From imperialism to failed liberal peace:
How Europe contributed to MENA's failing states system and how MENA blowback threatens Europe

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The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) area was profoundly reshaped under European imperialism, especially by the "peace to end all peace" (Fromkin 1989) imposed after WWI. The Euro-Mediterranean partnership was designed to deal with the long-term consequence: a dysfunctional regional states system whose instabilities were always liable to spill across to the north of the Mediterranean. The partnership would establish a liberal peace on Europe's Mediterranean borders via the export of economic and political reform, via soft rather than hard power, through the spread of norms by example, quite different from the failed US attempt at military hegemony, epitomized by the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Conceptual Framing: Liberalism vs. Structuralism, Soft vs. Hard Power

The EU relation to MENA allows testing of rival IR paradigms' understanding of core-periphery relations. In the liberal paradigm, EU-MENA relations can be interpreted as an attempt to use soft power to export a liberal peace through norm diffusion mechanisms such as linkage and leverage (Levitsky and Way 2005) and norm cascading (Finnamore and Sikkink 1998) that produces a benign win-win situation for both. The opposite structuralist paradigm, including Neo-Gramscianism (Cox 1996) and world systems theory (Arrighi and Silver 2001), sees norm export as an instrument of the global hegemon's attempt to establish the dominance over the periphery of the world capitalist core's finance capital. The equivalent of soft power in this paradigm, ideological hegemony, is merely the ideational superstructure of hard power, rooted in economic dominance, and backed up by military intervention where needed. It is moreover, part of what Clark (2001) depicted as an attempt to reverse the power diffusion from the spread of sovereignty to the periphery under de-colonialization so that, rather than a win-win outcome, various forms of resistance in the periphery may lead to "imperial overstretch" (Burbach and Tarbell 2004; Marshall 2016) in which the core incurs high costs, including "blowback" on itself of the turbulence in the periphery that precipitates (Johnson 2004). Moreover, contradictions between the use of hard and soft power, and in the norms exported, e.g. between neo-liberalism and democracy, may debilitate the core's drive into the periphery. Europe fits into this paradigm if one envisions a "collective hegemon", led by the US, but partnered with Europe, in which a certain division of labour is agreed in MENA, with the US specializing in hard power and the EU in soft power.

Indeed, this chapter will show that despite Europe's benign self-image, the distinction between the European and American projects was only ever one of degree. The asymmetric hub-and-spokes relations created by the Euro-Med project reproduced the power imbalance between core and periphery and served European interests first, much as structuralist approaches expect. The thrust of the Euro—Med partnership, namely the parallel export of neo-liberalism (with its associated inequalities) and the attempted export of "democracy," helped to precipitate the Arab Uprising. This "imperial overstretch" resulted in the spread of both failed and more repressive states, rather than a liberal peace, and led to a spillover (blowback) of the consequences—

mass migration and terrorism—across European borders that threaten the very survival of the EU. What went wrong?

From European Imperialism to Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The Heritage of European Imperialism

If the Middle East's dysfunctions now afflict Europe, the origins of those dysfunctions go back to the profound reshaping of the region under the impact of European imperialism. Arbitrary boundary drawing by Britain and France permanently fragmented the region into a multitude of weak and insecure states, grossly violating regional identity, generating several enduring border conflicts and stateless peoples, sources of enduring irredentism. Israel, a colonial settler state established under British auspices at the expense of indigenous people, was bound to be rejected; yet its unmatched network of strategic depth in the West made it the dominant regional military power. The region was incorporated into a global economic division of labour, as the break-up of the large Ottoman market snapped regional interdependencies and its economic links were reoriented to the imperial core (s). The concentration of much of MENA's enormous oil wealth in tiny Western client states ensured those countries exported capital surpluses to the West while larger MENA states with the land and labour potential for diversified economies lacked capital.

The Western powers faced nationalist resistance from the outset, but did not depart without a struggle. In the Suez war of 1956 Britain and France, together with Israel, attacked Nasserite Egypt; the standard-bearer of Arab nationalism that had led resistance to the West's attempt, under the Baghdad Pact, to sustain control of the region. But the war so aroused nationalism that it led, instead, to Europe's political recession from the region, ultimately culminating in Britain's 1974 military withdrawal from the Gulf. This left, from the viewpoint of the West, a "vacuum" which the US gradually began to fill.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP)

While withdrawing militarily from the region, European states, notably France and Britain, retained interests there and Europe as a whole was affected by growing interdependencies with MENA and needed, therefore, to remain engaged with it. The 1970s Euro-Arab Dialogue was a response to the oil crisis that threatened European economies and which several European states sought to alleviate through arms for oil trade. Energy security continued central to European relations with MENA: in 1995 of the 9.6 million bpd of oil imported by Europe 5.5 (57%) came from MENA (Marr 1998; Hollis 1997; Holden 2010). Geographical proximity exposed Europe to flows of migrants from its southern Mediterranean neighbourhood, thought likely to greatly increase if growing youth unemployment in the region was not addressed thorough economic development. In 2016 about 13 million foreign-born immigrants and over 20 million Muslims in total lived in Europe and made up four to five percent of its total population (Hackett 2016); the EU has sought to secure the cooperation of MENA governments in containing such flows. In the mid-1990s there was alarm at the anti-Westernism aroused in the south of the Mediterranean but also among European Muslims by the 1990 Gulf war. The Algerian civil war precipitated European fears of a spill-over of instability to the north: failed states, stagnant economies and civil wars were seen as a source of refugee flows, drug trafficking, and terrorism. As the EU gradually came into being as a collective actor with its own identity, it became ambitious to reassert Europe's influence over its MENA near neighbourhood, both to enhance its economic

advantages in the area against competitors, and to stabilize the region by projecting the "normative" power of a liberal peace (Tonra and Cavatorta 2007; Youngs 2004).

The centrepiece of Europe's effort was the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) launched by the 1995 Barcelona Declaration between Europe and southern Mediterranean states, with the avowed aim of transforming the Mediterranean region into an area of shared prosperity, hence stability. The heart of the scheme was a cross-regional free trade zone that, in the EU's liberal paradigm, was expected to generate prosperity that would dilute radicalism and conflict. Security challenges emanating from the southern Mediterranean were seen as deriving from economic and political failures in MENA that could be pre-empted through socio-economic reforms launched in cooperation with MENA countries (Youngs 2003). It was also expected that economic and political liberalization would foster each other and the scheme at least nominally made aid and trade conditional on political reform.

The Internal Contradictions of the EMP

While the EMP was supposed to generate prosperity in the partner nations, in the immediate term, it actually worsened the conditions of trade for MENA (Joffe 1998: 66-68). Europe's trade agreements with MENA states in the pre-neo-liberal 1970s had granted them preferential access to European markets for some of their industrial and agricultural products, (Salame 1998: 35) and MENA states were allowed, reflective of their lower levels of development, to protect their own industries. EMP agreements not only required the opening of MENA markets to European industrial exports (and those of Europe-based US multinationals) but also committed MENA countries to the global trade regime, e.g. on services and protection of intellectual property rights, that favours the north. The only improvement for MENA was slightly increased EU quotas for its agricultural exports (Miller and Mishraf 2005; Marks 1998; Parfitt 1997; Nienhaus, 1999).

The EMP gave MENA partner countries 12 years to dismantle their tariffs and accorded them financial aid to upgrade their industries so they could compete on the wider market and also to ease the balance of payment deficit that was expected in the transition period when European exports to the region would be more competitive than indigenous production. MENA economic takeoff would, it was argued, be facilitated by forcing its industries, through tariff reductions and technical assistance, to move from Import Substitute Industrialization (ISI) to industrial export strategies. Privatization of state owned industries was also encouraged. The requirement that MENA states increase administrative transparency and an investor-friendly regulatory framework was expected to encourage investment in the region. Nevertheless, the elimination of tariffs and barriers for EU industrial exports damaged MENA small and medium-sized businesses (60% of Morocco's and 30% of Tunisian's industries were not expected to withstand European competition) (Schumacher 2004). MENA exports to the EU did increase but Europe's exports to the region grew faster, at an annual average of 8 percent since the mid-1990s (Schumacher 2010); the EU ran a trade surplus with its southern partners in the years since 2000. As for investment, the EMP was expected to divert it to the EU since under the hub-and spokes arrangement, investors in the EU hub now got access to MENA partners, too (the spokes), while investing in the spokes would not give access to other spokes in the absence of a MENA free trade zone, which the hub and spokes system discouraged. In practice, North Africa and the Gulf region together accounted for only 3 percent of European Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) outside the EU in 2003-2008 (Schumacher 2010: 13) In the first decade of the EMP, 1994-2005, the

average income of the south as percentage of the north *declined* slightly to 18.1%. As Joffe (1998: 66-8) observed, no economy has ever developed under the economic openness the EMP mandated.

Rather, its actual effect was to generate crony capitalism. Regimes used neo-liberal discourse and pressures from the EU and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to legitimize privatization and structural adjustment as the inevitable responses to the demands of globalization. Privatizations of public sectors were used to legitimize appropriation of public assets by ruling elites and their families and cronies, thereby turning public into private monopolies. Tellingly, IFI's held up as models of good governance Tunisia and Egypt, where the cronies of Gamal Mubarak and the Ben Ali family took advantage of their pressures for privatization to turn public sector assets into private monopolies.

For Dostal (2009), the underlying problem of the Euro-Med project was the EU's post-Cold War adoption and export of neo-liberal ideology, with its stress on a market that favours corporations at the expense of the Social Charter; this was a reflection, Grahl (2004) argued, of the dominance of business interests over the EU that was naturally replicated in EU external policy toward MENA. Arguably the EMP was an instrument through which Europe, was acting, together with the US and IFIs, as part of a "collective hegemon," deploying a combination of incentives and pressures to force MENA states to open their economies to Western capitalist penetration, and to extend the structural power of core capital over the periphery (Holden 2010: 15; Cavatorta and Durac 2010:8).

MENA's acceptance of this suboptimal outcome reflected the process by which the partnership was constructed: the EU negotiated agreements individually with each southern partner rather than collectively (and separately from the Gulf countries, with their greater bargaining leverage); this reflected the fragmentation of MENA countries which, producing similar low value added products, saw each other as competitors and sought privileged individual bargains with the EU. As in other prisoner's dilemma games, all got worse deals than had they acted together. The effect of the EMP was therefore to reconstruct and institutionalize an economic regime reflective of the dominance of the world economic core and the dependence of the periphery.

This economic trajectory ensured that there would be a sharp disconnect between the rhetoric and reality of political reform. Hyde-Price (2006) argues that the EU operates as a realist actor, promoting its interests irrespective of the values it espouses in principle; hence, primacy is given to the economic side of partnership agreements while democratization and human rights are neglected. Indeed, the neo-liberal generation of crony capitalism in MENA had generated *less* inclusionary authoritarian regimes: ruling coalitions were re-structured, with older populist (labour and peasant) constituencies marginalized. Democratization was deterred because the masses that pay the cost of neo-liberal policies could be empowered by it, possibly bringing Islamist governments to power (Guazzone and Pioppi 2009). Authoritarian regimes were needed to implement free trade agreements and other neo-liberal policies against the resistance of MENA populations (Tonra and Cavatorta 2007; Cavatorta and Durac 2010: 7-8; Kienle 1998). And, Teti (2012) argues, the democratization ostensibly urged by the West was of the "thin" variety compatible with neo-liberal globalization--which had limited regional appeal--while Islamic versions and re-distributory forms of governance were discouraged.

The Atlantic Partnership Debilitates the Mediterranean Partnership

If the economic provisions of the Mediterranean partnership explain part of what went wrong, the partnership was also spoiled at the political level by Europe's increasing complicity in US policy in MENA. In spite of the European origins of many of the current problems of the Middle East, regional opinion had seen Europe as benign compared to the US. However, the EU's regional image declined as its policies converged with those of the US.

  As Europe's dominance of the region ended, the US increased its military presence, relying considerably on hard power against hostile states such as Libya under Qaddafi and Iraq under Saddam Hussein. Europe, although much more dependent than the US on MENA for trade and energy, relied on America's military power to provide regional security and protection of oil supply routes (Marr 1998). Yet the MENA policies of the US, specifically its bias toward Israel and its military interventionism, antagonized the region and stimulated or exacerbated the periodic regional crises from which Washington then claimed to protect its allies. Europe was seemingly "caught," according to Salame (1998), between MENA and US. For example, the success of political cooperation among the Euro-Med partnership countries was predicated on the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict--which was expected in the wake of the Oslo Accord; but the failure of the peace process blocked such cooperation (Aliboni 2010). There was widespread frustration in the Arab world that the EU could not balance the pro-Israeli bias in Washington that allowed Israel to evade a land for peace settlement. Another key episode was the 2003 US-mounted regime change in Iraq, in the face of opposition in much of Europe that, in destabilizing the region, inflicted high costs on Europe. And what made Europe's alignment with the US dangerous at home was America's unpopularity with the some 12 million European Muslims. However, Europe lacked the cohesion to be a unified actor capable of tempering US policies, as was brutally exposed by its division over the 2003 Iraq war which made a shambles of Europe's common foreign and defense policy; on the contrary, Europe became ever more implicated in US MENA policy, with important consequences for European priorities toward MENA.

  As a consequence of the blowback from US policy, democratization as an EU priority was increasingly eclipsed by security concerns, which led European states, particularly Britain and France, to sustain close alignments with pro-Western authoritarian states, notably Egypt because of its peace with Israel and its self-representation as a bulwark against Islamic radicalism. After 9/11 and the bombings in London and Madrid, the stress shifted further toward security cooperation with southern Mediterranean regimes against the common "terrorist" threats from radical Islamists, despite rhetorical insistence that political reform was needed to attack the roots of terrorism (Seeberg 2010: 299-300: Hollis 2012). EU democracy promotion was seen in the Mediterranean south as a rhetorical tool selectively applied against regimes that defied the West: thus, rigged elections were accepted in Egypt and Algeria and condemned in Iran and a fair election in the Palestinian territories was rejected because it brought Islamists to power. This was widely seen as reflecting a preferential treatment of regimes that were friendly with the US and Israel or in which Europe had oil interests (Idris 2010). Moreover, Europe was drawn, through its membership in NATO, into American occupation regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan and enlisted in the US war on terror. Europe's remaining "soft power" appeared at risk owing to its involvement in what was seen as a war on Islam in Middle East public opinion. Generally a dynamic was created wherein blowback resulting from US-led

interventionism in MENA drove the US and Europe closer together over the resulting threats of terrorism (Schumacher 2010). Far from becoming more critical of the costs of US policy, Britain and France's 2011 intervention in Libya seemed to express a desire to imitate American-style regime change via hard power (air bombing at little risk of casualties for their own forces but substantial "collateral damage" in the target society).

Europe and the Arab Uprising
The Euro-Med partnership was supposed to have helped prevent the instability in MENA's neighbourhood that erupted with the Arab Uprising. But Europe bore some responsibility for encouraging the Uprising and its post-Uprising policies proved ineffective in containing its fallout. What might be called the EU's post-sovereignty outlook had a role in provoking the Uprising while the destabilizing consequences of the Uprising has propelled a European move away from this outlook.

The European Role in the Arab Uprising
In certain indirect ways, Europe, together with the US, played a role in encouraging the Arab Uprising. In spite of European security alignments with some of the region's authoritarian governments and the EU's actually very tepid push for democratization (as compared to their more robust insistence on economic neo-liberalism), the post-sovereignty discourse coming out of Europe, encouraged by the EU's own apparently successful move beyond sovereignty, greatly underestimated and devalued the indispensible role of states in a globalized world, even non-democratic ones, and lacked sufficient appreciation of the costs of state failure.

At both official and NGO levels the *rhetoric* of democracy promotion was unrelenting. Transnational advocacy networks for human rights proliferated in the Euro-Mediterranean area over the two decades of the EMP (Feliu 2005). Activists trained by US and EU government funded democracy promotion campaigns and Western NGOs helped prepare the climate for the Arab Uprising. Although originating in America, the so-called non-violent resistance paradigm, popularized by Gene Sharp (Arrow 2011) publicized the techniques by which activists could use non-violent protest to provoke the collapse of authoritarian regimes; it played some role in inspiring the techniques of the Arab Uprising. Also, Europe, inspired by its own move away from national sovereignties, was in the vanguard of the normative shift away from an "international society" based on sovereign equal states to one wherein sovereignty was made conditional on "good governance" and on states' fulfilment of their "responsibility to protect," with human rights violations justifying intervention—all as judged and implemented by the Western great powers. The "responsibility to protect," doctrine conveyed the misapprehension to dissident activists in MENA that the West would be obliged to intervene should repression exceed certain limits and the Libyan intervention reinforced this illusion. These post-sovereignty discourses were spread within MENA civil societies via Internet technology, which played a key role in encouraging the middle class anti-regime political mobilization that spearheaded the Arab uprisings. Thus, even as the neo-liberalism promoted by the West reduced MENA authoritarian states' ability to satisfy the welfare of mass publics and widened inequalities inside MENA societies, the parallel democratization and post-sovereignty discourses helped de-legitimize their authoritarian governance among many citizens. The immediate consequence of the contradiction between the neo-liberal economics and democratization sides of the Euro-Med partnership produced exact opposite as the

EMP ostensibly intended—the widespread de-stabilization of the MENA regional states system.

European policy toward the uprising states was quite inconsistent from the point of view of the values Europe claimed to promote (democracy, responsibility to protect), but perfectly understandable as a reflection of geopolitical interests. Thus, in pro-Western Egypt and Tunisia European governments only abandoned presidents when it was clear they were on the way out and in Bahrain, they remained silent on the Saudi/Khalifa repression of protestors; by contrast, traditionally anti-Western Libya, where the Qaddafi regime had no allies to protect it, was the target of military intervention while anti-Western Syria, which did have powerful allies, was targeted with economic sanctions (Held and Ulrichsen 2014).

Libya: The Libyan intervention exposed cleavages within the EU as Britain and France ignored the objections of Germany and of Italy, which had seen Qaddafi as key to controlling migration. The rapid mission change from humanitarian protection of civilians to regime change, along with the rebuffing of the attempted African Union mediated political settlement, exposed the motives of London and Paris: the desire to empower friendly clients who would grant oil or reconstruction contracts. The 3000 sorties flown by European states in Libya cost millions of euros but resulted in a failed state that gave jihadist al-Qaida avatars fertile ground to establish themselves in North Africa. The spillover of the crisis in Mali soon drew France into a policing operation from which it could not easily find an exit and which made it a target for terrorism. The Libyan civil war unleashed a massive migrant flow, but although Tunisia and Egypt opened their borders to some half a million refugees, the 45,000 headed for Europe precipitated attempts to stop the flow (Koser 2012); Italy and Malta, which had opposed the intervention, bore the costs for the ambitions of London and Paris. Libya had been a bulwark against immigration from Africa and had provided work opportunities that dried up after Qaddafi, diverting work seekers to Europe (BBC 2015). Finally, the intervention ruined the international climate for the "Responsibility to Protect" Doctrine (R2P) since the Western misuse of the UN humanitarian resolution that Russia and China had acquiesced in, to serve geopolitical interests, alienated these great powers, who had a strong interest in defending the norm of sovereignty against Western expansion in MENA at the expense of the multi-polar world order they sought.

Syria: the Syrian Uprising began as a mobilization of protestors against a repressive authoritarian regime. The West's discourse of democratization (and financial support for dissidents) had helped generate exile groups that, at an early stage, promoted the uprising. Moreover, the possibility of external military intervention shaped both opposition and regime strategies as protests turned into an uprising: the discourse of humanitarian intervention encouraged the opposition to think that the regime could not bring the full force of its repressive capabilities against protestors without provoking foreign intervention, an expectation that kept alive both their resistance and their unwillingness to compromise. External activists told those on the ground, pointing to the Libya no-fly zone, that "the international community won't sit and watch you be killed."(Seeyle 2011) This encouraged Syrians to risk their lives and to eschew the compromise with the regime needed for a pacted transition. The Libyan intervention gave further momentum to the revolt. The regime, for its part, accelerated its repression in the hope of denying the opposition control over parts of Syrian territory that could be used, as in Libya, as a staging ground for outside intervention.

The EU's response to regime repression was to slap sanctions on Syria, ostensibly to deter the regime from further repression, but which actually made things

worse for Syrians. Western sanctions on Syria's oil sales helped debilitate the regime's capacity to fund state institutions and to maintain its control over wide swaths of the country but did not similarly debilitate the regime, per se, which found alternative funding sources, e.g. in Iran.

As the same time, as the West raised the discourse of the international criminal court, regime elites realized that, their bridges burned, there was no way back: they would have to stick together and do whatever it took to win. In parallel, Russia and China, antagonized by the West's use of a UN humanitarian resolution to promote regime change in Libya moved to protect Syria from a similar scenario. While the West in consequence proved unwilling to directly intervene militarily to end the war on Western terms (exit of Asad), the US, with support from Britain and France continued to insist that Asad had to go and either directly or via the Gulf monarchies, provided large amounts of game-changing weaponry, notably anti-tank weapons, much of which was transferred to militant Islamist groups. They seized control of significant parts of Syrian territory and prevented the regime from recovering territorial control; the stalemate and failed state thus produced would otherwise have been quite unlikely.

This vacuum was soon filled by the Islamic State that incorporated territory from two states, Syria and Iraq, whose governments the Western powers had directly or indirectly debilitated. IS soon became a magnet for European Muslims who travelled to Syria to join jihadist groups fighting Asad. Ironically, this led the Syrian government's UN delegate to accuse the West of exporting terrorists to Syria. "It's hard to believe that a terrorist who leaves Paris, London, Brussels…and arrives in Syria without a visa, without a passport, through dozens of states and the Turkish-Syrian border, has done so without intelligence services overseeing these operations." (http://www.euronews.com/2016/04/19/we-re-victims-of-european-terrorism-says-syria-negotiator-basharja-afari/). The well-grounded fear in European capitals was that their radicalized citizens would return home to carry out terrorist attacks at the bidding of IS and this fear was soon realized in Paris and Brussels. In parallel, a massive flow of Syrian refugees began to swamp Europe's borders.

Europe was split on how to respond to the Syrian crisis: while Germany and most other Europeans countries stressed the need to work with Russia to promote a political solution, London and Paris held to their demands for Asad to go; without having any means to effect such an exit, their stance only encouraged continued intransigence and stalemate in Syria. Given that they carried far less of the Syrian refugee burden than other European states, especially Greece and Germany, not to mention the fact that these two ex-imperial powers bear heavy responsibility for the initial creation of a dysfunctional Levant--their stand was bound to damage European unity.

European Policy toward the Post-Uprising Crisis
The EU promised a major rethink of its policies toward MENA after the Uprising exposed their flaws. Past support for authoritarian regimes was acknowledged to have been a mistake and henceforth the "3Ms"—money, market access and mobility for MENA states—were to be conditional on their movement toward democratization. In practice, this was overtaken by events such as the failure of Egypt's democratic transition. Little conditionality was enforced and, as a result of Europe's economic recession, little funding provided to assist democratization. More than this, Western dominated IFIs set out to use the economic crisis in MENA countries such as Egypt, to reinforce demands for austerity, thereby undermining the conditions for

democratization and indeed, stability in the Mediterranean south. The EU had no alternative approach except more of the same combination of neo-liberal economics and exhortation of political democratization that had helped de-stabilize MENA in the first place. (Teti 2012: Issac 2012; Balfour 2012)

However, as what had begun as a Middle East crisis soon became a European one, as failed states in MENA generated massive refugees flows and became breeding grounds for terrorism, EU policy shifted to containment of the blowback in Europe. Initially, there was broad public sympathy in Germany, Sweden, and Austria for the plight of the refugees. However, in mid-2015 a mass inflow of asylum seekers threatened internal political stability. Europe's capacity for joint action to manage the crisis rapidly fell behind the surge in migrant numbers, sparking recriminations among EU members; front-line states such as Italy or Greece had to absorb the influx that Germany's Chancellor Merkel's public welcome to refugees had encouraged. Following the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels in 2015-16, fear that migrant flows would harbour terrorists led to further securitization of the refugee issue (Lehne 2016). The ability to control borders is a key attribute of sovereignty and nationhood, and, as Walt put it, if Europe cannot control access to its own territory, it will not be able to control its political fate either: "The danger is migration that alters local communities too rapidly and appears to be beyond the control of local, national, or EU-level authorities." (Walt 2016)

Faced with this threat, a new European consensus emerged that the flow of refugees had to be controlled by reinforcing the EU's external border. Funding increased for "humanitarian containment"—the use of aid to care for refugees in the Middle East, notably Syria's neighbours, to prevent a their spill-over into Europe. Border and coastguards were beefed up. Europe also sought agreements with bordering states to close migrant channels across their territory; in the most important such agreement that of the EU and Turkey, initialled in March 2016, Ankara committed to take back immigrants that transited Turkey to Greece and the EU to accept an equivalent number of asylum seekers up to 72,000 and to liberalize visas for Turkish citizens traveling to the EU (Youngs and Gutman 2015; Koser 2012; Lehne 2016).

Ironically, the crisis unleashed by the Arab uprisings soon threatened the very survival of the EU. European states began trying to take back some of the sovereignty they had delegated to the EU, in the first place over borders, the main symbol of sovereignty. The migrant crisis threatened the Schengen Agreement on open borders, "one of the EU's singular accomplishments (as well as a tangible symbol of unity)", as Walt (2016) observed. It encouraged the growth of right-wing populist parties that so effectively tapped into and mobilized both anti-migrant and anti-EU sentiment across Europe that mainstream parties were also forced to take stands against mass migration. Growing Eurosepticism fuelled by the migration crisis was most extremely manifested in the campaign for Britain's exit form the EU, which seriously threatened the European project. The European states that had started by belittling the sovereignty claims of MENA states, now struggled to reclaim their own under pressures emanating from MENA.

Conclusion

Britain and France exported the Westphalian states system to the Middle East but in a flawed form that had conflict and instability built into it. As Europe shed its imperial past, the US assumed the role of world hegemon, deploying hard power to contain Middle East conflicts and to secure the region's oil. Europe sought, thru the EMP, to

export its experience of economic integration and democratization as an alternative solution to MENA's instability (Youngs 2004). In practice, the EMP aimed less at partnership than at assimilation of the south to the neo-liberal practices of the north, thereby promoting the reconstruction of the hub and spokes structure typical of imperialism. Increasingly, too, Europe became a partner in the project of US hegemony over the region.

The contradictions in European policy, between the fostering of crony capitalism and of regime de-legitimizing democratic discourses, and between partnership with MENA and with a Washington whose policies exacerbated MENA instability, largely nullified any stabilizing effect that EMP might have had. Moreover, the post-sovereignty discourse disseminated from Europe fundamentally misread the situation in the southern Mediterranean. The Arab Uprising showed that democracy (or more precisely democratic capitalism) can only be exported at great risk of destabilizing fragile states; that such social engineering is quite beyond the capacity of external powers; and that the regional state, authoritarian or not, is the only bulwark against anarchy—civil war, mass migration and terrorism. Western policies were decisive in creating, within roughly a decade, three failed states in Iraq, Libya, and Syria. These failed states (as earlier in Afghanistan) then became the sites of "blowback," posing the dual threats of terrorism and mass migration—and in consequence threatening the very survival of the European project.

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