Regional Integration and National Disintegration in the Post-Arab Spring Middle East

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Edited by

Imad H. El-Anis and Natasha Underhill

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FOREWORD

This edited collection draws together an eclectic collection of research papers presented at an interdisciplinary conference organized by Nottingham Trent University's Middle East and North Africa Research Cluster in April 2015. The conference was titled "Regional Integration and National Disintegration in the Post-Arab Spring Middle East and North Africa" and was held at the Nottingham Conference Centre at Nottingham Trent University. The aim of the conference was to bring together a broad network of scholars, practitioners and stakeholders to explore the processes of change currently shaping the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In particular, the conference sought to investigate the national and transnational challenges that have emerged since the uprisings in 2011, commonly referred to as the "Arab Spring". The increase in extremism and the emergence and intensification of civil wars have garnered significant attention in both media coverage and academic research. However, simultaneous (and far older) processes of regional integration in varying forms, from free trade agreements like the Greater Arab Free Trade Area to economic and political union like the Gulf Cooperation Council, have also been influenced by the changes of the past few years.

The conference brought together researchers working in different fields including Politics, International Relations, International Political Economy, Middle Eastern Studies and History, to explore how far the changes shaping the MENA are leading to the region's polarization between states that are integrating politically and economically with each other on the one hand, and states that are disintegrating internally on the other. Overall, the conference was well received by delegates presenting their research as well as the public in attendance. Over fifty scholars, stakeholders from the public and private sector, and members of the general public attended this event leading to invaluable networking opportunities and informed discussion, enabling the further advancement of the research being conducted by those involved.

This volume presents eleven of the research papers delivered at the conference. Each chapter included here investigates some of the most relevant contemporary issues and processes shaping the region, and are grouped together in three themes. The first section explores security,

securitization and the transformative effects of the Arab Spring. This section has chapters on the Iraq Syndrome and international military intervention in Syria, the revolutions in Syria and Egypt, the role of *identity* in interactions between ISIS and the West, and Iranian-Saudi Arabian rivalry and interactions. The second section of this volume explores the political economy of regional integration and disintegration in the MENA. This section's chapters analyze the relationship between foreign aid and the Arab Spring, trade liberalization and institutional peace in the region, geo-politics in the Persian Gulf, foreign aid and policy making in small states, and Turkey's growing interest in the MENA. The final section of the volume investigates society-state relations in the region with chapters that explore the role of civil society in Arab Spring era Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, and the emergence of Islamist terrorism in the region.

This volume would not have been possible without the work of Nottingham Trent University's MENA Research Cluster. This research group is housed in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Nottingham Trent University and was formed in 2013. The cluster offers established scholars, early career researchers and postgraduate researchers the platform to develop research that explores the politics, international relations, society and political economy of the MENA. The cluster has rapidly expanded in scope and membership since 2013 and now draws together scholars conducting internationally recognized research on various aspects of the historical and contemporary MENA from a range of theoretical and methodological approaches. As a research group, the MENA Cluster has benefitted from the financial support of Nottingham Trent University's School of Social Sciences, the International Studies Association, the British International Studies Association, the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, the European Consortium for Political Research, and the European International Studies Association.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABM–Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis
APERC–Asia-Pacific Energy Research Centre
BIWGTM–Baker Institute World Gas Trade Model
CSOs–civil society organizations
EUA–Economic Unity Agreement
FTA–Free Trade Agreement
GAA–Greater Arab Free Trade Area
GEA–General Energy Asessment
GID–General Intelligence Directorate
HDI–Human Development Index
IS (ISIS)–Islamic State
ISI–Islamic State in Iraq
JCPOA–Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
JRC–Joint Research Centre
JTWJ–Jama'at al Tawhid wa al Jihad
LNG–Liquified Natural Gas
MNE–multinational enterprises
NAFTA–North American Free Trade Area
NIGEC–National Iranian Gas Export Company
NITC–National Iranian Tanker Company
NPOs–non-profit organizations
ODA–Official Development Assistance
ODA–overseas development assistance
RESCT–Regional Energy Security Complex Theory
RSCT–Regional Security Complex Theory
SCAF–Supreme Council of the Armed Forces
THY–Turkish Airlines

SECTION ONE:

SECURITY, SECURITIZATION AND THE TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECTS OF THE ARAB SPRING

CHAPTER ONE

IRAQ SYNDROME AND ITS IMPLICATIONS
FOR US FOREIGN POLICY IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

NATASHA UNDERHILL

Introduction

The long-term legacy of the US misadventure in Iraq, or what has been termed "Iraq Syndrome", is now having severe implications for U.S. policy towards not just Iraq but also towards the ongoing issues occurring in Syria. With the over decade-long entrenchment of the U.S. in Iraq and the subsequent war weariness of the U.S. public, the prospect of a further intervention into the Middle East today is an apparent non-option for action. However, with the emergence of Islamic State (IS) we have now seen a shift by President Obama towards possible military intervention, not just in Iraq, but also in Syria. The aim of this chapter is to assess the impact of "Iraq syndrome" on U.S. foreign policy, especially in terms of its shift towards a non-interventionist stance in regards to the current situation in Iraq and Syria. The main objective of this chapter is to ascertain how much of an impact Iraq Syndrome is actually having on the creation of U.S. foreign policy in terms of action against IS in Iraq and Syria. There are many similarities between the situations in Iraq (pre-2003) and Syria including the fact that both have had a violent dictatorship in power, both have been party to the direct use of chemical weapons against their citizenry, both face a growing insurgency and/or a civil war, and both bear witness to a massive expansion of radical extremists, most significantly in the form of Islamic State. This chapter will begin with a brief overview of some of the main impacts on U.S. foreign policy development through a historical perspective. A focus will be placed on what has been called the "fear factor" that past foreign policy failures have had on the likelihood of action or inaction in Iraq and Syria. This will be followed by an assessment of events, the aim of which is to develop an understanding of what the current phenomenon of "Iraq Syndrome"

actually is in context. Following this, the chapter will move on to look at the links between the events in Iraq and Syria in a modern context. Finally, it will develop some conclusions and possible alternatives to the current policies in terms of the pathways to action by the U.S. in both Iraq and Syria in the face of the increasing threat from IS.

The Modern History of U.S. Foreign Policy: Facing the fear factor

Iraq, in its post-9/11 context, has not been the first case of a fear factor impacting on the development of U.S. foreign policy. In the modern historical context, the Vietnam War and its aftermath is argued to be the most influential war-related factor influencing U.S. foreign policy, especially in terms of (non-) intervention. The Vietnam War claimed the lives of over 58,000 U.S. soldiers, seriously damaged Washington's prestige as an imperial power and caused untold hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths. In this case, America's military defeat produced what came to be called a "Vietnam Syndrome", which has had an extremely influential impact on U.S. foreign policy development even to this day. Acknowledging the failure of the U.S. campaign brought about angry recriminations and second-guessing of the decisions made by political leaders. This resulted in an apparent return to an anti-interventionist sentiment both in the government and within the opinions of the populace. According to Wearing, for President Carter, his first two years in office marked the high point of détente and the military drawdown from the Vietnam years. However, even though he turned considerably more hawkish in the second half of his term, Carter became a symbol of everything weak about the Democratic Party and its foreign policy (Wearing 2012). Following the events of 1979–namely the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian revolution–Carter's opponent in the 1980 Presidential election, Ronald Reagan, promised to stand up to the Russians, the Iranians, and anyone else who dared challenge Old Glory (ibid.). Also, in more recent years, President Bill Clinton presided over a reduction of the US military leviathan in the wake of the end of the Cold War. Clinton was by no means a pacifist, but the United States was involved in the wars in former Yugoslavia and several attacks on Al-Qaeda and its ilk during the 1990s, which weighed heavily on Clinton's political decisions in terms of interventionism and global security. It has been argued that the great sin of the Clinton administration, to its critics on the right, was its commitment to multilateralism, which became seen as a method of weakening the U.S.'s position as world leader in the post-Cold War world (ibid.).

As a result, those who wanted to see the US exert its military might in the world were faced with what was termed a "Vietnam Syndrome" among the public and many policymakers. The latter were increasingly unconvinced of the practical feasibility of military action, while the former saw the potential human costs as intolerable and, in many cases, were resolved to actively opposing a repeat of the Vietnam experience (Boot 2013). The term "Never Again" was also powerfully used at this time in relation to U.S. foreign policy and intervention both from opposition party members and the general public. It is interesting that we are now hearing these calls emerge once more in the context of the U.S. foreign policy in the post-2003 Iraq invasion context. One of the reasons for this stance may be linked to the fact that Americans, in general, are "defeat-phobic" rather than "casualty-phobic". In this context, it is argued that they essentially do not really care how many casualties are suffered so long as their side comes out the overall clear-cut winner in the situation (Mueller 2011). This was obvious in the case of Iraq where the apparent failures of the mission had more of an impact on public opinion to withdraw from Iraq than the actual number of casualties involved.

As a result of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the inherent failures that followed, it is now argued that an "Iraq Syndrome" has emerged; a syndrome which is now having direct implications on the U.S. policy towards the possible intervention in Syria and in the ongoing fight against Islamic State. Aside from the removal of Saddam Hussein from power, practically the entire 2003 campaign in Iraq has been a failure of sorts: Iraq remains far from being a strong or stable state post-invasion and is in fact even more unstable today than it has been since 2006-2007 at the peak of post-U.S. invasion violence. In Iraq, where the geo-strategic stakes are considerably higher than in Southeast Asia, the U.S. failed both to install a reliably friendly government in Baghdad and to secure long-term military bases in the heart of the world's major energy-producing region (Wearing 2012). These failures are now having a detrimental impact on both Iraq and Syria and, with the growing threat from IS, one has to question how long this "Syndrome" can realistically hold the U.S. back from making definitive decisions before instability in the Middle East becomes too far entrenched to be addressed. The aim here then is to assess whether or not Iraq Syndrome will have a deeper and longer-lasting impact on the national psyche and U.S. prestige in the world than Vietnam Syndrome did.

Iraq Syndrome in Context

In the context of Iraq, the U.S. invaded the country in 2003, following a campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan, and remained in place as an occupying force for over a decade. Once on the ground in Iraq, the U.S. Army found itself in the middle of a deepening insurgency and civil war, both of which it was unprepared to adequately deal with. Following the 2011 withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq under the edict of President Obama, the U.S. presented itself as the "winner" in the situation declaring that it had handed over the capacity of leadership of the country back to the Iraqis. This, of course, was not the case and many have argued that the U.S. prematurely withdrew from Iraq. Following the withdrawal, it was clear that the fear of re-entering the Middle East was having a massive impact on foreign policy decisions being made by the Obama administration, especially in the context of the situation that was now playing out in Syria. Syria borders Iraq and many of the sectarian issues that impacted on the failures of the U.S. campaign in Iraq are also to be found across the border in Syria. As a result of this Iraq Syndrome, the "light footprint" approach to interventionism and foreign policy in general is becoming as much of an intellectual straitjacket for President Obama as the post-Vietnam era limitations were on his predecessors (Boot 2013).

According to Boot, this does not suggest that Obama is a pacifist; in fact he has shown on numerous occasions his willingness to use force, mostly through the use of drone strikes in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia, which all but eliminate risks on the US side (ibid.). However, the problem with this approach is that there are sharp limits to what drones can accomplish as the core toolkit for action in the global context. They can kill a few terrorist leaders, but they cannot prevent their replacement with equally malign successors. That would require a more prolonged intervention that Obama will not entertain as a viable foreign policy objective, perhaps rightly so. For Syria, the situation is growing worse and more toxic by the day. The country has been pushed to the brink of failure by the civil war that has raged since 2011. As long as the Assad regime stays in power and as long as the fighting continues, the prospects of re-establishing any form of stability in the wake of the violence diminish by the day. The most likely outcome now is a collapse of the country into different tribal and ethnic fiefdoms, with IS and Al-Qaeda-linked extremists likely to exert significant sway. The conflict has already spilled over into neighboring states with the spread of IS, the stoking of sectarian fighting in Lebanon between Shias and Sunnis, enticing Al-Qaeda in Iraq to expand its operations across the border, and flooding Lebanon, Turkey,

and Jordan with refugees (Boot 2013). It is argued here that perhaps some of these consequences might have been avoided if the Obama administration had taken a more active role from the start by, for example, declaring a no-fly zone and providing arms to the more moderate rebel factions much earlier than the U.S. had done (Katzman 2014). Such a proactive policy might have hastened Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad's downfall, shortened the term of the conflict, and increased the chances of assembling a new government that could control its own territory.

Obama has, however, clearly and definitively limited US involvement to an airstrike campaign to target IS and other extremist elements in the Syrian borders, to the provision of humanitarian aid, and to publicly making broad sweeping statements denouncing Assad, his regime and the methods that he has used against his own citizens. Obama is not, however, doing much to prove his points through action, mainly because the last thing he wants is to get sucked into another complicated Middle Eastern conflict and there is, thus, no doubt that memories of Iraq shape the White House's reticence on Syria (Boot 2013). Iraq round two has been made all the worse, not just because of the invasion and subsequent war but also because, as Boot notes, when the United States withdrew from Iraq it lost leverage to shape its future (ibid.). Additionally, by sitting practically idly by while Nouri al-Maliki pushed the sectarian issues even further than ever before, it allowed the emergence of further rifts between the Sunni and Shia communities while also leading to a revival of extremism and jihadism now led by IS. The broader problem is that the administration today, since the Iraq Syndrome kicked in, has had a blinkered view of its role in the historical record of Iraq and this is tainting all of its actions of the world stage. The U.S. has obviously paid a heavy price for this last fifteen years of interventionism in the Middle East, in lives, dollars and reputation, but this cannot be the way forward when deciding on any actions for possible intervention in the coming weeks, months and years.

Iraq and Syria: A shared legacy

No matter how much Western governments may try to ignore the fact that the similarities between the events in Syria and Iraq have shared legacies, it cannot be denied that the dangers posed by Syria under the Bashar al-Assad regime are, in today's world, more significant than those posed by Iraq under Saddam Hussein in the post-9/11 and pre-2003 U.S.-led invasion period. Possibly the most significant of legacies of the events of Iraq are that attempts to demand normal standards of truthfulness and clarity from a government like Syria will now be undermined (Geoghegan

2013). This, coupled with the notion that the U.S. needs to keep as far away as possible from direct military intervention, means that the civil war in Syria may be a long one with no real clear end in sight for the near future. Iraq Syndrome has already had quite significant impacts on U.S. foreign policy with the "lead from behind" approach in Libya being a key example. Obama had also openly acknowledged regrets about Libya but unfortunately has drawn the wrong lesson. "I think we underestimated […] the need to come in full force" the president told the New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman in August 2014. "If you're gonna do this", he elaborated, "there has to be a much more aggressive effort to rebuild societies" (Friedman 2014). One of the most recent examples of Iraq Syndrome impacting on the decisions of the U.S. in terms of foreign policy came with Barak Obama's initial signaling that he would use direct military force against the Syrian government for its use of chemical weapons against its citizens (an act he deemed as crossing the line in the sand,) but then swiftly backtracked when his plans were met with intense hostility from the American public. The main reason for such a backlash was the determination not to be dragged back into another war in the Middle East.

In terms of public opinion in relation to possible intervention or action in Syria, the American public can be divided into two clear anti-action movements, both of which are highly influenced by the long-term entrenchments in Afghanistan and Iraq. The first group in this context is basically exhausted by the apparent quest of the U.S. in a global context to "fix" other country's problems with little gains being made. The second group are those who have been directly impacted by previous military action, i.e. the families of soldiers who feel that the levels of casualties and deaths related to the Middle East have reached their peak and as a result they have become beyond war-weary (Mueller 2011). Thus, Iraq Syndrome and the fear of re-entrenchment in the Middle East will undoubtedly have wider implications for the region as a whole; much wider than those playing out in Syria today. According to Geoghegan, Obama has done a good job in resetting the tone of the American foreign policy machine, i.e. the policy of withdrawal and disengagement rather than intervention and engagement. As a result, we are now witnessing a foreign policy that has been too focused about the risks of action over the risks of inaction (Geoghegan 2013).

According to Mueller, Iraq Syndrome has a very potent implication for Iraq, especially with regard to the growing threat from Islamic State and the loss of control of the country by the government due to growing sectarian violence. The general U.S. mentality towards Iraq is blatantly

obvious: never again. With Iraq Syndrome in full force, political leaders, not just in the U.S. but in a global context, have done a lot of tough talking when it comes to issues such as the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government and the rise of Islamic State, but none seem willing to advocate boots on the ground just yet (Mueller 2011). This hesitance to act is having a massive impact, not just in Iraq but also, and possibly more worryingly, in Syria and the broader MENA. This could be a very sad legacy for the Obama administration if things worsen and the U.S. is then forced into action and does not decide to act of its own accord. For Obama to be drawn into another war in the Middle East would be a disaster for his legacy. He has made and kept his promise to withdraw troops from Afghanistan and Iraq, and it is argued here that he will try to the best of his capability to remain removed from direct military action in Iraq and Syria for as long as is realistically possible. This is going to be extremely difficult to continue, however, with the growing IS threat and the level of state failure being witnessed across the region.

Iraq's recent history infuses the current debates over Syria in that, for a start, it has generated extreme caution among policy makers who remain undecided about the possibility of direct military intervention. Iraq today is far from being a stable state post-invasion and as a result the consensus is that the entire U.S.-led campaign, the removal of Saddam Hussein aside, was a failure. It is this negativity about Iraq that is now shaping opinion on Syria. One of the other fears is that of the US having to become a nation builder in Syria if the regime and/or state were to fail. This is one of the most off-putting elements of the suggestion of intervention in Syria mainly due to the experiences in Iraq post-2003. In the most basic terms, the U.S. cannot afford to become the patron of yet another failed state. As a result of Iraq Syndrome, Obama now has a more limited range of foreign policy options and will therefore have more difficulty in gaining support both domestically and internationally in terms of the use of military power. Essentially, we are now witnessing the direct implications of Iraq Syndrome and this is having important consequences for U.S. foreign policy (ibid.).

Since the initial stages and failures of the 2003 Iraq War, the invading forces were too small to establish order, and some of the early administrative policies (specifically the de-Ba'athification program which involved the U.S. essentially removing from power and position all of the military, security forces, administration personnel, government officials, and so on, who were affiliated with Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party, triggering the insurgency and subsequently causing the Iraqi state to collapse due to the ensuing power vacuum) proved to be fatally misguided

at best and at worst a trigger for state failure. In effect, the US created an instant failed state which means that removing themselves from the situation would be extremely difficult (Geoghegan 2013). Mirroring the situation during the Vietnam War, U.S. troops faced an armed opposition that was hyper-dedicated, massively resourceful and tactful, capable and, most significantly, a force that was determined to fight as long as necessary. As argued by Mueller, in Vietnam the hope was that after suffering enough punishment, the enemy would reach its "breaking point" and then either fade away or seek accommodation. In this case, great punishment was inflicted but the enemy never broke; instead it was the U.S. that faded away and this left 'a bad taste in the mouth of the American public' thus creating the initial Vietnam Syndrome (Mueller 2011). The insurgents in Iraq have the same mentality and the signs are thus far showing that the insurgency is not going anywhere any time soon and is in actual fact becoming an even more potent problem for the stability of Iraq, especially since the emergence of IS.

How to Treat the Iraq Syndrome: A new direction in foreign policy

The debate is intensifying over how the U.S. should respond to Syria's escalating crisis and the ongoing issues facing Iraq. The emergence and rapid expansion of IS is adding yet another layer to the quandary facing the U.S. in terms of its foreign policy options. The Obama Administration's current policy of non-intervention in the Syria crisis has been highly criticized for a number of reasons, central of which are that it has permitted the Assad regime to continue oppressing the Sunni Arab majority, thus prolonging a civil war, and that it has also allowed the growth and expansion of radical jihadist groups such as Islamic State. What, then, should U.S. policy be in Iraq and Syria in light of the growing levels of instability and the expansion of the IS threat? One of the more realistic answers for the case of Syria would be that even with direct military intervention by the U.S., a stable Syrian government post-conflict is highly unlikely to emerge. The longer the Syrian crisis rages on, the deeper the sectarian division becomes and the higher the risk of long-term sectarian conflict. It is clear that the Obama Administration realizes that a policy of non-intervention in Syria carries some major hazards, maybe more so than a policy of intervention. Could the situation have been halted if the Obama Administration had taken a more active role from the start by, for example, declaring a no-fly zone and providing arms to the more moderate rebel factions? Such a proactive policy might have hastened

Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad's downfall, shortened the term of the conflict, and increased the chances of assembling a new government that could control its own territory. There is no doubt memories of Iraq shape the White House's reticence on Syria (Boot 2013).

At a NATO summit in Wales which took place 4-5th September 2014, the Obama Administration discussed with its allies a broad strategy to counter the IS gains. It was noted that the U.S. airstrikes against IS targets and other terrorist groups in Syria were illuminating several dilemmas faced by the Administration. On the one hand, Syrian opposition forces who have been fighting IS welcome U.S. and coalition assistance in their campaign. On the other hand, they question why the U.S. does not take military action against the Assad government or take more robust action to degrade IS capabilities in Syria (Katzman 2014). Advocates of continued U.S. support for select opposing groups in Syria argue that the withdrawal or reduction of such assistance would bolster less cooperative or friendly groups. Additionally, they have argued that if the U.S. withdraws or reduces its support, then it may force moderate groups to turn to extremist groups for funding and support, thereby increasing the influence of extremists while reducing U.S. leverage (Katzman 2014). On 10th September 2014, Obama announced his strategy for dealing with IS, describing the seriousness of the threat in terms ranging from moderate to extreme and identifying objectives ranging from containing IS to destroying it. It was at this point that he outlined his administration's plan, which consisted mainly of U.S. air support to Iraqi and Kurdish ground forces, a humanitarian mission, a train and assist mission to build the capacity of Iraqi and Kurdish forces, and an intelligence-based counterterrorism mission (Kagan et al. 2014). This plan was no surprise and held no real change to the previous failed counterterrorism strategy that was in place for years prior to the threat of IS. The plan also involved the expansion of a coalition against IS, which the U.S. would lead–a policy very similar to that against Al-Qaeda post 9/11.

In Syria, airstrikes have taken place but the overall campaign there has been stalled by inaction by the U.S. on a number of significant events, including the aforementioned "line in the sand" debacle in the use of chemical weapons by Assad. The U.S. intervention of Syria would, however, almost certainly be met with escalation by Assad's allies, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the Levant without providing a resolution to the War, which is why the policy developed by the U.S. needs to be hyper-strategic in nature (Stuster and French 2015). In this regard, realistically only a small minority of analysts advocate the full entry of the U.S. into the Syrian civil war. Airstrikes alone are not the

answer to the IS question, though it seems the US is pinning its hopes on these being the core anti-IS strategy tool. According to Barrett, it seems likely that IS fears that U.S. and allied airstrikes could tip the balance against it. Coalition airstrikes have made moving men and material harder for IS, as well as impacting on the safe storage of military equipment and attacks on targets with conventional tactics. They have also boosted the morale of opposing Iraqi and Kurdish forces while sapping that of its own (Barrett 2014).

Paradoxically, IS would no doubt feel more comfortable facing U.S. ground troops, as it is familiar with their capabilities and can leverage its own advantages of local knowledge and guerrilla tactics. Obama has continually ruled out the option of combat troops being deployed in either Iraq or Syria and has continuously stated that intervention by the U.S. combat troops is not capable of fixing the underlying political problems that caused the insurrection which, it is argued here, is completely correct. However, non-action or an overly light touch is also not a viable option. The Obama Administration has argued time and time again that any strategy will take a long time to reach its objectives, but it is argued here that the impact of Iraq Syndrome on decisions of inaction being made are actually prolonging the events rather than slowing them down or addressing them to the full potential of the U.S. The focus on the international coalition has also been heralded as the way to defeat IS and thus stabilize Iraq and Syria. It needs to be noted, however, that any success of this coalition will still highly depend on the U.S. As of mid-October 2015, 60 countries are listed as members of the coalition, many of which have been participating since 2012 in response to the evolving conflict in Syria.

According to Katzman, the subset of the broad coalition that is attempting to coordinate military operations in Iraq and Syria faces significant challenges. Past attempts at coordination have exposed rifts among regional actors, prompting situations in which the common goal of supporting the Syrian opposition was not enough to overcome other, competing priorities among ostensibly partner states (Katzman 2014). This does not bode well for the U.S.'s ability to place the bulk of the responsibility of dealing with IS and preventing state failure in Syria and Iraq in this coalition. What is failing to be understood by the Obama Administration at this time is that it is impossible to address Iraq first and Syria second, or conduct air attacks before using other military instruments. According to Kagan et al., any strategy to degrade and destroy IS requires actions across Iraq and Syria that contends with the expansive threat of IS in the full context of two complex internal security

situations (Kagan et al. 2014). The engagement of the U.S. and its allies in a coalition against IS since August 2014 has brought about a dramatic change in the dynamics of the battlefield, more so in Iraq where the majority of the action has taken place.

Having essentially neglected the events in Iraq and Syria for much too long, the U.S. now lacks core intelligence and contextual understandings necessary to build a coherent counter-strategy. Additionally, it remains dependent on a "one size fits all" approach to its counter-strategy and has forgotten one of the most important points in terms of the fight against IS, namely that IS is not Al-Qaeda and therefore any strategy or policy developed to address them needs to be newly developed not re-hashed from older policies. Nobody can debate the fact that IS needs to be defeated in Iraq and Syria but, the fact is that Syria faces more problems and, the removal of the Assad regime from power needs to occur in order for any strategy to work. Any successful strategy for dealing with IS in Syria must therefore address the Assad issue, marginalize it, and ultimately defeat it along with IS. This all needs to be done while also setting the conditions necessary for an inclusive post-Assad government that can prevent any Al-Qaeda affiliate from re-establishing itself in Syria (ibid.). The collapse of the Iraqi and Syrian states would be disastrous not only to those countries affected but also to the MENA region at large and also to the global international order. Therefore, the strategy to defeat and destroy IS must be determined, deliberate, and phased, allowing for iterative decisions that adjust the plan in response to the actual realities on the ground. It cannot be tainted by the fear factor associated with Iraq Syndrome; to do so would be detrimental to the survival of both Iraq and Syria and the long-term legacies of inaction may be felt in the MENA region for decades to come.

Conclusion

Obama's policy of non-intervention is heavily impacted by the ongoing Iraq Syndrome. With Iraq Syndrome playing its part in the non-action of the U.S. in Iraq and Syria, it appears that political leaders have done a lot of tough taking, but no one seems willing to advocate any tough action such as direct military action or "sending in the troops" (Mueller 2014). Although many argue that this policy is pragmatic and rational, there are a number of issues that may have a long term negative impact, not just in Iraq and Syria, but in the larger MENA region. Obama is highly constrained by public opinion and it is quite understandable that he would not want to intervene directly in the ongoing Iraq sectarian war nor the

Syrian civil war. Nor would he want to become re-entrenched in another decade long war which would taint the legacy of his presidency. However, the policy of non-intervention that is being applied is now providing a longer life to the Assad regime that continues to persecute its citizens, while also allowing the rapid expansion of radical extremist groups such as IS that could potentially destabilize the entire region.

If the U.S. decides to use force, it should do so with clear, pre-defined objectives and with the commitment to see them through to victory; if it cannot muster this, it should not use force at all. One thing stands though, the fact that the U.S. got it wrong in Iraq and the heavy price they paid during the decade-long entrenchment there should not stand in the way of creating a coherent and realistic policy option for dealing with the issues in today's MENA region. The U.S. can no longer stand by and hope that others will solve the problems; it has a responsibility for action in Iraq, if not also in Syria. Iraq Syndrome will have implications much wider than those playing out in Syria. At least some of these perilous consequences might have been avoided if the Obama Administration had taken a more active role from the start by, for example, declaring a no-fly zone and providing arms to the more moderate rebel factions. Such a proactive policy might have hastened al-Assad's downfall, shortened the term of the conflict, and increased the chances of assembling a new government that could control its own territory. But Obama has limited U.S. involvement to a small amount of humanitarian aid and a large number of statements denouncing Assad. The president is not doing much to back up his words because the last thing he wants is to get sucked into another complicated Middle Eastern conflict. No doubt memories of Iraq shape the White House's reticence on Syria (Boot 2013).

Obama has done a good job in resetting the tone of the American foreign policy machine, i.e. the policy of withdrawal and disengagement rather than intervention and engagement. As a result, we are now witnessing a foreign policy that has been too focused on the risks of action over the risks of inaction. This could be a very sad legacy for the Obama Administration if things were to worsen and the U.S. is forced into action and does not decide to act of its own accord. The U.S. needs to remove itself from the sidelines and define its foreign policy in a clearer manner, but the implications of Iraq Syndrome are going to make this a lot more difficult especially with the war-weariness of the American public and its now obvious turn against direct action on the ground in the Middle East. The Administration has ruled out deploying combat forces to either Iraq or Syria, but it has not necessarily ruled out providing forward aircraft controllers, additional military advisors, or other related ground military

assets. However, many experts assert that coalition partners inside Iraq and Syria are too weak to defeat IS and will eventually require help from U.S. combat troops (Katzman 2014). There will be no happy ending in Syria nor in Iraq in the near future, but the longer that the U.S. drags its feet in terms of developing a clear and concise foreign policy the worse the long-term effects of these wars are going to be. If both Syria and Iraq were to fail there is no telling what kind of instability would spill over into the region. Therefore, inaction and soft-touch foreign policy can no longer be the main options for future U.S. policy development. Essentially, we are seeing a demonstration of the dangers of policymaking on the rebound through the impact of the Iraq War on US foreign policy development and on its outlook on its role in the international system in general.

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CHAPTER TWO

ON REVOLUTION AND REVOLUTIONARY SITUATIONS: ASSESSING THE CASES OF SYRIA AND EGYPT DURING THE ARAB UPRISINGS

KONSTANTINOS C. ZARRAS

Introduction

Throughout the Arab Uprisings and the subsequent wave of revolts that swept the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the term "revolution" has been employed in various instances by scholars, journalists and political activists. It was used during public political speeches and in social media posts globally, while in the streets of Cairo, Aleppo and Damascus demonstrators chanted "thawra" in anticipation of a revolution that would bring about a new order. There is a vast and diverse scholarship on the phenomenon and questions remain about what constitutes a revolution in the social sciences. The aim of this chapter is to tackle the issue from a Realist perspective in IR theory. Due to the intricate character of the political nature involved, there is a constant need to revise our theories and ameliorate our tools for understanding the social world. After elaborating the theoretical approach on the issue, the analysis will examine the cases of the Syrian and Egyptian revolutionary mobilization during the ongoing and open-ended process of the Arab Uprisings. These two case studies, it is argued, will reaffirm the close relationship that revolutions share with war and counter-revolution.

Conceptualizing Revolution and Revolutionary Situations

In an attempt to grasp the meaning of the word "revolution" as a concept of political science, beyond its various uses in the media or

everyday discussions, it must be understood that there is no general agreement among scholars on its semantic content. The ambiguity of the term is partly a result of its polemical and symbolic significance. Invoking a revolution or inciting revolutionary situations, which are associated with influential ideas of social change, can raise the political consciousness and sometimes ignite political action. Thus a revolutionary rhetoric can turn into a powerful weapon in the hands of interested groups. In this light, the concept has often become a parameter of power struggles which have spawned a number of contested interpretations, under which definitions turn out to be fields of competition between collective entities and the struggle for power takes the form of a struggle for the exclusive interpretation of social and political phenomena. The aim here is to conceive of revolution as a political phenomenon from a Realist perspective and highlight the usefulness of distinguishing between revolution and revolutionary situations in order to describe the unfolding situation in Syria and Egypt.

Before investigating the key concepts surrounding the notion of revolution it is first essential to outline the basic assumptions of the Realist perspective in IR theory. In broad terms, it is argued that anarchy is designated as the overarching ordering principle of international affairs. Contrary to the domestic order of consolidated states, the international environment is seen by Realists as a world of "collectivities" in which the shadow of war is omnipresent (Aron 2003, 337). The fundamental unit of political analysis is the independent polity whose survival within the anarchic international system can only be ensured through an inevitable pursuit and application of power. At a deeper level of analysis, social reality consists of political actors, struggling for their survival in a perennially insecure environment. According to the Realist perspective, power-seeking behavior of collective entities is rooted in human nature and represents a permanent feature of international relations. In the absence of a central authority, and due to the uncertainty concerning the intentions of the "Others", collective actors can only rely on "self-help"; otherwise known as the principle of action. In this regard, the Realist vision of international politics emphasizes the competitive and conflictual character of social life, with the notions of anarchy, self-preservation and power at its core; they are interlinked and are considered as fundamental at the domestic level of states.

Having addressed the above contextual issues, the discussion will now focus on the characteristics of revolution, i.e. what is the set of criteria that a process of socio-political transformation needs to achieve in order to qualify as a revolution? In the most basic of contexts, a revolution is a

multi-dimensional phenomenon and this is why specific theoretical choices are imperative in order to articulate a logically coherent definition. It is not a static object of analysis and what is excluded in the current analysis is the idea that an invariable theory can be elaborated which could then be applied to any observed specific historical case. According to Panayiotis Kondylis, any theory in the social sciences should take into account two basic features of social relations: the heteronomy of ends and the unanticipated consequences of social action (Kondylis 2007). These features contribute to the inherent complexity of the social world and, as a consequence, a construction of a predictive, all-encompassing theoretical model is inconceivable. This way of theorizing has been designated by Charles Tilly as "the chimera of an invariant model of revolution" (Tilly 1995b, 1597). In particular, Stephen Walt described revolution as "the destruction of an existing state by members of its own society, followed by the creation of a new political order" (Walt 1997, 14).

The definition of revolution has been further refined by Samuel P. Huntington who argues that this "rapid, fundamental and violent domestic change" concerns not only state institutions but also the "dominant values and myths of a society", its "social structure, leadership, and government activity and policies" (Huntington 1968, 264). Jack Goldstone specified this transformation as a "forcible overthrow of a government through mass mobilization (whether military or civilian or both) in the name of social justice, to create new political institutions" (Goldstone 2014, 4). Analyzing the above definitions can prove convenient in identifying fundamental elements of the phenomenon: transformation, violence, revolutionary situation and revolutionary outcome. It is now essential to investigate the key aspect of transformation in relation to revolution, asking questions such as: what degree and pace of change are required for a revolution to occur? Could it be limited to the seizure of power by a new political regime? Or does it imply the alteration of state institutions or even a deep change in social relations in general? In most cases, the impetuous and rapid character of a revolutionary process causes a sudden break up of long-standing political structures. The effected change in the social order is abrupt; nevertheless it is "an acceleration of previously existing rates of change" (Kumar 1971, 10). Scholars disagree, however, on the extent of change that is needed to define revolution in a given situation.

Differing theoretical interpretations can be identified in addressing this theoretical challenge. Many theorists adopt a broad definition of revolution and then classify them into different types, depending on the degree of transformation and outcome. Others, however, perceive the phenomenon as a specific form of collective political violence and articulate its