

After Egypt's elections, what next for EU policy towards the Arab spring?

Richard Youngs
University of Warwick

As dust settles from the high drama of Egypt's momentous elections, Europe's backing for the Arab spring stands at a crucial juncture. It is now clear that the Middle East and North Africa offers no single trajectory towards consolidated democracy. The region's new normal is one of vibrant and uncertain political contestation, with strikingly varied processes of reform – and authoritarian resilience. The region's fraught political divisions have been thrown into sharp relief not only by events in Egypt, but also by revived protests in Bahrain, spiralling violence in Syria, simmering instability in Algeria and growing tensions around Libya's polls.

The EU's response to the Arab spring has contained many positive and admirable elements. In some ways the Arab spring has provided a positive antidote to Europe's relative decline and economic crisis: by standing up for democratic norms the EU's image has begun to improve in the region while China, Russia and other rising powers stand somewhat discredited. Prior to 2011, the EU had begun to focus effort and resources more on the rising powers and to some extent leave its Middle Eastern policies on auto-pilot. Since then it has certainly refocused on its southern neighbourhood as a top priority within its foreign policy. The stirring effusion of the Arab rebellions has helped lift the EU itself at least a little from its own creeping morosity. A tendency towards insularity in EU external relations has, to a modest degree, been tempered by a need to respond to brave reformers' calls for backing in the Middle East.

The EU has worked hard to support incipient political change in a more nuanced, sophisticated and demand-driven fashion. The fact that some new resources have been found for the Arab spring in the midst of such an acute economic recession is to the EU's credit. Much that sustains the EU's 'renewed' Neighbourhood Policy has been admirably broad and generous, in particular the commitments to dialogue with the full range of political actors in Arab states, provide more generous mobility partnerships, assist in job creation and back deeper economic integration across the Mediterranean. In the cases of Libya and Syria the EU has shown itself willing and able to



The totemic spectre of the Islamist threat has not entirely dissipated.

pursue tougher forms of diplomacy and operational engagement. The EU has done much since 2011 that goes beyond its hackneyed 'soft power' moniker.

Several qualitative aspects of EU policies have changed. Interaction with civil society in the Middle East has both deepened in intensity and widened in its range of interlocutors. The EU is today more ecumenical of different visions of political reform and the central involvement of formally excluded actors. The economic dimensions of policy have also evolved. Critics routinely charge the EU with being responsible for an overdose of economic liberalisation in the Middle East. This is a less valid criticism today than in the past. The EU's claim that it is more focused on social rights and welfare protection may be somewhat self-glorifying. But economic policy has changed.

Yet, the EU has done little to pre-empt change. Rather it has been caught in the tailwinds of rebellion, dragged along reluctantly. With reforms undeniably domestically driven, most in the EU have genuinely judged it prudent to avoid anything remotely evangelical in democracy support. The maxim has been to listen to and take the lead from local actors; yet even many of these reformers feel that the EU has been unduly abstemious of the opportunity to play a more engaged role.

The vast majority of those militating for meaningful change judges the EU to have under- rather than over-played its hand since late 2010.

Incipient paradigm shift has been followed in some parts of the region by paradigm reversion; a preference for the status quo has not been entirely excised from European foreign policies. The careful balancing of interests has ensured that EU support for change remains less than far-reaching. European policies remain replete with uneasy strategic contortions. The EU's approach to political Islam has evolved but remains unduly reductive in at least some of its elements. The totemic spectre of the Islamist threat has not entirely dissipated. Engagement with moderate Islamists has deepened, but not with those seen as further from this mainstream, such as Salafists. Atavistic traits of pre-2011 strategy remain. Between new opportunity and heightened risks, in the redrawn Middle East European policy-makers judge themselves to be walking on eggshells.

Moreover, the irony is that the EU has improved its policies just when its own loss of power renders it less able to have a major pro-reform impact. Its policies are today better, but many in the region feel this matters a lot less than it

British foreign policy and the search for justice in Syria

Jamie Gaskarth
Plymouth University

Two centuries ago, having vanquished Napoleon at the battle of Waterloo, the victors were left with a dilemma: what should they do with him? He had escaped exile once. The trial and possible execution of a head of state, even a commoner, might set a dangerous precedent. Napoleon himself asked to be set up in a country-house thirty or so miles outside London. His suggestion was not taken up.

After keeping him aboard a Royal Navy ship in Cattedown harbour, Plymouth, for two weeks, they exiled him to the remote island of St Helena. The problem of what to do with bad leaders remains to this day.

Throughout 2012, a bitter diplomatic row has rumbled on in the United Nations Security Council over how to end the violence in Syria and arrange a political transition. A plan was agreed but a key question was unresolved. Did President Bashar Al-Assad of Syria have to go? If so, what should happen to him?

Russia and China see attempts to oust Assad as contravening Syrian sovereignty and reject calls for him to stand down. For them, supposedly, non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states is an important principle of international order.

On the other side, the UK, France and the United States see peace as impossible whilst Assad remains in power. His government has presided over a campaign costing over 16000 lives, including atrocities targeting women and children.

According to the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, the political transition should "strip away the fiction that he and those with blood on their hands can stay in power". For the Western powers, this is about international justice.

Polarising the debate into a

EU policy towards the Arab spring

Continues From Page 1

might have done previously. The EU's impact on the nascent shaping of the new Middle East has been relatively marginal. The concern not to engage intrusively in such a way as to generate counter-productive effects has been genuine. But, the EU's constantly-repeated concern not to 'dictate' outcomes is out of tune with sentiment in the region: in most Arab states there is little belief that the EU could impose much even if it sought to. In most states in the region the main critique of European policies is that these have remained so painstakingly neutral at times that their impact has been to give succour to anti-reform forces.

In a small state struggling with post-transition challenges, like Tunisia, European resources, investment and technical assistance have played a positive secondary role. At the other end of the spectrum, a powerful and stubbornly authoritarian regime like that of Saudi Arabia has proven largely resistant, and the nature of European security cooperation has if anything acted as an additional disincentive to reform. European-Middle Eastern security networks still weave a nefarious web, a



The ENP must be 'multilateralised'.

minatory influence over those desirous of change.

The vaunted gravitational model of EU influence has gained little traction in the new Middle East. The EU has been able to wield little of its traditional influence-though-attraction. And it has struggled to devise alternative forms of influence that answer the long-posed dilemma of how the EU can replace an enlargement-lite model. The EU has offered incentives in return for reform; these are universally judged to in the region to have been of negligible mobilising influence.

All this – both the progress made and persistent shortcomings – point the way to the necessary next steps in

EU policy. The EU must work more closely from an understanding of Arabs' demands and interests. There must be less one-sided patronising and more two-way learning. The ENP must be 'multilateralised' to function in a way that intersects more with other powers' role in the Middle East. With more limited material incentives at its disposal, the EU must fashion less direct forms of leverage through building broader alliances on Middle Eastern concerns. And the EU and Arab countries must begin to work together on shared problems rather than all the 'help' being seen to run in one direction from the EU to the Middle East.

Perhaps most crucially, the full geo-strategic implications of political change remain to be seized. Because the Arab spring is affecting states to differing degrees, it will have an impact on relative power balances in the Maghreb and Mashreq. Variation across states will compound well-known rivalries between the Gulf states and Iran. Competition for regional leadership between Saudi Arabia and Egypt is compounded by the two countries' choice of different political trajectories. All this will happen against the backdrop of deepening and politically

manipulated Shia and Sunni tensions. In this context, current EU initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean are too technical and insufficiently geo-political. A clearer vision of where the EU would like its Middle Eastern relations to be in ten or twenty years is essential if Europe is to become the region's indispensable partner. This should be articulated through a bold political approach, more geo-strategic than hitherto. A more geo-strategic forum is required, as a guiding layer above the ENP and other more technical initiatives.

It is routinely pointed out that the Arab revolts are not driven by a desire for Westernisation; but it is an exaggeration to suggest that they denote an antipathy to the West which renders outside support for reforms unwelcome. More help can and should be proffered. Europe's presence is far from the rebarbative influence of yesteryear. Yet the EU now needs a more sustained strategy of reform support that is both more political and more nuanced.

Professor Richard Youngs (The University of Warwick, Politics and International Studies) is the Director of FRIDE, A European Think Tank for Global Action.

British foreign policy and justice in Syria

Continues From Page 1

fight between order and justice masks the real difficulties of resolving such a conflict. Leaving a tyrant in power might lead to disorder in the future and prevent reconciliation. However, pursuing individual leaders on justice grounds may result in them entrenching their power and refusing to leave in fear of being handed over to an international tribunal at some later date.

Furthermore, Syrian experts question how far Assad has command responsibility for the counter-insurgency campaign. Whilst, he is the figurehead of the regime, it is highly unlikely that he is personally making either tactical or strategic decisions in relation to how it is prosecuted. Thus, calling for Assad to go does not resolve the justice issues that have arisen from this civil war.

The British foreign secretary, William Hague, has form in demanding that heads of state step down. On 27 February 2011, Hague argued: "it is time for Colonel Gaddafi to go. That is the best hope for Libya" but then noted that: "last night, I signed a directive revoking his diplomatic immunity in the United Kingdom but also the diplomatic immunity of his sons, his family, his household". In other words, Hague was calling for Gaddafi to step down whilst simultaneously removing an incentive for him to do so: that he would retain diplomatic immunity.

Three solutions have been used to deal with bad leaders in recent decades:

international criminal justice, extrajudicial killing, and exile. The problem is that the international community cannot agree over when and how any of these might be appropriate.

Since the end of the cold war, there has been a broadening and deepening of international criminal law, with international tribunals set up in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone to prosecute those accused of the most serious crimes. In April this year a head of state, the former Liberian President Charles Taylor, was convicted of aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

The pursuit of individual accountability was further bolstered in 2002 when the International Criminal Court came into force. It was hoped this would deter leaders from committing atrocities. Yet, the past year has seen widespread human rights abuses in Libya and Syria with no evidence that Gaddafi or Assad were fearful of the court – in part because neither were parties to it.

Alongside these developments in international criminal law has come the growth of extrajudicial killings by states. When David Owen mooted the idea of assassinating Idi Amin to officials at the Foreign Office in the 1970s, they reacted with horror. Yet, recent drone attacks in Pakistan and Yemen by US forces are assassinations. NATO attacks in Libya targeted regime figures. Israel has been assassinating senior figures in Hamas for over a decade and may be using the same



How far does Assad have responsibility?

tactics against Iranian nuclear scientists. Russia too has been implicated in the murder of critics of its government.

The fact that this is contrary to international law does not seem to worry them. Indeed, the assassination of key regime figures in Syria on 18 July appears to have had a significant impact on the campaign in the short term. However, such actions would be highly disruptive to international order if established as a legitimate global norm. Moreover, if Assad is not personally directing the violence the number of regime targets multiplies.

Exile has been hinted as a way out, with Russia apparently offering to host Assad and his family. Yet, exile, whilst expedient, contradicts the demands for justice from victims' families. It also goes

against the idea that individuals should be held accountable for international crimes, regardless of who they are. To get him to step down, the council might need to give incentives that reward someone who may bear responsibility for appalling atrocities.

What this confusion points to is a need for the international community to think more systematically about how they should manage conflict resolution and transitional justice arrangements. Here Britain could provide what Nick Mabey describes as 'thought leadership'. Instead of blindly calling for a leader's head, those seeking an end to violence need to consider the range of solutions available and be prepared to balance or delay demands for legal justice in favour of mechanisms that might lead to a sustainable peace. Kirsten Ainley's call for 'Responsibility and Truth Commissions' is one such example, whereby individual responsibility is allocated alongside an awareness of wider social and political forces.

Britain's response to clampdowns on protests in the Middle East has been uneven. If its foreign policy is to be more than declaratory, it might acknowledge that there are a range of practical steps to achieving peace and justice and set out a rationale for choosing one over another in different cases – beyond self-interest.

Jamie Gaskarth is Associate Professor (Senior Lecturer) International Relations at Plymouth University School of Management (Plymouth Business School) and Convenor of the BISA British Foreign Policy Working Group.

Violence and violation: Masculinity and rape in war

Laura J. Shepherd
University of New South Wales

Language matters. In our personal lives, we know language matters, we know that words have a serious material impact on the world around us – that words, in fact, affect and effect how we engage with the world. There are words that have been excised from our vocabularies, deemed too damaging to use. There are forbidden words that children whisper with guilty glee. In our personal lives, we admit that words have power, and in formal politics we do the same, legislating against the use of threatening words intended to incite fear and hatred.

What, then, are the implications of talking and writing about violence as though women are eternally bound to be victims of violence, men the inevitable perpetrators? If these are the assumptions that inform policy, it is impossible to conceive strategies for prevention of violence or protection from violence that have a nuanced understanding of who may be a perpetrator, of who is (allowed to be) a victim. The assumptions have a significant impact on the opportunities available to male survivors of violence to report such violence and seek redress or counsel.

As with data on instances of sexual violence perpetrated against women during times of conflict, there is limited information available as to the prevalence of such crimes, but it is assumed that under-reporting is an enormous obstacle to the collection of accurate figures. Through the association of gender-based violence with women, men that do experience such violence may well feel feminised, less ‘manly’, making them less likely to speak out even where such facilities exist. The Guardian recently published an extensive feature documenting the investigation of rape during armed conflict in Uganda undertaken by Will Storr, in which one survivor reported that he could not disclose his experience to his closest family member, despite ongoing medical problems: ‘I don’t want to tell him,’ says Jean Paul. ‘I fear he will say: “Now, my brother is not a man.”’

The inequalities remain manifest even when survivors of violence are brave enough to report the attacks. In Uganda, as in 38 other African nations, homosexuality is illegal, which means that male survivors are liable to be arrested. There is also limited support available to counsel vulnerable males and even more limited understanding of the specific ways in which surviving sexual violence affects these men. One anecdote from Will Storr’s work is particularly troubling:

Before receiving help from the RLP [Refugee Law Project], one man went to see his local doctor. He told him he had been raped four times, that he was injured and depressed and his wife had threatened to leave him. The doctor gave



In Uganda homosexuality is illegal.

him a Panadol.

Feminist International Relations scholarship seeks to understand the ways in which gender organizes international political life, to investigate and illuminate how ideas about gender and gendered ideals are imbricated in the processes and practices of international relations. The refusal to take seriously sexual violence against men is not only symbolic of a set of stereotypes about gender that associate masculinity with aggression and strength (and, by corollary, femininity with passivity/need of protection) but also of an international institutional order that has only just begun to recognise the politics of sex and sexual violence as a security issue.

All of these issues have material effects in the national and international spheres: a lack of support for male survivors of intimate partner violence, for example; at the level of domestic politics; alongside the absence of sensitive disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes for male combatants who may have experienced gender-based violence during conflict in the sphere of international policymaking. If we wish to formulate and implement sensitive policies of violence prevention, we must first understand how our ideas about gender determine which acts of violence – and which victims – are deemed worthy of our attention.

2012 BISA-ISA Joint International Conference

British International Studies Association
and the International Studies Association
Edinburgh, June 20th-22nd, 2012



The June timeslot was popular with attendees.

In place of its own annual conference in 2012, BISA hosted a joint international conference with the ISA, on the theme of ‘Diversity in the Discipline: Tension or Opportunity in Responding to Global Challenges’. The joint programme chairs were Prof. Colin McInnes of Aberystwyth University and Prof. Karen Rasler of Indiana University. The event was a great success and heavily subscribed, with a total of 235 panels and roundtables over three days on the academic programme.

In addition, the event featured a number of special events in the evenings. Wednesday saw opening addresses by ISA President Prof. Etel Solingen (University of California Irvine) and BISA Chair Inderjeet Parmar (City University, London). This was followed by a keynote roundtable on the conference theme chaired by Prof. Stuart Croft, featuring Prof. Colin Hay (University of Sheffield), Prof. Paul Rogers (University of Bradford), Prof. Beth Simmons (Harvard University), and Prof. Ramesh Thakur (Australian National University)

The newly re-launched Review of International Studies, BISA’s flagship journal, held a roundtable on Thursday, chaired by the editor, Prof. Kimberly Hutchings (LSE), and featuring Prof. Neta Crawford (Boston), Prof. Lene Hansen (Copenhagen), Prof. Chris Reus-Smit (EUI), and Prof. Michael Williams

(Ottawa).

Also on Thursday, Prof. Anne-Marie Slaughter of Princeton University, delivered a special address, ‘A New World Order: Revisited’, hosted by the University of Edinburgh’s Politics and International Relations Department.

The conference was a resounding success. Such was the popularity of the June timeslot with attendees that it is being considered as a regular time for BISA conferences in future years.

In addition to those named above, BISA’s gratitude goes to Dr Ruth Blakeley, Gail Birkett and Damien van Puyvelde for their investment of an enormous amount of hard work in making the event the success that it was.

BISA 2011/12 Prize winners

BISA-C-Sap Teaching Excellence Prize
Ayla Gol, Aberystwyth University

Best Article in Review of International Studies

Joint winners: Ayse Zarakol, Washington & Lee University, and Nukhet Ahu Sandal, Brown University

BISA Susan Strange Book Prize
Co-authors Michael Murphree, Georgia Institute of Technology, and Dan Breznitz, Georgia Institute of Technology

BISA Michael Nicholson Thesis Prize
Jennifer Martinez, University of Nottingham

Hunger in the Horn of Africa

Is it the same old Story?

Carl Death
Aberystwyth University

In mid-July 2012 aid agencies drew attention to imminent humanitarian emergencies in Somalia, Somaliland, and Northern Kenya. At least 120,000 people in Somaliland require emergency food aid; southern Somalia is facing a 'fresh hunger emergency'; and charities are warning that the world's largest refugee camp at Dadaab, Kenya, is facing a combined crisis of funding shortages, insufficient food, water and sanitation, and an influx of Somali migrants fleeing the conflict. Elsewhere in Africa, agencies predict that 1.63 million Malawians (more than 10% of the population) will need food aid over the next few months after a massive crop failure in the country's south, and Oxfam is gearing up to provide aid to 1.8 million people across Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and the Gambia due to food and water shortages in the Sahel.

The stories are depressingly familiar, and chime with many of the familiar images of African politics, poverty and under-development. In 2011 food shortages in the horn affected 13 million people, and killed hundreds of thousands. Somalia became the first famine of the twenty-first century, despite the efforts of charities like Oxfam and Save the Children, which ran their largest ever campaigns. Famine – a horseman most thought had been banished to history – seems to have returned to stalk our present. Accordingly, food security made global headlines in 2011-12, with shortages and high prices being linked to political instability and transitions in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Niger, Morocco, Uganda, Mozambique, Sudan and elsewhere.

In response, world leaders at the Rio+20 UN Summit on Sustainable Development held in June 2012 reiterated commitments to the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, and the fundamental right to be free from hunger. But it is widely acknowledged that the first Millennium Development Goal, to reduce hunger by half by 2015, will not be met in sub-Saharan Africa where levels of undernourishment have actually increased sharply since 2003. Does this mean that the age-old story of African famine is once more set to become a defining image of the continent?

Whilst it is impossible to deny the saliency of issues of food and hunger in many parts of Africa today, it is also important to recognise that there are new dimensions to these problems, and it bears repeating that the tired clichés and stereotypes associated with African famines are as unhelpful ever. Three particularly resilient myths must be dispelled: that famines are natural disasters, inevitable in such parts of

the world; that Africans are helpless victims in need of Western saviours; and that begging bowl charity is the most appropriate collective response.

First, famines and mass hunger are not a straightforward consequence of 'drought', despite the media and charity headlines. They are deeply political, and as Amartya Sen famously showed, they can occur even in the midst of bumper harvests if certain groups lack economic entitlements to food. In the horn of Africa they are part of what David Keen calls 'complex emergencies': control of crops and food supplies (including food aid) become another political and economic resource in the hands of the powerful. The civil war in Somalia is the reason why famine has returned in the twenty-first century: as in the past, the horsemen ride together. Survival International have accused the Ethiopian government of destroying crops in order to evacuate tribes from desirable land in the Lower Omo valley, and a Human Rights Watch report in June 2012 predicted that thanks to government policies, it is likely that 'the livelihoods of 500,000 people may be endangered, tens of thousands will be forcibly displaced, and that the region will witness increased inter-ethnic conflict as communities compete for scarce resources.' Weather patterns change – and they are changing more rapidly thanks to manmade climate change – but the causes of famine and hunger are always political.

Secondly, the image of Africans as helpless victims is even more out-of-date than ever. Kenya and Ethiopia are regional powerhouses whose economies have grown substantially in the last decade. When governments fail to act, African populations have protested and called them to account. One of the reasons for Kenya's relatively prompt response to shortages in 2011 was the activism of the Somali-speaking community and the Kenyan Red Cross. Whilst the generous response to Britain's Disasters Emergency Committee raised £79m and captured headlines, far less



Control of food supplies becomes another resource in the hands of the powerful.

reported was the fact that the response from African nations raised more than £215m. African agency – the subject of an ESRC and BISA 'Africa and International Studies' working group seminar series in 2011 – is of primary importance in understanding the politics of famine.

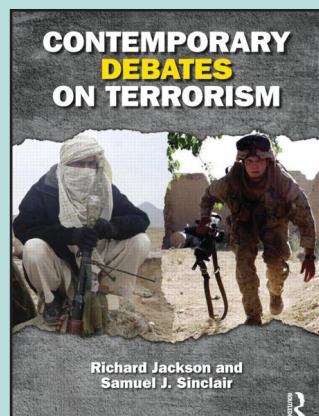
Finally, it has become commonplace to question the appropriateness of the charitable response. This is important: charity risks reaffirming long-standing North-South hierarchies; framing the crisis as an immediate and bounded event; and neglecting structural causes of poverty, inequality and hunger. But it is also important to acknowledge the way in which charities have reformed their programme in the last decade – increasingly drawing attention to the need for trade reform, action on climate change, safeguarding land rights, and cooperating with international organisations and local governments in multi-stakeholder partnerships on the ground.

There is a disjuncture, however, between the images that many charities continue to present – begging-bowl

images of starving African children and drought-stricken crops – and their work on the ground which is beginning to at least engage with some of the newer causes of food insecurity in the region. To cite just one example, so-called 'land-grabs' by international investors, with 34.3 million hectares of African land sold or leased since 2000, exploit the insecurity of land tenure among local communities, and expose regional economies to the vagaries of global commodity prices and biofuel markets. This prompted the UN to announce a set of global guidelines for rich countries buying land in developing nations in 2012, but ensuring that such deals are fair and sustainable will require – as always – African political action and mobilisation.

Contemporary protest movements and political thought in Africa was the subject of a July 2012 workshop organised by Clive Gabay, the BISA Africa and International Studies working group, and Queen Mary, University of London. New members for the working group should contact Carl Death at crd@aber.ac.uk. Aberystwyth University offers an interdisciplinary MSc in Food and Water Security, see www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/postgraduate-courses/taughtcourses/biosciences/food-water-security-masters/

book announcement



Contemporary Debates on Terrorism

Contemporary Debates on Terrorism examines key questions central to our understanding of the nature, causes and responses to contemporary terrorism. In a unique and engaging format, noted scholars outline the contrasting answers to each question, leaving the reader to judge the merits of competing points of view. An invaluable teaching tool, the volume also provides an accessible overview of the current state of research on terrorism.

Editorial Team

Dr Adam Quinn
Lecturer in International Studies
University of Birmingham
a.j.quinn@bham.ac.uk

Dr Oz Hassan
Research Fellow
University of Warwick
o.a.hassan@warwick.ac.uk

A Research-based Method and Student-focused Approach to Teaching Islamic Studies in International Politics

The winner of the BISA Teaching Excellence Award for 2012 was Dr Ayla Göl of Aberystwyth University. The winner of this award is invited to write a short article for *International Studies Today* discussing the innovative teaching that led to their receiving the award.

Ayla Göl
Aberystwyth University

The new module, 'Islam, Foreign Policy and the Developing World', combined my previous doctoral research expertise in foreign policy analysis (FPA) and my current research interests in Islam and the developing world. The learning objectives of the new module were designed so as to provide students with a critical introduction to the level of analysis problem in IR and to examine the relationship between Islam and foreign policymaking in the developing world through models of FPA and a number of case studies in Muslim societies.⁴

It specifically aimed to understand the complexity of religious, cultural and ideational dimensions of foreign policymaking in the greater Middle East and North Africa. The module aimed to encourage students to develop a critical approach to the study of Islam and foreign policymaking, through a critique of orthodox FPA, and to introduce them to emerging theories that provide fresh insights, perspectives and debates in understanding the foreign policies of Muslim countries in the twenty-first century. In the research-based teaching method, students as 'participants' were expected to learn how to do independent research and to apply their theoretical knowledge to specific case studies. Furthermore, the new approach aimed at encouraging students to deconstruct the widespread subjective knowledge on Islam and Muslims. For instance, in the first lecture, students were given a questionnaire to assess their existing knowledge about Islam and foreign policy. The majority of students said 'yes' (54 out of 63, or 86%), while the minority of students said 'no' (4 out of 63, or 6%) or maybe (5 out of 63, or 8%) (see Figure 1). It was evident that the majority of students had strong assumptions that Islam played a crucial role in the foreign policymaking of Muslim countries. I was convinced that the traditional methods of teaching and learning activities would not be enough to deconstruct students' existing knowledge about Islam and foreign policy and help students to be critical thinkers. Therefore, the following new methods were introduced to make it more research based and student focused (Göl 2011).

First, the module was delivered through 11 weekly lectures and a series of seven 2-hour seminars. This was different to the format of 'Religion and Politics in the Middle East', which was based on traditional methods of teaching with eighteen 1-hour lectures and a series of five 1-hour seminars. Having more seminars would translate into more active student participation in the process of learning. As Anderson argues (1997, pp. 184-185), seminars and group discussions 'provide an arena where "active" learning can take place and where critical thinking and the development of communication skills can be encouraged'. It has also been claimed that 'democratically run' discussion groups can encourage students to think more independently and gain confidence in their own abilities. Hence, while the literature indicated the positive outcome of student participation in seminars, my own teaching experience at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and Aberystwyth also supported these claims to support a student-focused approach (Göl 2010b). Introducing a 2-hour session made it possible to incorporate a 'blended' approach into seminar teaching. Specifically, the new method implied the use of a combination of different teaching and learning methods - crucially the use of small groups in seminars

to facilitate better learning outcomes. Small group discussions were blended with the use of multimedia in order to maintain student interest throughout a lengthy 2-hour session.

Second, the method of assessment was changed to make the new approach more research based than research led. In addition to the traditional essay and examination, seminar participation was assessed. In order to ensure that all students actively contributed to discussions, seminar participation constituted a component of students' overall mark. This was further supported by case studies to achieve maximum seminar participation. Each student had to choose a case-study country on which to carry out independent research. The student was expected to develop an in-depth knowledge of the country's foreign policy making, gathering data and information as the semester progressed. This was an independent piece of research, theoretically informed by the content of the module. Students were encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning process and to lead research based on academic and web-based sources. Students were also motivated by the idea that if they were able to develop a critically articulated alternative theory at the end of the module, they would be granted higher marks for this portion of the assessment. This approach is supported in the literature in the observation that 'in general those adopting "deep" approaches are more successful in exams' (Jaques 2000, p. 46). Furthermore, by adopting a deep approach to learning, a student can progress along the path of becoming a 'critical thinker who seeks balanced reasons in an argument and has both the ability and the disposition to do so' (Tishman and Andrade 1997, p. 3). This was particularly important to develop a critical pedagogy of research-based teaching for Islamic studies.

The third change to make the alternative method more student-oriented was based on developing an innovative formative assessment method. A new assessment method of using 'electronic learning portfolios' (e-Portfolios) on Blackboard was developed for the first time in Aberystwyth University (Göl 2010b). This was guided by the idea that traditional assessment methods that 'emphasize recall or the use of simple, standard procedures' and/or serve as a 'threatening and anxiety provoking' process produce surface learning (Jaques 2000, p. 59). By submitting the e-Portfolios for each seminar, students were introduced to a complex learning process that helped them - particularly shy students - to become more confident, overcome their anxieties and therefore enhance the quality of their 'deep learning' (Jaques 2000, p. 60). An e-Portfolio was allocated to each student on Blackboard and how to manage it was explained in the first seminar and through clear instructions in the module handbook.⁵ The e-Portfolio was graded as part of seminar participation, and it was worth 10% of the final overall mark. After their submissions, students were able to get feedback from the tutor by the end of the week. Interested and more seriously engaged students had the opportunity to contact the tutor if they still had questions or they did not understand the feedback (Göl 2010b).

As demonstrated in Figure 2, the feedback I gathered from students in an informal questionnaire further indicated that the majority of students found an interactive (41 out of 48, or 85%) and blended method (33 out of 48, or 69%) of teaching (question 1) and the use of e-Portfolio (question 3) (45 out of 48 students or 94% strongly agree, agree and partially agree) more helpful for learning than the traditional methods of teaching. The

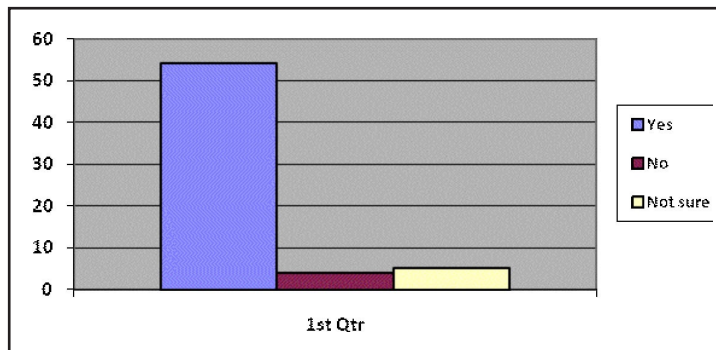


Fig. 1 Student knowledge on Islam and foreign policy at the beginning of the semester

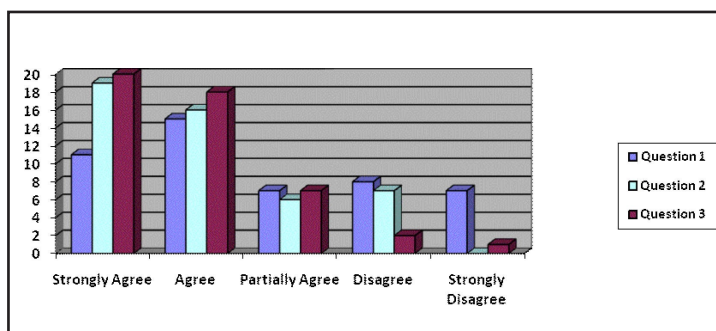


Fig. 2 Student feedback on the alternative methods of teaching.

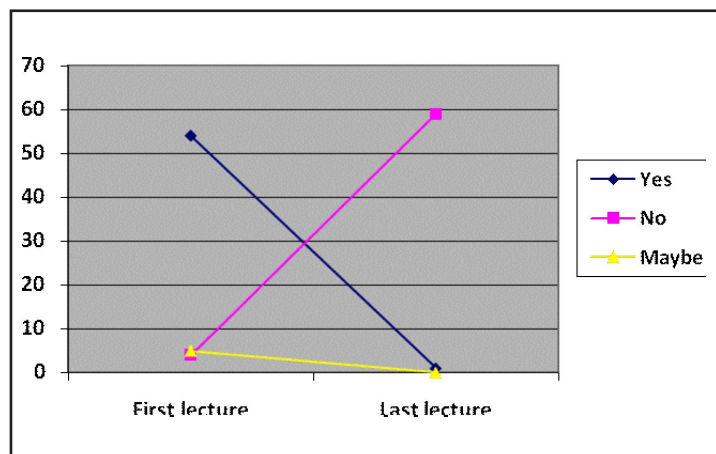


Fig. 3 Change of student knowledge on Islam and foreign policy at the start and end of the semester.

feedback supported my decision to alter my approach in teaching Islamic and Middle Eastern politics.

As Figure 2 highlights, the majority of students (41 out of 48, or 85% strongly agree, agree and partially agree) indicated that they enjoyed small group discussions and teamwork (question 2), where they participated much more actively, than in traditional methods of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the following additional feedback was received from students about the unprecedented consequences and advantages of using e-Portfolios: the effective and fast feedback to students; immediate electronic communication between teacher and student; evidence of progress for each student individually; provide a summary of each week's discussion questions ready for exam revision purposes; and encourage shy students, who are not confident enough to contribute during seminar discussions, for building self-confidence throughout the semester due to regular readings and exercises of writing e-Portfolios (Göl 2011).

Concluding reflections

The outcome of this article indicates that both student feedback and evidence support the argument that traditional teaching and learning methods guided by teacher-focused and research-led teaching can be ineffective when studying the Middle East and Islam in the UK higher education context. Feedback to assess the impact of the use of research-based teaching on student learning has been very positive, as indicated in Figure 2. Furthermore, the same questionnaire (see Figure 1), which was given at the first lecture, was redistributed to students at the last lecture in order to assess the change of assumptions about the relationship between Islam and foreign policy. This time the majority of students (99%) said that both 'material factors and ideational factors' were important in the foreign policymaking of Muslim countries. As Figure 3 shows, the majority of students' assumptions about the causal relationship between Islam and foreign policymaking were changed based on a better understanding of material and

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International Law and International Relations: Lost in Translation?

Math Noortmann

Convener of the BISA International Law Working Group

"On reflection, I think as an international lawyer. I have, at various times, decontextualized rules (or presented the wrong kind of context) in addition to teaching a truncated version of politics and an often fatally detached theory."

Gary Simpson (1999) Teaching on the Magic Mountain

Reflecting on her teaching, an International Relations scholar would probably have to admit that she thinks as a political scientist; that at various times she disregarded rules (or presented the wrong kind of rules) in addition to teaching a truncated version of law and an often fatally biased theory? In our reflective moments, many of us are indeed aware of our shortcomings and the constraints that hinder the shattering of our disciplinary shackles, which I believe is necessary to advance our understanding of the complexity of international issues.

A great many multi-, inter-, trans-disciplinary and integrative projects, and approaches have therefore premeditated the overcoming of the disciplinary divide. Georg Schwarzenberger, for example, showed the multidisciplinary character of the 'international' by publishing on both sides of the divide. Myres McDougal and Harold Lasswell, combined their knowledge to design a Policy Oriented Approach that was intended to transcend the divide. Hedley Bull sought to (re)introduce Hugo Grotius in International Relations and integrate idealism/legalism and realism. And last but not least, Anne-Marie Slaughter et al promoted an interdisciplinary project, based on the idea that IR and IL "cohabit the same conceptual space" and share a "dual agenda".

All of these projects, however, failed or lost momentum over time, due to different reasons. They were to (neo) liberal or too cosmopolitan, too eccentric or too popular, too much international law or too much international relations, but each and every one of them contained elements, which are worth considering in thinking about strategies and mechanisms to overcome that disciplinary gap. There can be little doubt that we have to work on and from both sides of the gap and that the project is partly about educating and being educated, but there is also the challenge of at the same time cultivating our common ground and discovering new ground. The English School represents the first approach in that it works with and within existing 'international' paradigms and frameworks, while the New Haven School embodies the aspiration to design a new analytical framework that inter alia requires a new language. In the distinguished terminology of the New Haven School, law is an 'authoritative decision making process' and 'participants' are key in that process.

To the extent that language is fundamental to our inter-subjective

understanding across disciplines, we must consider the possibility that the problem, according to Oran Young, is "not merely a problem of two distinct disciplines"; but a "true two-cultures problem". The problem than is no longer a matter of not recognizing, addressing and overcoming conceptual, paradigmatic and ontological differences, but one of cultivating the idea that we do things differently here. The problem is that we get lost in translation when we seek to give meaning to and interpret new ideas and new phenomena on the basis of our traditional knowledge.

'Non-state actors' and 'human security' illustrate how international legal scholars translate the (ir)relevance of these newcomers in the 'international' discourse to international law. Non-state actors are first and foremost translated in terms of legal personality and only considered to be relevant if and only if they can be held accountable for violations of international law. They are considered to be 'law-takers' rather than 'law-makers'. The traditional making and unmaking of international law is obviously not fundamentally troubled by the arrival of new 'participants'. The question is whether we look at non-state actors through the lens of international law or whether we look at international law through the lens of non-state actors.

Human security is another and perhaps more instructive example as it illustrates how an otherwise holistic and complex idea is fragmented into human rights and humanitarian law and subsequently appropriated by the legal proponents of the Responsibility to Protect and humanitarian intervention. Again, we are not investigating how 'human security' affects international law's traditional Westphalian, state-centred design, but how that design can accommodate new developments, without jeopardizing that very design. Where human security promotes the interdependency of seven fundamental securities (economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political), international law tends to promote an essential difference between political and civil rights, social, cultural and economic rights, and community rights. Instead of critically questioning the generational division of our human rights on the basis of the human security concept, the latter concept is dissected in order to facilitate its absorption into the legal system.

International studies offer the possibility to pack rather than unpack international issues; to complicate rather than to simplify. While it is understandable, from a power political point of view, that international law is increasingly fragmented along functional lines. Within the broader global context it is imperative for the legal scholar to investigate the links between different fields of international law (economic, environmental, migration, conflict, development, etc. etc.) and question the politics of fragmentation and disciplining.

Teaching Islamic Studies in International Politics

Continues From Page 5

ideational factors of FPA.

In conclusion, this article explains why a research-based teaching method is more productive in encouraging students to connect knowledge and power, 'problematised' and deconstruct existing understandings of Islam while becoming critical thinkers. It, therefore, shows that the critical pedagogy of research-based teaching that I developed for teaching Islamic studies in the International Politics department are transferable to other areas of Islamic studies in the United Kingdom.

Notes

1. <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/quality-assurance/research-practice/>.
2. See the online module information: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/modules/deptcurrent/?m=IP39720>.
3. See the copy of exam paper for 2009/2010: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/IP39720-10.pdf>.
4. See the online module identifier: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/modules/deptcurrent/?m=IP39520>.
5. See Aberystwyth University Case Studies – Grade Centre for Electronic Learning Portfolios: http://nexus.aber.ac.uk/xwiki/bin/view/Main/grade_centre_gol.

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Footnotes

This extract is taken from 'Developing a critical pedagogy of 'research-based' teaching in Islamic Studies', *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (December 2011), 431-440. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17539153.2011.623421>

Dr Ayla Göl is a Lecturer in International Politics of the Middle East Islamic Studies, and Director of the Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Contemporary Political Violence (CSRVCV) in the Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University. She holds a BA and an MSc from the Department of International Relations, Faculty of Political Science (SBF), Ankara University, Turkey and a PhD from the London School of Economics (LSE). Dr Göl took up her first academic post as Lecturer at the Department of International Relations, LSE in 2003 before she joined the Department at Aberystwyth University in 2005. She was also the inaugural John Vincent Fellow in Department of International Politics, at the ANU and most recently a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge between November 2009 and March 2010. E-mail: ayg@aber.ac.uk

Making an impact on security and intelligence

Robert Dover
Loughborough University

Intelligence studies remains a small and discreet discipline that locates itself near to other disciplines such as: international studies, history and area studies, public administration, British politics, and security studies in different mixes and borrowing and utilising different insights along the way. As a discipline it has been characterised and conditioned by the significant characteristics of the activities it seeks to analyse: that of secrecy, empiricism and government security. This short essay takes a snapshot of the developing relationship between scholars and security and intelligence officials through a series of selected issues that have appeared on the horizon of the last ten years. In doing so, it argues that a good percentage of intelligence studies scholars have responded to the opportunities presented to them to impact on the policy world, and that there are further areas in which the scholarly community can add value to policy work.

The so-called 'global war on terror', or 'long war' (depending on which term you prefer) brought security and intelligence scholars closer to the policy and security community in this country and across the Atlantic. This was partly due to timing: the 2004 Butler Report had suggested that a much closer relationship between the two communities would help reduce the chances of intelligence failures in the future. The initiatives that were initially taken by the intelligence community happened to coincide with the terrorist attacks on London in July 2005 and so the first post-Butler contacts focussed on what the research community could offer intelligence officers by way of advanced understanding of the issues around Jihadist terrorism (although all forms of radicalisation were said to be of interest). The absence of a formalised system of contact - be it through the professional associations or research councils - left it to proceed along classical intelligence lines: sporadic and fortuitous personal contact. The first attempt to provide a system, through a research council call for funding proposals, descended into headlines and accusations about the securitisation of the

academy, which was as unfortunate as it was counterproductive.

The big security questions of our time, that have clustered into the threats from terrorism, cyber-security, the proliferation of WMD and societal instability which manifested itself briefly in the UK in the August 2011 riots lend themselves to different points of access for the scholar. For questions around intelligence and WMD the Butler and Chilcot inquiries were obvious starting points, and whilst Chilcot has yet to report the oral testimony provided to the inquiry has provided a rich treasure trove of material that scholars can work with. Similarly, and controversially, the Wikileaks 'Cablegate' files provided an enormous resource of materials that would have ordinarily been obscured to academics, but if and how these files can be used for scholarly work is unresolved and the implications for using them similarly so. Issues around cyber-security provide a good opportunity for multidisciplinary work, but the issues are so sensitive that the primary work done here is going to be mostly policy related, and yet still difficult to connect up to various salient audiences. Whilst at the other end of the spectrum, the primary points of access for the August 2011 riots have been through using raw data from social media and communication sites (key elements of the riots) and interviews with participants and enforcement officials. In publication terms the work done on the riots has been disseminated mostly via the media, think-tanks and blogs, with peer-reviewed publications following on afterwards.

The REF-inspired emphasis on few world-class publications in prestigious peer-reviewed outlets removes some of the motivation for academics to engage in alternative (and more widely read) dissemination routes: from an intelligence and security perspective, it would be helpful if this emphasis was rethought, particularly if our work is to continue making an impact. There would seem to be a great deal of value in exploiting the work of scholars in informing current security and intelligence policy and work. Whilst British academics are highly unlikely to be ever afforded the access to officials and classified material that is possible for



The big security questions lend themselves to different access points for scholars.

seconded academics in the US, there is a hidden contribution that could be made by scholars to the background context analysts work with, and an open source challenge to established thinking within the security community.

The positive development from REF culture is the need to generate research impact which has encouraged intelligence scholars to move beyond relatively esoteric analyses of intelligence activity and bureaucracies and towards how their historical and area-specific research can be used to inform and shape deep contextual background for practitioners (in the case of Michael Goodman and my AHRC grant), or in the case of the Brunel Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies in their work with the UK Ministry of Defence. Many of our IR and international studies colleagues come from critical backgrounds, and so this explicit linkage between scholarship and government or private industry activity will look alien (and possibly offensive). It would be for a much longer essay to unpick why this is the case, and the implications it has for the field.

The debates around academic engagement with the security community

are yet to be resolved. Whilst the current government yearns for scholars who are 'more useful' in 'the real world' there are undeniable tensions between the dissemination of academic knowledge into academic outlets and engagement with policy communities. There is also a large vocal community of colleagues who suggest that there should be little place for this work in an academic's professional life. Amongst the unresolved questions are those which verge on ethical considerations, much as there were for anthropologists and the so-called Human Terrain System, and whether the creation of 'pure knowledge' is more valuable than knowledge shaped for a policy audience. The debates within the intelligence studies community are, of course, a microcosm of those that exist within the wider International Relations and Studies community, and until a coherent position is reached on the subject, individuals and groups will continue to pragmatically choose where and how to engage with the stakeholder communities they value.

Dr Robert Dover is Convenor of the BISA Security and Intelligence Studies Working Group

50th Anniversary of Politics & IR at the University of Edinburgh

'Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant' wrote Robert Louis Stevenson, one of Edinburgh's most famous graduates. Though he pre-dated the Politics Department by many decades, his saying is as true today as it was then. The seed that was planted in 1963 with the creation of the Politics Department has matured into a superb department of some 30 colleagues, now preparing for a year of celebrations to mark the coming Golden Anniversary. We kick off with a gala alumni reunion weekend from 21 to 23 September, beginning with a roundtable discussion on the question 'What Future for Scotland?' It features some of our best-known graduates, including Malcolm Rifkind, Michael Moore, Susan Deacon, Alice Brown, John Swinney, and Allan Little. In recognition of the anniversary we commissioned a department history by Professor Charles Raab, now retired but present at the creation of the department.

We're proud to look back on our achievements. One of our first Professors, James Cornford, went on to advise successive UK governments on Freedom of Information legislation and constitutional issues. He was also a broker of the Labour-Liberal pact. In the 1980s, the Department's famous 'Edinburgh Conversations,' led by Professor John Erickson, brought together Western and Soviet foreign policy and military officials and helped to build bridges and ensure that lines of communication remained open between the two blocs. PIR also played an important role in the historic creation of the Scottish Parliament, when Professor Alice Brown became its first Ombudsperson in 1999. More recently, Professor Charlie Jeffery was appointed to the influential McKay Commission to consider the consequences of devolution for the House of Commons. Today, PIR is a leading centre for the study of Scotland,

Europe and the world. Our academics have won research grants totalling several million pounds in the last five years for projects on Islamic radicalisation in Russia, constitutional change in Scotland, gender inequality, the performance of financial markets, the foreign policy of the EU, Scottish energy governance, the politics of island regions, the profile of European Commission officials, and European labour migration. We've received awards for teaching excellence, including the Edinburgh University Students Association awards for Innovative Teaching Methods and for Overall High Performer as well as the Political Studies Association 'Sir Bernard Crick Award' for politics teaching (twice).

Our outreach activities have been recognised too, notably when Charlie Jeffery received the Political Studies Association award for Political Science Communication in 2006. Within the University, PIR

colleagues work in close collaboration with The Academy of Government (the UK's first postgraduate institute of public policy), the Europa Institute, the Princess Dashkova Centre (advancing understanding of Russia), and the Alwaleed Centre (promoting understanding of Islam). Our graduates have gone on to shape the age in which we live through their work in governments, think-tanks, international organizations, voluntary groups, and universities, as well as industry and commerce. The 50th anniversary provides an opportunity both to recognize their achievements and to respond to the needs of new students. So we are launching a new 'Next Generation Fund' to support the brightest and best students in politics at all levels. New seeds need to be planted, and as we celebrate the work of colleagues, past and present, we aim to invest in a new generation of leaders and thinkers.

Phoebe V. Moore-Carter IPEG Convenor

After being inaugurated at the IPEG@40, which was organised by my predecessor Dr Stuart Shields in Warwick 14th and 15th September 2011, and which was a great success, my first few months as the IPEG Convenor have been astonishingly busy. A whirlwind of innovations and activities are currently underway, reflecting members' enthusiasm and commitment.

As was discussed during the BISA/ISA members' meeting in Edinburgh, the new face of IPEG appears to be one that promotes internationalism.

Our Spring 2012 newsletter <http://www.bisa-ipeg.org/newsletters.php> and our website outlines our recent activities <http://www.bisa-ipeg.org/>, including the following:

Book Prize shortlist

Ian Bruff, Book Prize Chair

- Colin Crouch, *The Strange Non-death of Neoliberalism* (Polity)
- Laura Horn, *Regulating Corporate Governance in the European Union: Towards a Marketization of Corporate Control* (Palgrave)
- Greta Krippner, *Capitalizing on Crisis: The Political Origins of the Rise of Finance* (Harvard University Press)
- Adam David Morton, *Revolution and State in Modern Mexico: The Political Economy of Uneven Development* (Rowman & Littlefield)

Please send contributions for our discussion paper series to Matthew.Eagleton-Pierce@exeter.ac.uk.

Workshops

Global Health, Political Economy and Beyond (Sophie Harman and Anastasia Nesvetailova 7th December 2011, City University)

Comparison, Analysis, Critique - Critical Perspectives on the Diversity of Contemporary Capitalisms (Ian Bruff, Matthias Ebenau, Christian May and Andreas N like 10th-11th February 2012, Jugendherberge Wiesbaden)

BISA/IPEG Working Group Workshop Grant: Methodologies of the Everyday in International Political Economy (Ben Rosamond and Laura Horn 29th-30th May 2012, University of Copenhagen)

For a Public University (Andreas Bieler 15th June 2012, University of Nottingham)

BISA/ISA 2012 Joint International Conference: Diversity in the Discipline: Tension or Opportunity in Responding to Global Challenges, IPEG and IPEG/ISA IPE section panels <[\[ipeg.org/panels_edinburgh.php\]\(http://ipeg.org/panels_edinburgh.php\)> \(Panel convenors: Isalene Bergamaschi, Jewellord T. Nem Singh, Randall Germain, Nicola Phillips 20th-22nd June 2012, Edinburgh\)](http://www.bisa-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Political Economy and the State in Historical Perspective (Raphael Heffron, 11th July 2012, University of Cambridge)

Forthcoming IPEG/COST/ICDD conference

The Future, and Praxis of Decent Work

International Centre for Development and Decent Work (ICDD) Kassel University Germany, www.icdd.uni-kassel.de, 14th-15th February 2013

The concept of decent work is in crisis and this conference is a call for praxis around these issues. Papers may be on the workings and structure of the International Labour Organisation, the world of work in the current context of global recession, issues surrounding social unrest as linked to rising unemployment, and the nature of international labour standards.

Invited and confirmed participants include delegates from the ICDD/Unicamp, the International Labour Organisation, and the Global Labour Institute.

Please send 200 word abstracts, with complete affiliation details to decentworkconference@gmail.com Paper abstract deadline: 15 November 2012. Notification/programme: early December 2012. Paper deadline (where available): 1 February 2013

Organisers, sponsors: Dr Phoebe V Moore (Salford University and IPEG Convenor); Dr Charles Dannreuther (COST and University of Leeds); Professor Christoph Scherrer (ICDD Kassel) Christian M Ilmann (ICDD Kassel).

Facebook

Please contribute to the IPEG Facebook microblog <https://www.facebook.com/BISA.IPEG>

Annual workshop

The Future of Global Economic Governance

10th - 11th September, 2012

Hosts: Andre Broom and Amin Samman, Department of Political Science and International Studies, University of Birmingham. There is no registration fee for this event, and PhD presenters are provided a travel/accommodation stipend. The call for papers deadline has passed. See you all there.



Global Health, Political Economy and Beyond

Network of Educators in Support of a Public University Expanding Rapidly

I attended two excellent workshops in June this year, the Workers' Education Meeting TUC/Unionlearn Leeds: Higher Education Forum in Yorkshire and the Humber, held at the Leeds TUC (11/06/12) and organised by Alan Roe, Cilla Ross, Miguel Martinez Lucio, Kate Hardy, and Sian Moore; and the For a Public University event organised by Andreas Bieler and sponsored by the Local UCU Association at Nottingham University, the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice (CSSGJ)/Nottingham University, the Centre for Research in Higher, Adult & Vocational Education (HAVE)/Nottingham University, and the International Political Economy Group (IPEG) of the British International Studies Association (BISA), held at the University of Nottingham (15/06/12).

Within the space of one week at these two events, the most pressing issues in higher education in the United Kingdom today were laid out on the tables in these rooms, and the urgency and frankness of discussions by experts in the areas of further education, community education, worker education, and trade union activities was both refreshing and troubling. In Leeds, discussions started with a quote from Bernard Shaw who pointed toward a conspiracy against the laity, as linked in the case of our discussions, to the marketization and businessification (Allen and Ainley 2007, 21) of Higher Education in the United Kingdom. In Nottingham, the first speakers made reference to Burawoy's influential quote that the University is becoming a means to someone else's end (2011). Discussions at both events surrounded questions of limited resources for Higher Education and for trade unions; focussed on the crisis of critical education and the need for a renewed platform for these discussions; highlighted the current government's weak training and skills agenda; and asked how we can appropriate the widening participation agenda to better serve the communities we are in danger of failing given the rapidly loosening ties between the public sector and Higher

Education. We are all workers, but the history of union activism as well as the history of education, is being overlooked in current curricula. Rapid, market-led transitions have begun to threaten the very core of our capacity to offer a truly public service.

In Leeds, representatives from the Workers' Education Association, from TUC, CPU, the Really Open University, the Space Project, Working Lives Research Institute, Unite, GFTU, CWU, and the Global Labour Institute attended, as well as representative from a number of Universities including Leeds, East Anglia, Manchester, and Strathclyde. Presentations and discussions were driven by the desire to organise a forward thinking set of initiatives that will work to incorporate existing resources we can identify within our respective practices to offer courses that reflect our critical agenda for public education.

In Nottingham, discussions delved into the issues we face today as researchers and activists in the current context, including the blatant exclusion of the politics of reproduction in discussions of framework-able results; the catastrophe of allowing education institutions to invite shareholders and new providers; the issues of unpaid work; the place for a student producer; and the worry that sat-navigation of education will undo the very principles that educators have fought to inculcate, an educational philosophy that is not exclusively for the elite class.

After these two events, the Yorkshire/Humberside group held a second meeting on 16/07/12; drafted a statement; and an evolving working group is discussing holding a Workers' Education Festival on the 01/12/12 to be held in Leeds. Organisers of the Nottingham event have published speakers' presentations and papers on a website that encourages further discussion and collaborations <http://andreasbieler.net/for-a-public-university/>. These groundbreaking activities signal the proliferation of public discussion and debate in these ever important areas.

Phoebe Moore-Carter is IPEG Convenor and co-sponsor For a Public University, Nottingham

Policy Forum: Iran's Nuclear Programme

This forum consists of distilled versions of presentations made at the symposium 'Iran's Nuclear Programme - Assessing the Options for Cooperation and Conflict', which was hosted by the University of Birmingham in April 2012. This was the first major event of the Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security (ICCS), established at the University of Birmingham in 2012, under the directorship of Prof. Nicholas Wheeler, with the purpose of promoting a multidisciplinary and multidimensional approach to the study of conflict and security in global politics. The Institute prides itself on producing cutting-edge, internationally renowned research, which has a significant impact on the key practitioner communities with which it engages.

The Institute can be contacted at: ICCS@contacts.bham.ac.uk, and followed on Twitter @ICCS_bham

Contributors

Peter Gray is Senior Research Fellow in Air Power Studies at the Centre for War Studies, University of Birmingham

Naomi Head is a Lecturer in Politics at the University of Glasgow and an Honorary Research Fellow at the Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security (ICCS) at the University of Birmingham.

Dani Nedal is a Research Fellow at the ICCS and at the Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLISIS), University of Birmingham

Adam Quinn is a Lecturer in International Studies at the POLISIS Dept, University of Birmingham

Nicholas Wheeler is Professor of International Relations and Director of the Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security at the University of Birmingham. He is principal investigator of a project on 'The Challenges to Trust Building in Nuclear Worlds' and is writing a book entitled *Trusting Nuclear Rivals* (Forthcoming, Oxford University Press).

Stefan Wolff is Professor of International Security at the POLISIS Dept, University of Birmingham

Asaf Siniver is a Senior Lecturer at the POLISIS Dept, University of Birmingham

The Contribution of Trust, Empathy, and Dialogue: Talking to Iran



Naomi Head
University of Glasgow

"I think there is nothing barbarous and savage in that nation, from what I have been told, except that each man calls barbarism whatever is not his own practice; for indeed it seems we have no other test of truth and reason than the example and pattern of the opinions and the customs of the country we live in."¹

More recently, Robert Jervis has argued that 'if people do not learn enough from what happens to others, they learn too much from what happens to themselves.'² When some European governments failed to support the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, Condoleezza Rice declared, 'We simply didn't understand it.'³ What these remarks share is a sense of the limitations imposed upon our understanding of the world and each other. In the context of Iran, commentators have noted the dangers of escalating tensions through misconceptions, stereotypes, demonization, hostile rhetoric, and military posturing. They point to the absence of diplomatic relations between the US and Iran over the last thirty years and the consequences of this for our ability to understand the Iranian context.

How might we, therefore, build a relationship embedded in a sense of mutual security and cooperation for both Western countries and Iran? John Paul Lederach has called for us to open our imaginations as well as our minds when it comes to thinking about constructive social change and breaking cycles of violence.⁴ While the skills of mediation, negotiation, and diplomacy remain important, the crux of conflict transformation lies in our 'moral imagination'. This is a messy, personal,

timely - and time-consuming - process of innovation and creation; a complex and dynamic process which neither ignores the existing hard realities of conflict and politics nor yet considers itself determined by them. In the light of the ongoing negotiations, it is timely to ask how we might begin to imagine ourselves in a relationship with Iran that accepts the complexity of the needs and interests of all sides without being determined by the habitual rhetoric of the 'other as enemy'.

Trust, empathy, and dialogue offer a concrete language which may contribute to creative approaches to conflict and to the transformation of relations with Iran. A reflexive, empathic, and critical ethic of communication sensitises us to the ways in which legitimacy is sought and obtained within negotiations. It directs our attention to processes of inclusion and exclusion and it highlights the social and political harm that comes from failure to recognise the perceptions and feelings of others. Historical narratives - and the emotions embedded in them - have played a significant role in the failure of previous negotiations with Iran. Only when we are able to look at these actions in the context of a broader, long-term, pattern can we understand that how we choose to respond has consequences and implications for building trust and transforming conflict.

¹ Michel de Montaigne, cited in 'Encountering the Other', by Daniel R. Brunstetter, from *Expressions/Impressions*, (Vol 7, 2010) University of California, Irvine, Olive Tree Initiative.

² Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, cited in Stephen Walt, "Empathy" and international affairs; *Foreign Policy*, May 27, 2009

³ Walt, "Empathy" 2009

⁴ Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford University Press, 2005)

International Security and the Iranian Threat

Stefan Wolff
University of Birmingham

Considering the threat that Iran might currently pose to international security, it is important to distinguish clearly between two dimensions of this threat. One is the scenario in which Iran acquires nuclear weapons, the other one in which it would be using them.

Having more clearly defined the threat, any further assessment needs to determine how credible either of these two threats is, what their impact would be if they occurred, and how vulnerable potential targets are.

Different estimates by the IAEA and various governments and think tanks put Iran at different points in the cycle of Uranium enrichment and thus see the threat of the country becoming a nuclear-armed state as more or less immediate. These assessments, and even more so the public debate that builds on them, are 'guestimates' and they are further complicated by the wide range of different public pronouncements from Iran on this issue—ranging from assertions of the entirely peaceful nature of its nuclear programme to statements that are more ambiguous.

Where evidence is more concrete and reliable is in relation to delivery capabilities. Here, there is little doubt that Iran has successfully tested mid-range missiles and has connections to terrorist networks that are potentially capable of delivering 'dirty bombs'. This delivery capability does not make the threat of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons more credible, but it does have a bearing on what it might do once it has reached that stage.

Yet it is important to bear in mind that even if we assume that the threat of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons is credible, this is very different from their deployment in case of an actual military confrontation with any of its neighbours, or other countries in the region and beyond. Assuming even only a minimum degree of rationality on the part of the Iranian leadership, first-use in terms of 'battlefield' deployment seems very unlikely. However, retaliatory use, in a 'back-against-the-wall' scenario, cannot be excluded either in the sense of 'battlefield' deployment or a dirty bomb.

International Security and the Iranian Threat



Continues From Page 9

Remote as these scenarios might be, responsible policy makers nonetheless need to determine what the impact would be if either of these two distinct threats came to be realised. The impact of Iran becoming a nuclear-armed state would mean a shift in regional balance of power; potentially a direct military threat primarily to Israel and Saudi Arabia; a politically more assertive Iran, becoming a more influential player in a region US/West consider an area of vital interest, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Persian Gulf, Caspian, Pakistan, Syria, Israel/Palestinian Territories; and more limited options to respond to Iranian policies threatening Western/US interests in this area.

The impact of Iran deploying nuclear weapons would no doubt be devastating not only to whichever country/area was at the receiving end of a deployment but also to Iran itself, because of the retaliation it would face. Use of nuclear weapons would completely undermine the stability in the region as a whole and seriously destabilise international security across the range of different dimensions from ecological and energy security to economic and military security.

Clearly, the dynamics around the threat that the Iranian nuclear programme potentially poses are far from harmless. But how vulnerable are its potential targets? Here we need to consider both defensive capabilities

(against the threat) and resilience (in the face of it being carried out), and we can imagine this generally as a series of concentric circles with the greatest vulnerability and lowest resilience in the centre. This works well for both threat dimensions (acquisition and deployment), across the range of security dimensions, and in relation to both defensive capabilities and resilience.

If we accept this logic, there are two important conclusions to draw. From a Western perspective, the threat is real, but it affects our interests and allies in the region more than it affects us. An Iranian nuclear warhead or a dirty bomb are unlikely ever to reach Washington, London, or Brussels. Likewise, a nuclear Iran may be more difficult to deal with, but the international system could cope with it and rely on its ability to contain this threat effectively below a threshold of military hostilities with or without deployment of nuclear weapons. From an Iranian perspective, acquiring a nuclear weapons capability, and even more so deploying it, poses very grave risks to the country and its leadership itself, considering that, at this stage already, political and economic sanctions exert a real toll on Iran and that a military response would impose devastating costs primarily on Iran.

These two considerations of how the Iranian threat to international security might evolve should be factored into any calculations about appropriate responses from the international community and its individual member states.

The Israeli Military Option

Asaf Siniver
University of Birmingham

Perhaps the most burning question concerning the Iranian issue is whether an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities is imminent or unavoidable. The arguments for and against the likelihood of an Israeli strike are equally compelling. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has consistently claimed that Israel will be facing an existential threat from a Nuclear Iran, whose leader, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, had repeatedly threatened to wipe Israel off the map. Netanyahu's sentiment is reinforced by the view of many in Israel that the diplomatic efforts of the international community will not prove sufficient to halt the progress of Iran's nuclear programme. In the past Israel had destroyed the nuclear reactors of Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2007, and whilst the logistical and strategic parameters were evidently different from the Iranian case, the nevertheless reinforce the view that Israel is determined to prevent its neighbours from acquiring nuclear capabilities. The Stuxnet cyber-attack on Iran's industrial software and the assassinations of leading Iranian scientists have been traced back to Israel, which also has access to several airbases in Azerbaijan, on Iran's northern borders. These measures can be understood as parts of a broader framework of deterrence, a concept which is fundamental to Israel's strategic doctrine. Failing to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear capabilities by non-coercive measure may persuade Israeli decision-makers to resort to the use of force. A failure of deterrence in this case may have detrimental implications for Israel's other circles of conflict,

such as Hamas and Hezbollah. Finally, Israeli society is remarkably resilient, thanks to decades of wars, terrorism, suicide bombing and rocket attacks, and had already demonstrated capacity to tolerate casualties and violence in order to achieve long-term security.

On the other hand, there are equally strong indicators against an Israeli strike, most of strategic nature. First, it is evident that Israel does not possess the military capabilities to launch a successful strike on Iran without US assistance. Among other things, the Israeli air force does not possess long range bombers or the most advanced 'bunker buster' bombs which are designed to penetrate Iran's deepest bunkers, or indeed the capacity to refuel its jet fighters and bombers during the more than 2000mile long flight to Iran and back. This is further compounded by the fact that the Iranian targets are spread across nine locations in the vast country, which will necessarily limit the range and duration of a strike. Finally, Israel's special relations with the United States and its reliance on American military hardware, will make any Israeli strike against Iran dependent on American acquiescence, if not an explicit commitment for a joint attack. As such, the forthcoming presidential elections in the US, coupled with America's broader strategic interests in the region, such as the country's relations with the Muslim world, the planned withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan and the general lack of appetite of the American public to get entangled in another Mideast war, may lead the American administration to step up its political and diplomatic pressure on Iran, while at the same time reign in any Israeli endeavours to pursue the military option.

The Effectiveness of Air Power against Iran

Peter Gray
University of Birmingham

It is inevitable the possible growth of Iran's nuclear programme to encompass weapons should raise questions of military options to supplement the alleged cyber attacks and targeted assassinations. It is equally inevitable that the Israeli attacks on the Osirak Reactor in 1981 in Iraq in Operation BABYLON should invite speculation that American, Israeli or combined air attacks could be launched against Iran in a similar fashion. The (more-or-less) successful application of air power in separate operations in the Balkans, in the two Gulf Wars fought by the coalitions, in the No Fly Zones over Iraq and most recently over Libya adds momentum, and a wealth of tactical weapons detail, to the plot. Speculation on the quality of Iranian concrete and depth of the

facilities invites the question as to how effective these attacks may possibly be. It could, however, be argued that this debate centres on the wrong use of the word 'effective'. Should the debate not actually focus on what effect the strategic planners would want from air power?

If the planners want to destroy the actual production or reprocessing facilities, then the current debate may be valid. But the wider question centres on broader aspirations. These could include delaying the programme by damaging the infrastructure around the sites. Critics of air power in the past have gleefully pointed out that not even the RAF's Tallboy and Grand Slam weapons were able to destroy the German V2 assembly bunkers in Northern France in 1944; but even the most cursory examination of the surrounding area shows the damage

Continues Page 11

The Effectiveness of Air Power

Continues From Page 10

done to the transportation system which effectively rendered the facilities useless. Alternatively, air attacks on the facilities could be conducted in such a way as to raise the spectre of leakage of 'dirty' materials in order to deter scientists, technicians and supporting staff. The twin themes of coercion and deterrence could be spread with attacks on the relatively vulnerable support infrastructure such as accommodation. This in turn raises the issue of how much collateral damage the strategic planners and their political masters are prepared to authorise. If the rhetoric over threat levels increases considerably, debate over proportionality will take on all new meaning. The two years leading up to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM showed the value of attacking a much wider target suite which could include Command and Control Infrastructure as well as air

defence systems; this again allows for a degree of coercion and deterrence.

Operation BABYLON and air operations over Iraq conjure images of sizeable formations of conventional aircraft supported by traditional reconnaissance and C2. But these may not be the correct operations from which to draw precedent. It may well be that the covert operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan conducted by agencies other than conventional military units, but supported by special forces and uninhabited combat air vehicles may actually be a more flexible option. Outright destruction of the facilities becomes somewhat less likely and a range of operations from causing dirty leaks to further assassinations of key personnel look a more likely course of action. This may hardly be reminiscent of the air power's glamour days, but could prove to be more effective.

Building Mutual Nuclear Security with Iran

Nicholas Wheeler
University of Birmingham

Dani Nedal
University of Birmingham

Why has a solution to the decade long nuclear standoff with Iran proved so elusive? Based on ongoing research into the dynamics of nuclear rivalries, and the role of trust in international politics, we argue that the main obstacle to solving the crisis over Iran's nuclear program is that neither side believes that it is possible to reassure the other without this reducing their own security. Recent talks in Istanbul suggest that a new path to mutual security might be opening up, but there are still challenges ahead.

A fundamental problem of international politics is that we can rarely be sure whether we are dealing with aggressive or defensive states. Mutual security is possible between defensive states, and aggressors can only be balanced or deterred. But confusing these two types of states carry risks for national welfare and international security.

Although US intelligence agencies were explicit in their 2007 National Intelligence Estimate that Iran had stopped work on developing nuclear weapons in 2003, policy-makers in key Western states have believed that Iran's acquisition of fuel-cycle capabilities is leading inexorably to Iran becoming a nuclear weapons state, with dire consequences for their countries' security. As a consequence, any level of enrichment on Iranian soil has been viewed as a red line in previous rounds of negotiations. To reverse Iran's enrichment efforts, the United States has been willing to apply increasing levels of economic

coercion and the threat of force.

If perceptions of Iran's aggressive intent are accurate, then there is no path to mutual security. But what if Iran is seeking a latent nuclear weapons capability and the motivation behind this is defensive? Churchill once described thermonuclear weapons as the 'great equaliser', and given the Iranian leadership's fear that Washington is intent on regime change, is it really surprising that Iran wants a nuclear hedge?

As long as one side or the other assumes they are dealing with an aggressor states, they will remain trapped in a vicious circle of spiraling insecurity, as each perceives the other's position on the nuclear issue as posing a threat to their core security interests. Put differently, neither has been able to signal their peaceful/defensive motives and intent, because the steps necessary to reassure the other side have been seen as too costly to risk if it turns out the other side does have aggressive motives and intent.

Does the new round of talks suggest that there is a way through this impasse which could lead to mutual security? Persuading Iranian leaders that mistrust of the US is unjustified becomes harder when Western governments insist that Tehran was only brought to the negotiating table by the use of economic coercion and the threat of force. What is missing in Western capitals is an appreciation of how far their own actions have contributed to Iran's feelings of fear and insecurity. The more Western policy-makers emphasise the importance of threats in producing changes in Iranian policy, the more the Iranian leadership will cling to its nuclear hedge, and the more distant the promise of mutual nuclear security will be between the two sides.

American electoral politics and the Iranian nuclear standoff



Adam Quinn
University of Birmingham

The Iranian nuclear programme has become a symbolic issue for the Republican Party in seeking to differentiate itself from President Obama in an area (foreign policy) where the president's public approval ratings have generally been solid. The presidential challenger, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, has sought to cast the distinction between his prospective presidency and Obama's record as a choice between more assertive American 'leadership' contrasted with what is alleged to be present policy of uncertainty and appeasement abroad when dealing with forces hostile to the United States. Bellicosity on the subject of Iran has become one of the primary concrete issues used to support this narrative.

While President Obama has officially recorded his willingness to use whatever means might be required to avert Iranian acquisition of a nuclear weapon, Romney has questioned whether Obama really has the resolve required to launch military strikes if Iranian nuclear capability crossed American-set 'red lines'. These thresholds have sometimes been characterised as lying at a point of capability prior to actual possession of a nuclear weapon. Republicans have also suggested that Obama will prove unable to secure a resolution to the crisis that avoids the need for force because he has insufficient credibility as a hawk to deter the Iranian regime from pressing ahead into the danger zone. Romney's close relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has also led him to publicly endorse Israel's right to pre-emptive self-defence, i.e. military strikes, against the Iranian programme at a time when the Obama administration has appeared to be doing what it can to rein in the prospect of an Israel-precipitated military exchange.

On closer inspection, the substantive differences between a President Romney and Obama are more limited than on the surface, largely due to the practical limitations of what is achievable via even American military strikes: they could at best be expected to deliver a temporary set-back to the Iranian programme, while creating a diplomatic environment more sympathetic to Iran and less so to those who attacked it. Romney has also appeared to equivocate under questioning regarding the firmness of his primary substantive difference with Obama, i.e. the drawing of the 'red line' at the development of plausible capability to build nuclear weapons as opposed to any manifested effort to do so.

In reality, the difference between the Romney and Obama positions may boil down to a Republican assertion that its own more confrontational tone would serve to obtain US objectives without the need for conflict due to the deterrent effect of ostentatious resolve. Although the Iran issue has been and will continue to be used by Republicans as a way to display a 'harder line' sensibility in dealing with a hostile power, the difference in concrete policy as applied by a Romney administration would likely be smaller given the practical limits of the military option's plausible results. One extraneous factor might be that the Israeli government, given its close ties to Romney and suspicion of Obama's resoluteness, might, if it anticipates an Obama victory, precipitate a military exchange during the election, perceiving itself to have a closing window for action and believing that Obama would be more easily rolled into backing its actions during the political climate of election season. This would of course be a gamble of momentous scale by Netanyahu, and the possibility for it diminishes each day the election draws nearer.



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