that is a major challenge. The military do want to step aside after the Presidential elections. They want to be out of the limelight. But nevertheless they want immunity, they want to maintain their economic influence and to have a say over security issues and maybe even politics and foreign affairs.

So the whole issue of military-civil relations in Egypt is still going to be played out and I believe it is going to be played out through Parliament. The belief that the Muslim Brotherhood is in some ways in cahoots with the military misses in a sense what the Brotherhood is about. Their strategy has been to deal with issues step by step. They know that they have come a long way and that Egypt has come a long way. There is no love for the military or for SCAF (the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces) and the upper echelons of the military in particular. They, more than any other, have suffered at the hands of the military regime, but they know that they do not want confrontation now. I believe that over time, the confrontation will come through Parliament whereby there will be increasing attempts, both by the Brotherhood and other political forces in Egypt and the Egyptian street, to limit the powers of the military, but it is certainly a major challenge in terms of reform for that country.

Another major challenge, of course, is reform of the security sector and police and that is a very big issue. It is clear that, in terms of the brutality of the police and over the past year what we have seen in Egypt in the way that the protestors have been dealt with and treated, many of the old methods still exist, military trials for civilians and so on and so forth.

I think another major challenge, which was also pointed to earlier, is that of dealing with corruption and the economy and that really is at the heart of where Egypt is going, because the democratic process can be seriously undermined unless Egypt can pick up in terms of the economic situation and attract investments both from the region and outside. Unless those investments are forthcoming, Egypt is going to be in a dire situation, which will undermine this democratic experiment.

And in a sense, the region has a great deal of influence. Investments from the Gulf are very, very important and Egypt wants to steer a path that is independent, but at the same time, that independence will require co-operation regionally. The whole issue as

well of being in some ways independent of aid, of the IMF loan, of Gulf investments, is a very powerful argument in the minds not only of political activists, but of Egyptians generally in the sense of 'to what extent can we steer an independent path, if we have to rely on Saudi money, if we have to rely on aid from the outside?', but I think that the future government of Egypt and what we have heard from the Muslim Brotherhood so far (and they are going to be the main partners or the main leaders of that future government) is that they want to do business with the West, they want to do business with the Gulf States and that, ultimately, they will accept the IMF loan and that they are going to welcome tourism and so on. There is a very clear understanding of the fact that Egypt is not going to survive unless it is going to steer a path towards some kind of free market economics. How it is going to then balance that with the notion of social justice and providing for the vast majority of the poor is another question, because expectations are very high in Egypt. Part of the decay that has happened in Egyptian society has also affected areas such as education, the health service and housing, so in all these realms, people want to see improvement and development.

The list is long, but I think the main issue here is that for the first time in sixty years, Egyptians, like others in the region, are saying, 'we are going to hold governments accountable, we want a fair share in political participation and we want greater respect for the rule of law and human rights' - these are major steps. It will take a long time, but the first phase, if you like, of an ongoing revolution has already taken place.

SECOND SESSION: THE WESTERN POLICY RESPONSE

'The UN Dimension: Is The International Community Responding Effectively?'

Lord Williams of Baglan
UN Under Secretary-General and Special Coordinator for Lebanon (2008–11); UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East (2006–07)

'Supporting Democratic Revolution: Intervention And Its Limits'

Sir Richard Dalton KCMG
Former UK Ambassador to Iran and to Libya

'Paradigm Shifts And Inflection Points In The MENA Region: How Can The UK Meet The Challenge?'

Rt Hon Jack Straw MP
Home Secretary (1997-2001); Foreign Secretary (2001-2006); Justice Secretary (2007-2010)

'THE UN DIMENSION: IS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY RESPONDING EFFECTIVELY?'

Lord Williams of Baglan
UN Under Secretary-General and Special Coordinator for Lebanon (2008–11); and UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East (2006–07)

Thank you Michael, and Global Strategy Forum for organising this very important event. I think already in the first session, we have had a very rich discussion.

My title is *'The UN Dimension: Is The International Community Responding Effectively?'* and I will be talking largely about the UN dimension, which of course is greater than the Western policy response in as much as the UN represents 192 Member States and not just western states. Clearly, what we have seen in the past year has been utterly remarkable: one of the most historic years, not just in terms of the Middle East, but of global significance.

When I was in the region (I only left Beirut in mid-October), some people sometimes would compare it with the 1967 Six Day War, which reshaped the region. President Sleiman, the Lebanese President when I was leaving, compared it with the Sykes-Picot Agreement, under which Britain and France divided the region just after the First World War. Those were external events of course - the war of 1967, Sykes-Picot - led by outside powers, Israel in one case, Britain and France as the dominant imperial powers in the other.

The events of 2011 by contrast, come from the Street as previous speakers have so dramatically outlined, and are in the process of reshaping that region in the most dramatic fashion. One of the first things I would say (and it is very important for Western policy and particularly the UN dimension): this is unfinished business. This is a drama which will continue to unroll in the coming weeks, months and years.

And I do believe that whilst we are focused, as Eugene mentioned, on the four successful revolutions and the two that have been less successful, we should not kid ourselves that any country, from the Maghreb to the Gulf, is going to be immune from this process. This is a crisis in governance of the Arab world, whether republic or monarchy, whether pro-Western like Egypt and Tunisia, or radical, like Syria and Libya. The crisis is in the governance of the Arab world.

Some of the intellectual analysis of that crisis has been made for many years by the UN itself. A series of excellent Annual Reports on Arab Human Development beginning in

the year 2002, I think, and produced by the UNDP, by a team of Arab scholars led by a Jordanian scholar and former Minister there, Dr. Rima Khalaf Hunaidi, have articulated and analysed and unpacked the problems of the Arab world. These included critical things, like the lack of universal education systems, infant mortality rates, which are much, much higher than those in the Latin America and the illiteracy of huge numbers of women, usually more than 50%, I think, in most countries.

One statistic I always remember is the number of books published in Greek, a language of around 25 million (perhaps not enough books published on economics by the way, but that's another matter) – there are far more books published in Greek than in Arabic, spoken by hundreds of millions of people, from the Atlantic to the shores of the Indian Ocean. That is a condemnation, I am afraid, of Arab political systems of all sorts and across the region.

I think there was also a fault in the past of Western governments, of UK governments, whether Labour or Conservative, in analysing the situation in the Middle East and using the rigour that they often applied to other regions, such as Africa or Asia, in terms of looking at standards of good governance. What on earth did we expect was going to happen in Egypt? Mubarak was 84 years of age. He was going to die at some point and clearly the regime plan was to put his son Gamal in place, just as Hafez al-Assad did with his son Bashar several years ago. Did we really think that that was going to work in Egypt in the 21st century? No, clearly it was not, and we see the results which have been so strikingly outlined by my colleague from Chatham House, Maha, in her talk.

I think initially the West was taken by surprise. The UN, I would argue, less so. I think that the situation began to change dramatically with the outbreak of the revolt in Libya in February 2011. The UN was involved on the ground from the start, with UNHCR tackling the refugee outflows into Tunisia and to a lesser extent, into Malta. But it was above all, the intervention of David Cameron and of Nicolas Sarkozy, of the UK and France taking this issue to the Security Council, with some hesitation, it has to be said, initially, from the United States. President Obama went along, but to their credit, the lead was with Prime Minister Cameron and President Sarkozy.

The first resolution on Libya was Resolution 1970 of February 26th, imposing sanctions, and then moving quickly to Council Resolution 1973, which established a 'no-fly zone' and that always haunting phrase, 'all necessary means,' and of course we know what that led to - Lindsey reported it amongst others.

Following the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, the Security Council has established a political mission called UNSMIL (there is always a UN acronym) - the UN Special Mission in Libya. That was established in September, and led, incidentally, by a Brit, an old friend and colleague, Ian Martin, and it has been doing good work with a mandate to support the government in promoting democracy and accountable government, restoring public

security, and curbing, or trying to curb, the flood of weapons in the country.

On March 2nd that mission was renewed for a further twelve months by the Security Council. But if on Libya we have seen an enormous engagement of the West and of the Security Council generally, clearly that has not been the case, sadly, I believe, with regard to Syria.

So, to answer the exam question that Michael Lothian has posed for us: *'Is the international community responding effectively?'* - the answer with regard to Syria is a thundering 'no'. Now, the most immediate cause of that inaction, has, of course, been the blocking by Russia and China of Security Council action, which we saw again at the beginning of this week in New York, under the UK presidency, the Foreign Secretary was there.

I believe there is more that can be done. I think that Western countries should be doing more with regard to China for example, which does not have the objective material interests in Syria that Russia has in terms of arms sales, in terms of the naval facility in Tartus and indeed there was a quote today from the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao, expressing sorrow at the loss of life and saying that China had no friends in this quarrel. If accurately reported, that might indicate some rethinking on the Chinese side.

Despite the inaction of the Security Council, I do think and I am sorry to say this in a way as a former UN official, that the Secretary-General should have been more proactive on Syria. He has now appointed a Special Envoy on February 24th, Kofi Annan, of course his predecessor, I think that could have come earlier. The Secretary-General has some leeway in this regard and although the Security Council has been divided over Syria, if the Secretary-General had appointed an Envoy, I believe that Council members would have accepted that, even if it had been much earlier. Frankly, it is something within the UN that I had tried to press from April or May last year, and discussed individually with P5 Ambassadors in New York last July.

Finally, Kofi Annan has been appointed. Obviously we all wish him well with his extremely difficult endeavours. He had two days of conversations earlier this week in Damascus with Bashar al-Assad, always a surreal experience – I have been with two Secretary-Generals in many meetings with the man. Now Kofi Annan has visited Qatar and Turkey, two countries playing a critical role. The primary goal, of course, has been to try and secure a ceasefire. I should say that for my own part, I have some misgivings about an approach that is hinged on securing a ceasefire.

I served with the UN in Bosnia, when David Hannay was Ambassador in New York, and we all remember that too often, ceasefires were agreed and sometimes fell apart within 48 hours. In fact, the experience from 1992 to 1995, three horrible years in Bosnia, was that it was very, very difficult to make ceasefires endure. I wish Kofi Annan the best in

this regard, but I do worry that this is not a correct approach. It is not a level playing field.

Assad apparently has now sent a written response. I am worried that he will say, 'okay, we'll have a ceasefire on certain grounds', but within Syria, there is still no real equivalent of the NTC, the National Transitional Council in Libya. The Syrian National Council, I regret, is a very weak body and despite the many months of this struggle, a coherent leadership with clear political goals has still not come to the fore.

To answer the exam question on Syria, the international community has not responded effectively, including the UN, and I think we are losing sight of something that was key for the Prime Minister and Nicolas Sarkozy last year, namely what was called within the UN, the 'Responsibility to Protect', a doctrine that emerged after the tragedies of the '90's in Bosnia and in Rwanda.

I have perhaps three suggestions to end with, the first of which was mentioned by one of the contributors, the question of humanitarian access. I checked with the ICRC yesterday and it is still the case that the ICRC, the guardians of international humanitarian law, do not have access in Syria. They still have not been to the site of the awful fight in the Homs suburb of Baba Amr. This is an absolute scandal and I think this is something that all countries, including Russia and China, should be shamed into uniting around a demand for humanitarian access.

My second suggestion is that there is a need for an international conference to be called, or an international meeting perhaps, rather than a conference, with the P5, Germany, Turkey and the Arab League, to establish some sort of common ground with Syria, because this has to be taken away from the Security Council now, because the debate there, tragically, is not going anywhere. I think in another context, the possibility of China, for example, playing a more subtle role and a more engaging role, is a real possibility.

The third and final suggestion is the option of what is known as a 'Uniting for Peace' resolution, that is, taking the issue to the General Assembly, where of course, the vote of one member state counts the same as the vote of any other - Uruguay counts the same as Russia, as New Zealand does with regard to China. There are some interesting examples in the past and one back in 1981 when Zimbabwe, of all countries, used the General Assembly to adopt a resolution with regard to Namibia and the then South African involvement in that country, condemning it, calling for sanctions, which were agreed, and political and military help for the internal radical organisation, SWAPO.

So, to conclude, the international response, the Western policy response, has been uneven; it has got much better, but now we are stuck in the trenches on the question of Syria, and we need desperately to find ways out, I believe.

'SUPPORTING DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION: INTERVENTION AND ITS LIMITS'

Sir Richard Dalton KCMG
Former UK Ambassador to Iran and to Libya

Intervention of course comprises a huge range of actions, from collective diplomacy of the active negotiating kind, attempts at persuasion through non-binding UN resolutions, the sort of regional actions we have seen in the Yemen, sanctions, civil society programmes, economic and financial aid, assistance to insurgents and committing armed forces. I do not suppose that is a complete list, but I have not got time to take you through them all.

I am going to talk chiefly about military intervention and its limits and to try and suggest some lessons of Libya and some pointers for the future.

My main thoughts, which do chime very well with what we have just heard from Lord Williams, are that we should join others in standing up for human rights and freedoms, that we should provide the most generous assistance we can afford after conflicts and where requested, but instances where (again with others, of course) we would seek to dictate change through coercion will be rare; and that actually, there are no rules as to when or how the use of forceful intervention should take place, but there are very important general principles under the heading of the Responsibility to Protect that we should cling to and promote continued international acceptance of.

The Libya war - clearly a one-off. To paraphrase Simon Tisdall in the Guardian, it did set a further limited precedent for doable interventionism. The reasons for success in Libya are among the conditions, I believe, for success elsewhere. So we had general (or very large) majority support for the revolt, assisted in Libya's case by the ethnic and religious homogeneity of Libya's people. Then there was generous funding at acute moments of shortage (it came late, but it was there), particularly from Qatar and the UAE. The national interests of regional powers and also of those principal powers that exist with active, interventionist foreign policies were aligned and that is not always going to be the case.

Libya, of course, had no large state friends. And we must not forget that it was a very close run. There is a wry irony that here we are advocating accountable government - and yet governments will not account to us as UK citizens for those of our armed forces who were actually on the ground, namely, our Special Forces. This is in accordance with longstanding policy which has its own reasons, but one of the reasons it did work at the end, and rapidly, was the Special Force presence.

So what are the lessons from Libya? And of course there is a little bit of Iraq in here too.

What has been learned, I think, are the limits of what airpower can achieve, that we should avoid occupations, that we should not destroy the physical or human capacity of and for government in the country we are intervening in, and that we should work to keep the aftermath local. Some Libyans are criticising us for being a bit too hands off in the present situation. I think that is unrealistic - we have to move after conflict where invited.

What I am not confident has been learned adequately by way of lessons from these conflicts, particularly in the case of Iraq, is caution about the public use of intelligence. Personally, I found our Defence Secretary's claim that Iran was rushing towards a nuclear weapon, when in fact the public evidence does not support that, to be severely misleading to the British public. We also need to carry the public along and I am not sure that lesson has adequately been learned in our country. And we have to have a well-informed public debate, that is a given, and of course there is Parliament's role in holding the executive to account at a very early stage. Has that really been learned yet? I am not sure.

The unintended consequences of wars? Well, some of the rhetoric around the potential for military intervention in certain situations suggested that that lesson has not sunk in adequately.

And finally a lesson of Libya - I think it is quite a cautionary tale - is that states will stretch, possibly even distort, the mandates they are given internationally, if it appears the right thing to do in the spirit of the underlying intention of that mandate. There is always going to be a long debate about whether we had to go all out for regime change in Libya. Those for the defence will say, 'well, you couldn't protect the rights of the inhabitants of Libya unless you were prepared to go that far'. But we have to recognise that this debate exists and that it has done harm already to the possibility of acting with a UN mandate to prevent mass atrocities in future.

So what about the future? Well, clearly there is no general right of intervention or the right to protect. Some French statesmen used to talk about the 'right of intervention to protect' and that clearly does not exist. There are no simple rules and no doctrines which you can look to in order to guide decision-making.

Of course, this is the next lesson. The perceived national interests of outsiders will dominate policy-making, but what is new about that? Each case is going to be taken on its merits, to examine what capabilities there are, and where, when and how to use them. So you put together the fact that there is no wishing away national interests and you cannot do something everywhere, but there is simply no avoiding the accusations

that we hear levelled at us of selectivity in addressing some crises in certain ways and not others. I think we can find some comfort for that in other areas of international activity. After all, there is always an uneven response to humanitarian emergencies involving natural disasters or famines. We cannot always do the same thing for everybody, everywhere: that is the fact of how the state system works today.

The next thought I would give you about future intervention is that states will continue to go for United Nations Security Council legality as the basis of it and will be reluctant to go outside the UN, but clearly the Kosovo precedent exists and you may well be right that now is the time to think more toughly about that in connection with Syria.

But moving on from legality to legitimacy, there the criteria are still the same and we do need to bear them in mind. The risk has got to be really serious. It has got to be clear that the primary purpose of intervention is not a national agenda or the agendas of countries seeking to intervene, but is actually protection.

Proportional means: you must not cause more harm by intervening, you must not select means of military intervention that go way over the top for what is actually required to minimise the risk of atrocities.

We see all these factors at play in Libya and there is no alternative to confronting the debate under each heading and finding a way through.

Final thoughts. I entirely agree that it is a tragedy for the Syrian people that the Annan mission was conceived and mounted so late. And then, referring again to the need for international debate on the criteria for exercising the Responsibility to Protect, it is not going to be good enough just to respond ad hoc. International organisations do need to set aside time to try and revert to those more constructive debates that preceded the UN Anniversary World Summit in 2005, when 150 Heads of State and Government unanimously declared at the time of the 60th anniversary, enthusiasm for this development of the international system.

It is very hard to conceive of that happening again in today's circumstances, but we must encourage our government, amongst others, to work to create time in international debates to focus attention on the criteria for involvement in future cases and those issues of seriousness of risk, primary purpose, proportionality and balance of consequences, because (and here I am very much a follower of Gareth Evans and those of you who have read what he has had to say in recent years will recognise much of what I am saying) that does offer the opportunity of teasing out something of the objections of those who do not want to see intervention in particular cases where all the pressure is on say, European countries, to get stuck in.

So, to conclude with the rallying cry of Gareth Evans, most recently in the New York

Times of 11th March, the whole point of the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect is to generate a reflex international response that occurring or imminent mass atrocities are everybody's business, not nobody's.

'PARADIGM SHIFTS AND INFLECTION POINTS IN THE MENA REGION: HOW CAN THE UK MEET THE CHALLENGE?'

Rt Hon Jack Straw MP
Home Secretary (1997-2001); Foreign Secretary (2001-2006);
Justice Secretary (2007-2010)

I am going to make three sets of observations, some of which echo an interesting short note which Dr. Azzam produced outside this meeting. The first on democracy; the second on how we deal with Islamist parties and movements within democracy; and the third on the alliances we should strengthen in order to increase our influence.

About 120 years ago, towards the end of the 19th century, Lord Salisbury, a very distinguished Conservative Prime Minister, said of another country that he was no more willing to give that country democracy than, and I quote, he would be 'willing to give the Hottentots democracy.' Now that other country was Ireland and that quotation serves as a reminder as to how contemporary are our attitudes to the idea that democracy is a universal principle. And even decades after democracy was laid down as a universal principle in the United Nations Charter, as countries in Sub Saharan Africa were decolonised, we heard a very strong repetition of the same sentiments as Lord Salisbury's. The West and indeed the Soviet Bloc, the alternative power bloc, not only turned a blind eye to the absence of democracy, but actively supported anti-democratic governments across Sub Saharan Africa on the basis that these people were not ready for democracy. And what we recall is that this approach, in which all the wealthier nations almost without exception were complicit, led to the development of corrupt, thieving kleptocracies which, generally speaking, raped their countries.

More recently, the idea of democracy started to spread across Africa and these democracies are by no means perfect, they are inadequate, they are developing, but as with almost all democracies, they are a great deal better than the alternative. My starting point is that the principle of democracy is a universal one and it requires universal application. I have never met a group of people, in any country, who voluntarily have said 'I do not wish to have the kind of control over my life, which others can freely enjoy in countries called democracies'. It is against all that we know about the human character.

What does that mean for the Middle East with these developing situations? Well, Dr. Azzam said that the commitment needs to be consistent and not selective. It does need to be consistent, but inevitably (and this, in a sense, does pick up on an implication of Charles Guthrie's point), exactly how far different countries can go does depend on their circumstances. Also, what attitudes the United Kingdom government and Parliament

should strike about dealing with, say, a very difficult situation in Bahrain as opposed to that in Syria, depends both on the objective situation in those countries, but also on how we think we can exercise influence in those countries.

But one thing we have to be clear about and this has to be applied consistently, is that if we are in favour of democracy, then that means we have to be in favour of clean elections, of peaceful changes of power, and what goes with that - of accepting that if they are clean elections, that if the people have spoken, the people have spoken. Leninists used to have a very fine term for elections which produced the wrong answer, which were that the proletariats were guilty of a 'false consciousness'. We smile, but it is just worth bearing in mind - and I was, to a degree, party to this - that when the elections in the Occupied Territories produced the wrong answer, the international community decided that they would not recognise that answer and I personally think that that was a mistake, a mistake which I regret.

It leads on to this issue of how we handle the so-called Islamist movements. If you look up there, you will see a great painting, which is actually about the inauguration of the Order of the Garter, a mystical order. You have to be a very, very serious member of the British establishment to become an Order of the Garter. But you will spot that there are a couple of bishops up there, going in for some very odd ritual, to inaugurate the Order of Garter. Now that was at the end of the 18th century, but it is a reminder that the United Kingdom is not a secular state. Indeed, we have prayers for Parliament every day, given by the Chaplain of the House of Commons who has to be an Anglican.

The liturgy, the Statement of Beliefs of the Church of Scotland, is laid down, word for word, in a 20th century Act of Parliament, the 1921 Church of Scotland Act. It is law in Scotland that they subscribe to the Calvinist Articles and the Westminster Assembly, which Cromwell set up, whereas down in England we have a rather different view of these things. Although of course there is this difference that we allow complete freedom of practice of religion and we regard it as a private, not a public matter, this is only up to a point, and in other European countries, the involvement of state and church has, in our recent past, been much more intense, so you have Christian Democratic parties or you can look at what the Italian Constitution still says about the role of the Roman Catholic Church. Look at what the Greek Constitution says about the role of the Greek Orthodox Church – it is a criminal offence of some seriousness, to insult the Orthodox Church. So, what we have been able to do, after (I have to say) some rather bloody centuries, is to accommodate the role of religion and of faith in our societies, while accepting that, on the whole, we do not have secular states. France does, but other countries do not and that includes the United Kingdom. I think we need to apply a similar approach to faith-based and religious-based parties in the Muslim world.

And acknowledge this truth too about the human character, which is that if you stigmatise a whole group, they will be united because of that stigma. If on the other hand, you

seek to accept their legitimacy, then arguments will break out amongst that group and disagreements and shades and you can already see that in the different shading of opinion amongst Islamist parties. I think it would be both a breach of the principles of democracy, but also profoundly an error in practice, if we were to say that if parties are Islamist, then we should regard them as anathema, and the consequences would be very serious.

My last point leads me on to alliances and I will keep this very short. The West has had a chequered history in the Middle East, as indeed we have in most countries of the world, and not least the United Kingdom, but the situation has changed and I also have to say that Russia, Iran and China have hardly covered themselves in glory by backing the most brutal repression of all across the Middle East. But we have got to build alliances and there is an important opportunity for the United Kingdom to strengthen further, in dealing with the Middle East, its alliance with Turkey.

We are by far, the strongest and most consistent ally of Turkey. I am backwards and forwards to that country. Their own approach to their neighbours has changed radically in the last year. They did have an approach which Ahmet Davutoğlu, the Foreign Minister, articulated as 'zero problems' with the neighbours. They now accept they have got big problems with the neighbours and they have decided basically to take sides in this, as I think they are wise to do.

But Turkey's importance, because of its power, because of its economic growth, but also because here is a country, which is a functioning democracy, which since early 2003 or late 2002, has had what some say in Turkey, as well as outside, is an Islamist party in power and it is certainly one which is faith-based and some of the secularists and certainly some of the deep state there find that extremely uncomfortable. It is not a perfect government - there is not one - but it is one that so far has respected the constitution, which has maintained great legitimacy and which can exercise with us and with others in Europe, very considerable influence, properly used, in the development of governance, which accepts the faith in those countries, as we accept the prevailing faith in Europe and the West, but also ensures the application of this universal principle of democracy.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

DR MAHA AZZAM is a leading commentator and lecturer on the politics of the Middle East and political Islam at academic, policy and government institutions and in the media. She is Associate Fellow at the Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House (since 2002). She is on the Egypt Dialogue team at Chatham House. Azzam is currently writing on the transition to democracy in Egypt with specific reference to the military. She previously set up and was Head of the Programme on Security and Development in Muslim States at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies (London, Whitehall). She was 'Thought Leader' on the World Economic Forum's Davis project on the Gulf 2025. She has given evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Iraq. Azzam is a Patron of the UK based charity Social Change through Education in the Middle East (SCEME). She is on the Executive Board of the UK-based parliamentary lobby group, the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding (CAABU). Azzam received her BA from the University of London and her Doctoral thesis from the University of Oxford. Some of her publications include: 'Islamism: Extremists or Democrats', The Arab Spring: Implications for British Policy, Conservative Middle East Council, October 2011; 'The Centrality of Ideology in Counter-Terrorism Strategies in the Middle East', in James Forest (ed.) Counter Terrorism in the 21st Century (Praeger Security International 2007); 'Some Local and Global Dimensions in the Radicalisation of Muslim Communities in Europe', The Brown Journal of World Affairs, 2007; 'Al-Qaeda-Five Years On', Chatham House Briefing Paper, London, September 2006; 'Islamism Revisited', International Affairs, vol 82, no.6, November 2006; 'Political Islam and the Ideology of Violence', in Professor James Forest (ed.) The Making of a Terrorist (Praeger Press 2006); 'Militant Islamism in Egypt and the New Jihad', in Jean-Luc (ed.) Jihadism (University Press France 2005).

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RT HON ALAN DUNCAN MP was appointed as Minister of State for International Development on 13 May 2010. Alan Duncan's great passion for international affairs is inspired by a lifetime of global voyage and discovery. Born in 1957, raised in Hertfordshire and across the world tracking his father's RAF career, he went onto study at Oxford and Harvard. His early career as a crude oil trader spanned the Middle East, South East Asia and Singapore, where he lived for two years. Alan Duncan has kept a constant watch

on the wider world throughout his parliamentary career, reflected in his appointment as shadow Secretary for International Development from 2004 to 2005. He is personally committed to DFID's central goal of fighting global poverty and has long been an advocate of well-managed, effectively spent aid. Alan Duncan joined Parliament in 1992 as the Conservative Member for Rutland and Melton. Five years later he was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party and Parliamentary Political Secretary to the Rt. Hon. William Hague MP. He held a number of positions in the Shadow Cabinet, most recently as Shadow Secretary for Trade Industry and Energy (2005). In 2009, Alan Duncan was appointed Shadow Leader of the House and shortly after, he became Shadow Minister for Prisons and Probation.

LINDSEY HILSUM is Channel 4 News' International Editor. She has covered the major conflicts of the past two decades, including the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 2011 she reported the uprisings in Egypt and Bahrain, as well as Libya. She has also reported extensively from Iran and Zimbabwe, and was Channel 4 News China Correspondent from 2006 to 2008. During the 2004 US assault on Fallujah, she was embedded with a frontline marine unit, and in 1994, she was the only English-speaking foreign correspondent in Rwanda when the genocide started. She has been Royal Television Society Journalist of the Year, and won the Charles Wheeler Award and the James Cameron Award as well as recognition from the One World Media and Amnesty International. Her writing has been featured in the Sunday Times, the Guardian, the Observer and Granta, among other publications. Before becoming a journalist, she was an aid worker, first in Latin America and then in Africa. Her book Sandstorm: Libya in the Time of Revolution was published by Faber in the UK in April, and by Penguin Press in the USA in May.

DR EUGENE ROGAN is a Fellow of the Middle East Centre at St Antony's College, Oxford. He took his BA in economics from Columbia, and his MA and PhD in Middle Eastern history from Harvard. He taught at Boston College and Sarah Lawrence College before taking up his post in Oxford in 1991, where he teaches the modern history of the Middle East. He is author of The Arabs: A History (New York: Basic Books, and London: Penguin, 2009), which is being translated in six languages and was named one of the best books of 2009 by The Economist, The Financial Times, and The Atlantic Monthly. His earlier works include Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire (CUP, 1999), for which he received the Albert Hourani Book Award of the Middle East Studies Association of North America and the Fuad Köprülü Prize of the Turkish Studies Association; and The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948 (CUP, 2001, 2nd edition 2007, with Avi Shlaim). He is currently working on a history of the Middle East in World War I.

RT HON JACK STRAW is Member of Parliament for Blackburn, having previously served in successive senior Cabinet positions in Labour governments from 1997 through to 2010. He is one of the most experienced British and European politicians. During his long career including continuous Cabinet-level roles, he has taken a leading part in many momentous

political decisions in both national and international politics. He first entered Parliament as a Labour MP representing Blackburn in 1979. He had a number of Shadow Cabinet roles before becoming Home Secretary after the Labour Party's 1997 election victory, and then Foreign Secretary in 2001 and Leader of the House of Commons and Lord Privy Seal in 2006. He served as Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice from 2007 until 2010. His time as Home Secretary had its fair share of controversies (including new measures to increase police powers to deal with suspected terrorists) but also saw the European Convention in Human Rights incorporated into British law. Appointed Foreign Secretary in 2001, he soon played a leading role in the dramatic and difficult foreign policy problems arising from the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and then the interventions in Afghanistan and then Iraq. He publicly defended these decisions, although later in January 2010 he told the Iraq Inquiry in London that the 2003 decision to go to war 'had haunted him'. In 2006 he was appointed Leader of the House of Commons and Lord Privy Seal with responsibility for parliamentary reform. He returned to the Opposition benches after Labour lost the 2010 general election and continues to play a leading role in national politics, on home and foreign policy. He is an Advisory Board member of Global Strategy Forum.

LORD WILLIAMS OF BAGLAN studied at University College London and the School of Oriental and African Studies in London where he gained his Ph.D. and M.Sc. before starting his career with Amnesty International. In 1984 he joined the BBC World Service as an editor. Following his time at the World Service, he moved to the United Nations where he was based in Cambodia as Deputy Director for Human Rights; and in former Yugoslavia as Director for Information for the UN Protection Force; in Geneva as Adviser to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and in New York as Director, Office for Children and Armed Conflict. Between 2000-2005, he was Special Adviser to two Foreign Secretaries: Robin Cook, and then Jack Straw. He was also the UK's Special Representative on the Middle East. More recently he has worked once again for the United Nations, serving as United Nations Under Secretary-General and Special Coordinator for Lebanon (2008–11), having also served as UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East (2006–07). He was appointed to the House of Lords in October 2010 and joined the BBC Trust in December 2011. Lord Williams became a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at Chatham House in October 2011. He is the author of three books, Communism, Religion and Revolt in Banten (1990), Vietnam at the Crossroads (1992) and Civil-Military Relations and Peacekeeping (1998).

ABOUT GLOBAL STRATEGY FORUM

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Global Strategy Forum is an independent, not-for-profit organisation which was founded in 2006 to research and stimulate discussion on international affairs and security issues.

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