

Opening Remarks for the Session (edited)

"The Future of Cooperation"

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Daniel Rothschild and Tommy Steiner, *The Herzliya Assessment 2011: Critical Junctures for Israel*, Herzliya: Institute for Policy and Strategy, IDC Herzliya, 2011.

Thank you to the Italian Atlantic Committee, their partners, and to the Secretary General, Prof. Fabrizio LUCIOLLI.

- What do we mean by cooperation? Specifically security/military cooperation –
 - functional dimension (M2M, security integration)
 - strategic dimension (common interests and confronting shared threats and challenges).
 - The following remarks will focus more on the strategic dimension.

- What I want to set out is very straightforward:
 - the second decade of the 21st Century is shaping up to be an epoch of profound strategic uncertainty reflecting shifting global balances of power and a growingly volatile Middle East.
 - Preempting further Islamic radicalization – in the Middle East and among Muslim communities in the West – is the common strategic imperative of the West, the remaining moderate Arab forces, and Israel.

- This ought to inform a joint international strategy built on three mutually reinforcing and simultaneous pillars:
 - containing the region's revisionist and radical forces;
 - fostering a gradual, phased transition process of Arab regimes to alleviate socio-economic and political under-development; and
 - advancing the Arab-Israeli peace process.
- **In essence: the US and EU should strive to build a regional anti-radical and pro-peace coalition**

Perhaps more than ever before, the Atlantic Community's allies in the region need to work together to bolster the Euro-Atlantic projection of influence in the Middle East, which is intertwined with their respective strategic postures.
- Timing of political turmoil in key countries across the ME could not be worse – combination of:
 - global economic crisis hitting hard the two global benign "custodians" of the region – US and Europe.

- Rising political power of radicalism in the ME along with Iranian hegemonic ambitions powered by its proxies – subversion in virtually all the countries in the region.
- The outcome of this combination is simple:
 - with all good and sincere intentions of the leading figures of the popular revolt across the region, the end result will be more likely to look far less similar to the Boston Tea Party or to the Velvet Revolution. Rather we will see growing political power of radical Islamists – formally or informally – leading new transitional governments to align or come closer to Iran and its radical proxies in the region. Egypt is one example. Others might follow.
- The core strategic interests of the West – US and Europe – are at jeopardy; Their strategy can best be titled "dump and hope" and in the process they have lost credibility due to:
 - the uneven application of R2P – turned into be R2P our borders....

- abandoning allies
- financial crisis, lack of EU solidarity, conflicting messaging, out of touch
- the US and Europe are still sticking to nearly unachievable standards – "deep and sustainable democracy" is an admirable aspiration but is not a realistic approach. The inherent belief that good will ultimately prevail is exactly that – a belief – unsubstantiated by evidence. Theology is not a policy.
- Reading the EU new neighborhood strategy and the American doctrine is somewhat disturbing. To put in European terms:
 - the expectation that the ME countries undergo transition and adopt the Copenhagen Criteria – because in essence this is the expectation – with a fraction of political and financial support offered to CEECs in the 1990s and onwards or to Western Europe in the Marshall Program – in face of formidable

domestic and regional radical forces threatened by this possible transition – is fantastical, not a common political agenda for regional cooperation.

- The outcome – US and Europe have alienated remaining allies, while as the other countries are unlikely to engage in substantial and meaningful cooperation.
- Unlike Western powers, parties on the ground are starting to contend with shifting balances of power and interests.
 - The politically boosted power of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is already leading this country to seek new relations with the radical and terrorist forces in the region – namely Iran and Hamas.
 - Concerned by the breakaway of Egypt, the growing assertiveness of Iran, and the sense of US betrayal, Saudi Arabia and its partners to the Gulf Cooperation Council are moving to enlarge this Forum to include Jordan and Morocco.

- These trends do not bode well for regional stability and security or for the hope that democracy will prevail in the region.
- Having said that – there is no alternative to a robust and constructive US and European role in the region.
 - The events have underscored that although Western projection of influence, power, and credibility in the region have diminished, there is no substitute for the US and Europe in sharing the burden in maintaining, and where necessary restoring, regional security.
 - The attempts of the Saudi leadership to play the China card are not helpful – does not seem serious. China will not fill any gap.
- Time has come for not only rethinking Western strategy in the Middle East, but also in the Western approach to accomplishing its interests – **the WHAT and HOW?**
- Paving the way to a more stable, free, and progressive Middle East with an effective and credible role of Western powers requires the forthcoming of a new

grand-strategy for the region based on three mutually reinforcing pillars:

- Political, and where necessary, military containment of the region's radical forces;
 - Fostering a gradual, phased transition process which would improve the socio-economic living conditions and provide responsive and accountable governance of the Arab Middle East;
 - Establishing a pro-peace coalition jointly led by the Western powers and the moderate and non-radical forces of the region to advance the Arab-Israeli peace process.
- Simply put:
 - without addressing the threat of radicalism there is no hope for achieving a lasting a durable peace between Israel, the Palestinians and the Arab World;
 - Democracy will not prevail if radical forces are allowed to assume political power and derail aspirations for human rights and regional security;

- Better living conditions and promoting Arab-Israel peace are a pre-requisite for mitigating the political power of radicals and fostering regional political development.
- A grand-strategy approach does not necessarily require applying the same set of policy tools across the region, but it definitely means that only a coherent approach conscious of the regional complex interdependencies and intricacies might prevail.
- In addition – ambitions have to be grounded more realistically with a clear objective in mind regional security and strategic stability –
 - While ME countries will not meet the Copenhagen criteria in the foreseeable future, this does mean that governance cannot be more effective, responsive or accountable.
 - Reaching a final comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians and the broader Arab World will not be achieved overnight – but this

does not mean that we need to stick to a binary approach of peace or no peace.

- I am aware that "stability" has become a tainted term – but there is virtue in "stability" although it has become under-rated. To be clear however:
 - Regional security and strategic stability are about the management of regional conflicts, avoiding political and military escalations, and progress towards the de-escalation and resolution of conflicts.
 - I would also go beyond and argue that the unleashing of radical forces under the pretext of free elections is not a positive or desirable outcome – not in terms of regional security or for addressing social, political and economic under-development across the Middle East.
- Arguably, the task of assuring progress in the Middle East and preventing its rapid downhill deterioration and radicalization will not be an easy or short feat for the US,

Europe and their allies in the region. The stakes however, are simply too high and warrant a paradigm change.

- Middle East strategic and political stability is a fundamental strategic interest shared by the Atlantic community and its partners in the region. This should be the basis for common action and cooperation – the potential for a **grand bargain**:
 - The US and Europe need to work to rebuild their pro-peace anti-Iran coalition with the Big GCC and Israel to achieve these objectives.
 - The US and Europe will need to reassure their allies in the region and work with them.
- But this also means that the allies in the region will have to "pitch in".
 - The Big GCC should become involved in the peace process not letting Iran's proxies take over the Palestinians. It's in their interest too.
 - The Big GCC (and hopefully Egypt if it comes around) countries should introduce reforms in exchange for

more substantial assurances from the US and Europe vis-à-vis Iran

- Israel will have to make – not talk about – concessions and credibly move ahead the peace process, with dividends to Israel also coming from the GCC.
- In short, we need a new grand bargain for the Middle East.
- This however will require NATO and the West to commit to real joint authorship with willing and able allies in the region in the process of crafting a new grand-strategy for the region.
- "Real Joint Authorship" – does not begin or end with writing up documents in Charlemagne, giving speeches at the US State Department, and issuing press statements. Rather –
 - It is a tedious process of consulting – formally and informally with partners, getting partners to work together in coordination with the US and Europe.

- There is one major experience I wish to evoke here today – the Marshall Plan.
 - This week 64 years ago, George Marshall delivered his address that became later known as the Marshall Plan.
 - The idea was intentionally presented vaguely. The most important element of the speech was the call for the Europeans to meet and create their own plan for rebuilding Europe, and that the United States would then fund this plan.
 - This would bring about the establishment of the OEEC – the first European regional organization.
 - The financial under-writing was considerable – in the course of 4 years the US donated to Western Europe via the OEEC \$13 billion in 1948 values, the equivalent of 1.25% of the GDP per annum. This was on top of \$12 billion in American aid to Europe between 1945 and 1948.
 - Not less important than the financial assistance, which was immense, the form of giving – of having

and forcing Europeans to establish a joint institution and jointly determine the allocation of resources through peer-review process and create the first-ever European civil service (small as it was) is the added value.

- Not surprisingly – the OEEC gave way to the European integration process with supranationalists forming the EC and the inter-governmentalists forming EFTA.
- As one historian pointed out – the OEEC was "the springboard" for European integration.
- This was the beauty of the OEEC. True, the financial assistance towards European reconstruction was provided to contain the spread of communism in Europe and from the Soviet Bloc.
- There was an imposition by the US but it was minimalist and constructive – forcing Europeans to agree among themselves how to share the aid.
- But the ingenuity of the model that was developed was unique and provided a real concrete added-

value in uniting Western Europe and its economic reconstruction – far more than just by doling out money.

- The lesson of this story is not necessarily to repeat this model. Quite the contrary. It is to find a suitable, ambitious but realistic model through engagement, cooperation, and when necessary cajoling. This is real joint authorship and this should inspire us all 64 years after George Marshall's original speech.

Thank you all very much.