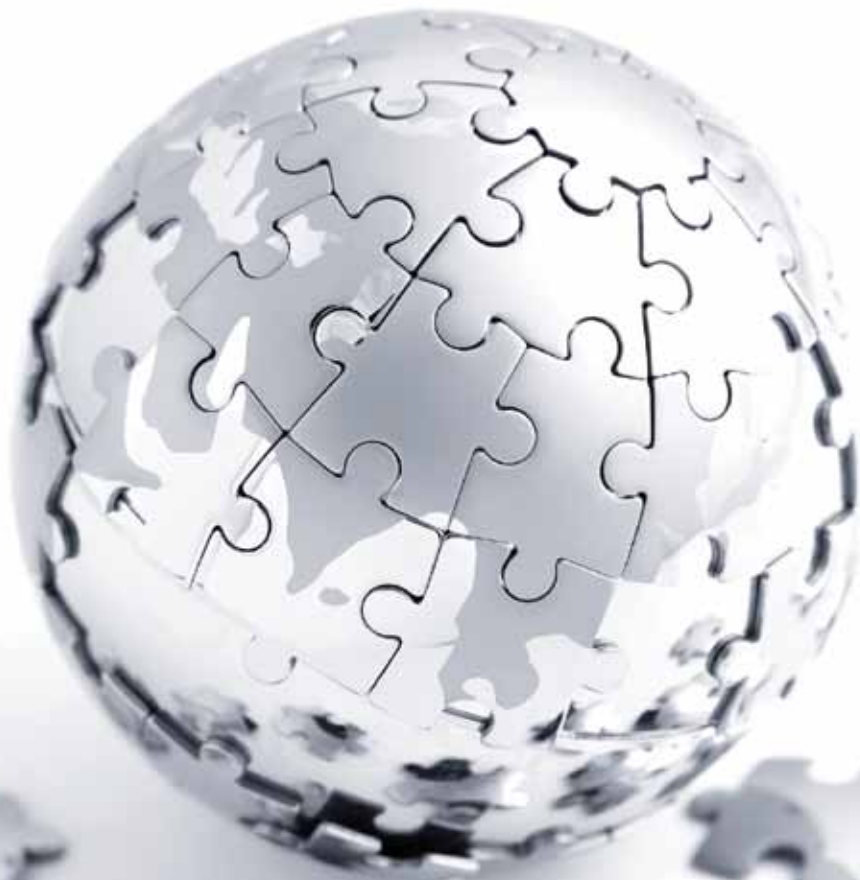


# Rising Democracies and the Arab Awakening:

Implications for Global Democracy  
and Human Rights

Ted Piccone

Emily Alinikoff



Managing Global Order

January 2012

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# INTRODUCTION

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As the emerging global order takes shape, debate is growing more intense around the trajectory of the rising powers and what their ascendancy to positions of regional and international influence means for the United States, its traditional allies, and global governance more broadly. Commentary about these rising powers—often referred to in a generic way as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) but actually encompassing a dozen or so countries largely represented in the G-20—ranges from alarmist to sanguine.<sup>1</sup> Pessimists argue that China, with its impressive economic growth and increasingly global reach, is well-positioned to challenge the United States' role of global superpower and to weaken the commitment of other rising powers, and various international organizations, to liberal values. More optimistic analysts insist that the rise of middle powers, most of which are democracies of varying stripes, bodes well for the world: millions are being lifted out of poverty, rule of law is taking hold and the international system is bound to be a more inclusive, representative one.

Each of these narratives holds some truth. It is in principle a net positive and a success story of the post World War II system that these states are growing stronger and more integrated in the global architecture. As China impressively expands its economic reach, its model for growth—one that has embraced elements of capitalism and a growing middle class while retaining authoritarian powers and repressing dissent—has become increasingly attractive to other developing countries striving to improve their economic performance, and a counterpoint to the so-called Western model of democratic development.

It is misleading, however, to suggest that the rise of emerging powers is inevitably a threat to the predominant Western democratic success story. A group of these rising powers—namely India, Brazil, and South Africa, acting at times under the IBSA banner, along with Indonesia and Turkey, a group we collectively refer to as IBSATI—are making impressive economic strides, including expanding middle classes, while simultaneously consolidating their own democracies and expand-

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<sup>1</sup> For recent commentary on the implications of the ascendancy of emerging powers, see: Jorge G. Castaneda, "Not Ready for Prime Time," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2010; Daniel M. Kliman, "Brazil, Turkey and the Rise of the Democratic Rest," *World Politics Review*, May 24, 2010; Walter Russell Mead, "Terrible Twins: Turkey, Brazil and the Future of American Foreign Policy," *The American Interest*, June 5, 2010; Fareed Zakaria, "Rising Powers Need to Rise Up," *The Washington Post*, September 27, 2010; Stewart Patrick, "Irresponsible Stakeholders? The Difficulty of Integrating Rising Powers," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2010.

ing the rights of their citizens. All five are members of the G-20, the leading group of major economies, all of which also happen to be democracies, with the exception of China, Russia and Saudi Arabia. Leaders and activists around the globe are looking to these states as relatable models of economic and political success, opening new opportunities for influence. This is especially true in the context of the Arab Spring, where transitional states increasingly are looking to emerging democratic powers for assistance and advice. Turkey and Indonesia, as large Muslim-majority democracies, play a potentially crucial role in this regard. For those in the West, and elsewhere, concerned with the future trends of global attention to democracy and human rights, it is critical to understand how these new, rising powers incorporate democracy and human rights into their foreign policies.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, while they all share a common identity and sense of pride at having emerged triumphant from the dark days of authoritarian, military, racist and/or colonial rule, each of these states has unique histories and associations with democracy and human rights and each will incorporate these values into its foreign policy differently. All five articulate a strong belief in the value of democracy and human rights as a principle of foreign policy and have signed on to a long list of treaties, charters, declarations and communiqués politically binding them to honor such values at home and abroad. Similar to established democracies, however, these rising powers behave inconsistently and unpredictably when it comes to applying these principles to concrete cases. Like any other country, they are primarily concerned with national security, economic growth and regional stability and carefully and cautiously weigh the costs and benefits of raising democracy and

human rights issues bilaterally or multilaterally against these primordial interests.

As they seek to play a bigger role on the global stage, policymakers face a new set of challenges arising from their own domestic situations. Internal democratization coupled with globalization in trade, migration and communications is opening foreign policy decisions to wider attention and scrutiny and presenting governments with more difficult tradeoffs. Within the complexity of this decision-making environment, it is important to learn if and how democracy and human rights fit into these states' conceptions of national interests as they ascend to positions of regional and international influence.

To better understand how these states have performed on international democracy and human rights challenges in the last five to ten years, we have undertaken an analysis of their approaches on such issues in their own regions as well as their reaction to the widespread demands for democracy and human rights in the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> A review of how these states have performed regionally is a logical starting point for understanding what place democracy and human rights have in their foreign policy. After all, these states are considered—and consider themselves—leaders in their own regions. We then review their responses to the dramatic and unfolding events of the Arab Spring to provide further insight into how they incorporate values in their foreign policies in real time, and how they may address these issues in the future.

We conclude with some core findings that help distinguish their individual and collective approaches from the other leading actors in this

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<sup>2</sup> This is the central question of the Brookings Foreign Policy project on emerging democracies' foreign policies, launched in April 2011. For a report of the inaugural conference, co-hosted with the International Forum for Democratic Studies, please see: [http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2011/06\\_human\\_rights\\_piccone.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2011/06_human_rights_piccone.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> For a comparison of their approaches to democracy and human rights issues at the United Nations, see Ted Piccone, "Do New Democracies Support Democracy? The Multilateral Dimension," *Journal of Democracy*, October 2011.

field, namely: their strong support for sovereignty and non-intervention in internal affairs, their preference for mediation and “constructive engagement” over condemnation and isolation, their deep antipathy to military intervention in the name of protecting or promoting democracy, their demand for greater equity in global governance and complementary resistance to initiatives led by established powers, and their willingness, in varying ways, to offer support to transitioning democracies, as demonstrated in

the Arab Awakening. Within this group, the IBSA states act as straddlers between traditional powers in the West and their southern, non-interventionist colleagues, a stance akin to Indonesia’s, while Turkey is moving closer to a more robust stand for democratic change in its own neighborhood. For all five, there is a growing insistence on regional organizations as the frontline responders to political crises in their neighborhoods, a position that reinforces their own agenda for regional leadership.



## BRAZIL: PRINCIPLED AMBIGUITY

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Brazil's evolution from a relatively quiet, inward-looking and defensive foreign policy posture to a more assertive regional and increasingly global player has coincided with its considerable domestic progress on democracy and human rights. Indeed, Brazilian diplomats often point to Brazil's democratic consolidation and economic progress as key factors in their growing credibility, legitimacy and influence on the international stage.<sup>4</sup> When it comes to using such influence to support democratic change abroad, however, Brazil has played an ambiguous and somewhat unpredictable role, with both positive and negative examples. On the occasional episode when support for democracy or human rights abroad coincides with higher priority goals like consolidating regional leadership, protecting business interests or winning a seat on the UN Security Council, Brazil tends to favor multilateral strategies that lean toward pro-reform outcomes. More typically, as in the cases of Iran, Cuba and Honduras, Brazil under President Lula and his hand-picked successor, Dilma Rousseff, has taken a more ideological or soft-balancing approach, relying on a traditional defense of national sovereignty and demands for global governance

reform. Brazil's policy response to the Arab Spring has demonstrated this latter tendency more than the former.

As Brazil emerged from 21 years of military dictatorship in 1985, it began to incorporate a concern for democracy in its foreign policy, supporting or leading efforts to further the cause of democratic transitions in its region through multilateral institutions like the Organization of American States (OAS), the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur) and the Rio Group. President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2003), who also served as foreign minister from 1992 to 1993, was the principal advocate for using Brazil's growing leverage to advance political reforms in the region, for example through adoption of democratic criteria for Mercosur membership.<sup>5</sup> Throughout Cardoso's presidency, Brazil responded swiftly to overt interruptions of democracy in Paraguay, Guatemala, Venezuela and Ecuador both bilaterally and by supporting OAS, Rio Group and Mercosur diplomatic initiatives to restore constitutional rule during periods of political crises in neighboring countries. It fell back to a more non-interventionist position, however, in responding

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<sup>4</sup> See *Brazilian Foreign Policy: Present and Future*, ed. Liberdade e Cidadania Foundation 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "Democracy as a Starting Point," *Journal of Democracy* 12:1 (2001), pp. 5-14; also "Brazil and a New South America," *Valor*, 30 August 2000.

to the manipulation of electoral processes in Peru in 2000, a case which did not clearly trigger the anti-coup mechanism of the OAS.<sup>6</sup>

President Lula (2003-11), on the other hand, took a more opportunistic and inconsistent stand in favor of democracy and human rights abroad, often driven by ideological interests. Given the orientation of his leftist supporters, and the desire to expand commercial and trade ties in the region, Lula and his advisors favored closer relations with Cuba and Venezuela, despite entrenched and deteriorating situations of human rights in both countries. In 2009, Brazil led a campaign for Cuba's unqualified readmission to the OAS regardless of Havana's failure to meet the organization's democracy-related criteria for membership. It pushed hard for Venezuela's entry into Mercosur, again without regard to the democratic standards of the organization and despite some domestic opposition in the Brazilian Senate.<sup>7</sup> It joined with Venezuela in creating the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), a regional integration scheme that until 2010 largely ignored democracy and human rights as a condition for membership. And while Brazil quickly joined regional condemnation of the military coup in Honduras in 2009, it acted in a manner that may have aggravated the crisis, for example by giving shelter to ousted President Manuel Zelaya as he attempted, unsuccessfully, to retake his position in the presidential palace. Brazil's decision to rally UNASUR against recognizing a new Honduran government, despite being chosen through free and fair elections, had the effect, or perhaps the intent, of

weakening the OAS (and the United States) and its leadership role in resolving democratic crises.

Brazil played a positive role in leveraging its leadership in UNASUR to mediate violent political conflict in its neighbor, Bolivia, the source of nearly all its natural gas imports.<sup>8</sup> In the midst of raging protests between the central government and the resource-rich eastern lowlands, Lula pushed for strong language in support of Bolivian President Evo Morales' government at a UNASUR summit in September 2008 while simultaneously pressuring Morales to negotiate with his opponents. Brazil also succeeded in thwarting Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's attempts to provide military support to La Paz and to insert anti-U.S. rhetoric in the final declaration.<sup>9</sup> Brazil's handling of the situation had at least three positive outcomes for Lula: magnifying Brazil's leadership role in UNASUR, demonstrating the value of multilateral approaches to political crises, and quieting a serious security situation on its border.

Brazil's regional and global leadership role in the area of democracy and human rights is also evident in Haiti where it has led the UN peacekeeping mission since 2004. Brazil's commitment to leading international security and reconstruction efforts in Haiti provides currency for its campaign for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council but also may reflect domestic pressures to find viable missions for its military in a region of relative peace.<sup>10</sup> It has also lent important support to the ongoing challenge of political reforms in the country. Regardless, Brazil has paid a price for its

<sup>6</sup> Piccone and Herman, *Defending Democracy: A Global Survey of Foreign Policy Trends, 1992-2002*, Democracy Coalition Project (2002), pp. 56-60.

<sup>7</sup> Reuters, "Brazil's Senate Approves Venezuela in Mercosur," 15 Dec 2009, <http://af.reuters.com/article/energyOilNews/idAFN1523614120091215>, accessed 1 April 2011.

<sup>8</sup> While natural gas comprises only eight percent of total Brazilian energy consumption, 96 percent of it comes from Bolivia. For more information, see: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Background Analysis on Brazil*, January 2011. Available at <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=BR> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Marcelo Ballve, "Lula Steps In: Brazil Fills Vacuum Left by American Disengagement," *World Politics Review*, 18 Sept. 2008, [www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/print/2673](http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/print/2673), accessed 14 March 2011.

<sup>10</sup> *The Economist*, "Policy, not Altruism: How Global Ambitions Are Helping to Modernise the Army," September 23, 2010.

efforts to stabilize Haiti along a democratic path, especially after the horrific earthquake of January, 2010 in which it lost 17 personnel, and deserves credit for sticking with the mission.

In the context of the Arab Spring, Brazil has taken a largely hands-off, non-interventionist approach. Any action Brazil has taken or endorsed has been multilateral in nature, with a strong preference for south-south cooperation and against external interventions. When uprisings began in January 2011, Itamaraty (the Foreign Ministry) took a soft, nuanced stance, expressing hope that states experiencing protests “will follow a path of political evolution that meets the expectations of their people in a peaceful environment, bereft of foreign interference, so as to foster the ongoing economic and social development.”<sup>11</sup> From the onset, Brazil made it clear that political transitions should reflect the domestic will and not be dictated by foreign intervention. In the same statement, Itamaraty expressed its prioritization of economic interests, concluding that “Egypt is an important Mercosur partner (a free trade agreement was signed in 2010).”<sup>12</sup> Policy statements out of Brasilia did not mention the word “democracy” until it was clear that Mubarak’s days as leader were numbered. A week before he stepped down, Itamaraty reaffirmed Brazil’s “solidarity and friendship toward the Egyptian people and expect[ed] that this moment of instability be overcome shortly under a framework of institutional and democratic improvement in Egypt.”<sup>13</sup> A few days later, President Dilma Rousseff signaled that Brazil supported the democratic movement, saying that the

government “looks upon the Egyptian issue with much expectation, and hopes that it may become a democratic country.”<sup>14</sup> After Mubarak relinquished power, Itamaraty declared that Brazil “expects the political transition in that country to be carried out while upholding the political and civil liberties and human rights of the population.”<sup>15</sup>

When Brazil’s Foreign Minister, Antonio de Aguiar de Patriota, visited Cairo in May 2011, Egypt’s transition seemed to be a footnote to other economic and diplomatic discussions. The foreign ministers reportedly discussed ongoing events in the region but Patriota, unlike his counterparts from India or Turkey, met only with Egyptian government officials and not with leaders of the opposition or civil society. The Brazilian Foreign Minister reportedly sought support from the Egyptian government, as well as from the Arab League, for Brazil’s candidate to head the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In relation to Egypt’s transition, Itamaraty expressed solidarity with Egypt, explaining that “Brazil is Arab, as it houses many representatives of the Arab community. We went to Egypt to support the transition process. We made contact so that Brazil may cooperate more with Egypt.”<sup>16</sup> Brazil’s unwillingness publicly to raise democracy and human rights in the context of this visit is consistent with its broader low-profile and skeptical approach on these issues. In the Egyptian case, this reticence is at least in part due to Egypt’s growing economic significance for Brazil. In 2010, Egypt became the second non-Latin American partner to sign a Free Trade Agreement with Mercosur and rose to

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<sup>11</sup> Brazilian Ministry of External Relations, “Situation in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen,” note 31, January 28, 2011. Available at: <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/sala-de-imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/situacao-no-egito-na-tunisia-e-no-iemem> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Brazilian Ministry of External Relations, “Situation in Egypt,” note 41, February 2, 2011. Available at: <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/sala-de-imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/situacao-no-egito-1> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Sebastiao Martins, “Brazil,” Pulsamerica, February 2, 2011. Available at: <http://www.pulsamerica.co.uk/?p=3514> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Brazilian Ministry of External Relations, “Political Situation in Egypt,” note 54, February 11, 2011. Available at <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/sala-de-imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/situacao-politica-no-egito> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> *BBC Monitoring Latin American*, “Brazil foreign minister visits Egypt; urges Arab support for UN FAO candidate,” May 10, 2011.

become Brazil's third largest African trading partner overall and the single largest African consumer of Brazilian goods.<sup>17</sup>

To the extent it engages on human rights, the Brazilian government's preferred approach is to emphasize economic, social, and cultural rights, like the right to food. During visits to the United States and Italy in early June, for example, Brazil proposed that its contribution to international efforts to seek a peaceful solution to crises in the Middle East and North Africa would consist of agricultural and income transfer programs.<sup>18</sup>

In the tumult of 2011, Brazil tried to walk a line between supporting UN actions intended to protect civilians while abstaining or resisting the authorization of use of force. Brazil initially supported UN actions in Libya then abstained on the use of force, a view that has intensified in the case of international condemnation of Syria. In between these two episodes, however, it did join unanimous consent by the Security Council for UN forces in Côte d'Ivoire to use "all necessary means" to protect civilians caught up in post-election violence.<sup>19</sup> In line with its preference for regionally-led efforts, Brazil emphasized during the vote that "efforts by the African Union and other regional actors in [Côte d'Ivoire] deserve our strong support."<sup>20</sup>

In the case of Libya, Brazil joined unanimous consent in the Security Council to invoke the responsibility to protect civilians, extend sanctions and refer the situation to the International Criminal Court. It abstained, however, on the Security Council's second resolution that authorized force and a no-fly zone. Brazil's explanation of vote was carefully worded to explain that it was not opposed to intervention in principle but that it could not support the resolution's authorization of force. The statement further explained that Brazil understood and was sensitive to the Arab League's call for strong measures to stop the violence through a no-fly zone but was worried that force, as outlined in the resolution, could have "unintended effects of exacerbating tensions on the ground and causing more harm than good to the very same civilians we are committed to protecting."<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the statement explicitly cautioned that Brazil's abstention should not be interpreted as a "disregard for the need to protect civilians and respect their rights."<sup>22</sup> Brazil's non-committal position fell short of its own earlier view, expressed by Foreign Minister Patriota during a trip to India just ten days before the Security Council passed the resolution, that Brazil "will support the international intervention in Libya only if UN approves" it.<sup>23</sup>

Like India, Brazil's objection to the NATO intervention, particularly the way in which it was

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<sup>17</sup> Brazilian Ministry of External Relations, "Minister Antonio de Aguiar to visit Egypt," note 179, May 6, 2011. Available at <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/sala-de-imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/visita-do-ministro-antonio-de-aguiar-patriota-ao-egito-2013-cairo-7-e-8-de-maio-de-2011> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> Brazil-Arab News Agency, "Brazil Wants to Aid in Arab World Crisis," June 7, 2011, Available at [http://www2.anba.com.br/noticia\\_diplomacia.kmf?cod=11983586&indice=50](http://www2.anba.com.br/noticia_diplomacia.kmf?cod=11983586&indice=50) (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1975, March 30, 2011, para. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Statement by H.E. Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, *The Situation in Côte d'Ivoire*, March 30, 2011. Available at [http://www.un.int/brazil/speech/11d\\_mlr\\_v\\_Cote\\_Ivoire-explanation-vote.html](http://www.un.int/brazil/speech/11d_mlr_v_Cote_Ivoire-explanation-vote.html) (Accessed December 19, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Statement by H.E. Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, *The Situation in Libya*, March 17, 2011. Available at [http://www.un.int/brazil/speech/11d\\_mlr\\_v-on-situation-in-libya.html](http://www.un.int/brazil/speech/11d_mlr_v-on-situation-in-libya.html) (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*; for more information on Brazil's stance on protection of civilians, see *Responsibility while Protecting: Elements for the Development and Promotion of a Concept*, Annex to the letter dated 9 November 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN addressed to the Secretary-General, official UN Doc: A/66/551-S/2011/701.

<sup>23</sup> *BBC Monitoring Latin America*, "Brazil makes intervention in Libya conditional on UN approval," March 7, 2011.

interpreted as a mandate for regime change, largely influenced its unwillingness to condone UN action on Syria. As violence escalated in Syria in April 2011, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry “denounce[d] the use of force against unarmed demonstrators [and] note[d] that the legitimate desires of the peoples of the Arab world must be met with inclusive political processes and not with military force.”<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the Brazilian Government reaffirmed that it was the responsibility of the UN Security Council and regional bodies like the African Union and the League of Arab States to address the impact of political crises in the Middle East and North Africa.<sup>25</sup> This reflects Brazil’s preference for South-South solidarity, multilateral action and an inclination to defer to regional bodies to resolve conflicts, a stance that neatly serves their own purposes as leaders of UNASUR. Brazil’s message only slightly hardened when Assad ramped up violence in July and August. Aside from expressing “its repudiation of the use of force against civilian demonstrators,” Brazil expressed concern “that Syria has not fulfilled commitments made publicly with regard to the right to demonstrate and the right of expression, and calls on the Syrian Government to move forward with the national dialogue and political reform process with utmost urgency.”<sup>26</sup>

Despite professed indignation over violence against civilians, however, Brazil failed to support a proposed Security Council resolution to condemn Syria. In fact, Brazil was largely seen

as working to soften tough language proposed by European governments and even advocated for dropping a provision calling on the Assad regime to permit press freedom.<sup>27</sup> This resistance to Security Council action was in large part due to disappointment with the perceived misuse of the Security Council resolution that authorized force in Libya. Its subsequent support for the first special session on Syria in the UN Human Rights Council in April 2011 underscored its preference for a non-military UN response. Moreover, in negotiating the final text of that session’s resolution, Brazil joined several states in calling on “the international community to acknowledge the recent progressive steps and reforms undertaken by the Syrian government.”<sup>28</sup> In a similar move, Brazil requested that the Security Council’s Presidential statement on Syria include a provision “expressing concern about violent reprisals against the Syrian government and attacks against Syrian institutions.”<sup>29</sup> This Brazilian style of diplomacy is proving to be a soft one, concerned more with evenhandedness and non-intervention than condemnation or sanctions.

Brazil’s opposition to a condemnatory Security Council resolution on Syria was not only the result of frustration in the way NATO managed the Libya resolution, and an overall desire to maintain support from the global South. In recent years, Brazil and Syria have been cultivating improved economic ties. Trade volume between the two states increased by 240 percent between 2002

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<sup>24</sup> Brazilian Ministry of External Relations, “Situation in Syria,” note 161, April 25, 2011. <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/sala-de-imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/situacao-na-siria> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Brazilian Ministry of External Relations, “Actions against protesters in Hama, Syria” note 286, August 1, 2011. Available at <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/sala-de-imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/acao-contra-manifestantes-em-hama-siria> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Colum Lynch, “New U.N. bloc finds constraining the West preferable to restraining Syria,” *Foreign Policy*, August 10, 2011. Available at: [http://turtlebay.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/08/10/new\\_un\\_bloc\\_finds\\_constraining\\_the\\_west\\_preferable\\_to\\_restraining\\_syria](http://turtlebay.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/08/10/new_un_bloc_finds_constraining_the_west_preferable_to_restraining_syria) (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> International Service for Human Rights, “Human Rights Council holds special session on Syria,” May 2, 2011. Available at <http://www.ishr.ch/council/376-council/1055-human-rights-council-holds-special-session-on-syria> (Accessed December 7, 2011). The Human Rights Council convened subsequent special sessions on Syria in August and December 2011 but Brazil was no longer a member of the Council.

<sup>29</sup> Colum Lynch, U.N. Security Council condemns Syria’s campaign against protesters,” *Foreign Policy*, August 3, 2011. Available at [http://turtlebay.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/08/03/un\\_security\\_council\\_condemns\\_syrias\\_campaign\\_against\\_protesters](http://turtlebay.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/08/03/un_security_council_condemns_syrias_campaign_against_protesters) (Accessed December 5, 2011).

and 2008 alone.<sup>30</sup> On the bilateral level, the Assad government and Brazil established a joint business council in 2010 to encourage more private and public investment while on the multilateral level, Syria signed a preliminary agreement with Mercosur in December 2010 to lay the foundation for a free trade agreement.

When it came to the upheaval in Bahrain, Brazil expressed muted concern. In February 2011, the Brazilian government called on all parties to seek a peaceful resolution and “expect[ed] that Bahraini officials refrain from resorting to violence and uphold the freedom of expression and the civil rights of the population.”<sup>31</sup> A month later, and amidst increased violence, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry largely reiterated its message. In a press statement, Itamaraty called on Bahraini authorities “to engage in dialogue with the protesters and the opposition with a view of breaking current political deadlock... [and] reaffirm[ed] the need to uphold civil and political rights, as well as the peaceful right of expression of the Bahraini citizens.”<sup>32</sup> Unlike its other rising power counterparts, Brazil’s willingness to speak up on Bahrain or Syria was not constrained by energy dependence on Saudi Arabia or Iran since Brazil is relatively oil self-sufficient. It imports less than two percent of its total oil and other liquids consumption.<sup>33</sup>

Brazil’s general reluctance to criticize democracy and human rights violations in the context of the Arab Spring reflects its desire to maintain south-south solidarity and to avoid criticism of other states as it campaigns for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Its failure to stand up for these values in the context of the Arab Spring has disappointed observers who were counting on early signals from the Rousseff government that it would move away from Lula’s hands-off approach when it came to criticizing the human rights records of allies. After receiving domestic and international criticism for its overtly friendly relations with Tehran, for instance, Brasilia began to moderate its position. Lula reversed himself when he offered asylum in Brazil to an Iranian woman condemned to death by stoning for adultery. “If my friendship and affection for the president of Iran matters, and if this woman is causing problems there, we will welcome her here in Brazil,” he said while campaigning for his successor, Dilma Rousseff.<sup>34</sup> Rousseff, herself a former political prisoner, made her views clear from the start in an early interview in *The Washington Post*: “I would feel uncomfortable as a woman president-elect not to say anything against stoning. My position will not change when I take office. I do not agree with the way Brazil voted [on the UN resolution on Iran’s human rights record].”<sup>35</sup> One of her senior advisors, Marco Aurelio Garcia further declared

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<sup>30</sup> Amal Hasson, “Syria, Brazil Launch Business Council to Encourage Economic, Trade Cooperation,” *Global Arab Network*, November 20, 2011. Available at <http://www.english.globalarabnetwork.com/201011308249/Economics/syria-brazil-launch-business-council-to-encourage-economic-trade-cooperation.html> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Brazilian Ministry of External Relations, “Situation in Bahrain” note 64, February 17, 2011. Available at <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/sala-de-imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/situacao-no-bareine> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>32</sup> Brazilian Ministry of External Relations, “Situation in Bahrain” note 102, March 17, 2011. Available at <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/sala-de-imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/situacao-no-bareine-1> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Background Analysis on Brazil*, January 2011. Available at <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=BR> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>34</sup> Alexei Barrionuevo, “Brazil’s President Offers Asylum to Woman Facing Stoning in Iran,” *The New York Times*, August 1, 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Lally Weymouth, “An Interview with Dilma Rousseff, Brazil’s President-Elect,” *The Washington Post*, 3 December 2010; see also Parvin Ardalan and Hadi Ghaemi, “President Dilma: Please Keep Your Promise,” International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, 28 Feb. 2011.



that the Rousseff presidency would “emphasize human rights” as part of its foreign policy.<sup>36</sup> She fulfilled this promise in March when Brazil voted for the first time in favor of a Human Rights Council resolution criticizing Iran’s human rights record and appointing a special rapporteur to monitor the situation. More recently, however,

Brazil abstained on a UN resolution in the Third Committee condemning Iran’s human rights record, thus reverting to previous voting patterns. Overall, in the context of the Arab Spring, her government has chosen a muted approach, raising questions about its rhetorical commitment to human rights.

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<sup>36</sup> Marco Aurelio Garcia, special advisor to President Rousseff, said the President’s foreign policy will emphasize human rights in *MercoPress*, “President Rousseff’s foreign policy will emphasize human rights in South and North,” April 4, 2011. Available at <http://en.mercopress.com/2011/04/04/president-rousseff-s-foreign-policy-will-emphasize-human-rights-south-and-north> (Accessed December 12, 2011).

# INDIA: PASSIVE PROMOTER

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India, the world's most populous democracy, was a leader in the nonaligned movement during the Cold War and the anti-imperialist and noninterventionist roots of its foreign policy run deep. Yet, as it emerges as a global economic power, and a rival to China, its status as a secular, pluralist and democratically-governed state is slowly beginning to influence its behavior in multilateral venues.

At the United Nations, India, the number three contributor of troops to UN peacekeeping operations, nonetheless has scrupulously opposed or abstained from criticizing the human rights records of other states as an inappropriate intervention in internal affairs.<sup>37</sup> Its robust support to the UN Democracy Fund, and its membership in the steering committee of the Community of Democracies, reflect its preferred approach of cooperative engagement and passive promotion of democracy and human rights values. India is willing to associate itself with multilateral initiatives that support democratization in countries already on the democratic path and that actively request assistance from India or the larger international

community.<sup>38</sup> A key factor in its decision to participate in these two particular initiatives was its desire to forge closer ties with the United States, which worked hard under the George W. Bush administration to secure New Delhi's support. Like Brazil, it seeks to win a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. It also has been quick to use democracy-related forums on the international stage to distinguish itself from autocratic and corrupt regimes in neighboring Pakistan and the authoritarian capitalist model presented by China.

Apart from these two cases, examples of India's multilateral activism to support democracy and human rights in third countries are few. Its regional organization, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), created in 1985, until this year had virtually no mandate or activities related to democracy and human rights. In February 2011, however, SAARC foreign ministers adopted a Charter of Democracy that states a strong commitment to democratic governance and human rights as essential to development, inclusion and poverty alleviation.<sup>39</sup> The Charter

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<sup>37</sup> Background Note: UN Peacekeeping, pg 3.

<sup>38</sup> At the launch of the UN Democracy Fund, Prime Minister Singh stated: "India has been sharing its rich experience, institutional capabilities and training infrastructure with nations that share our values and beliefs and request our assistance. We are prepared to do much more..." quoted in Cartwright p. 420.

<sup>39</sup> South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), *Charter of Democracy*, Available at <http://www.saarc-sec.org/SAARC-Charter-of-Democracy/88/>



“renounce[s] unequivocally any unconstitutional change of an elected government in a Member State,” “encourage[s] all democratic forces in South Asia, including elected representatives of the people, to unite against any unconstitutional change in government in any South Asian country, and work towards the restoration of democracy in keeping with the SAARC Charter,” and opens the door to creation of an institutional mechanism to enforce these commitments. Initiated by Bangladesh at a time when all SAARC governments nominally are democratically elected, the Charter in theory breaks new ground in defining democracy as a requisite for membership, a standard adopted by several other regional organizations.

While there is little to suggest that India played any special role in promoting the SAARC Charter on Democracy, there is some evidence that India has used its leverage at SAARC to protest non-democratic behavior. In 2005, for example, India refused to attend the Dhaka SAARC Summit, forcing its postponement. India justified its cancellation by citing the seizure of power by the King of Nepal and concern over worsening security conditions in Bangladesh.<sup>40</sup> It was later revealed through released diplomatic cables that India’s main intent was to protest Bangladesh’s increasing intolerance and anti-Indian sentiment.<sup>41</sup>

The only other relevant international organization where India has engaged in democracy promotion is the Commonwealth of former British colonies, which for many years in principle has

required its 54 member states to uphold basic principles of democracy and human rights. India played an active role in rallying the Commonwealth to condemn coups and impose sanctions on military regimes in both Fiji and Pakistan.<sup>42</sup> India also supported the unprecedented suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth following the execution of opposition leader Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others in 1995. At the time of Zimbabwe’s election violence in 2002, India was a member of the Commonwealth’s Ministerial Action Group, charged with responding quickly to democratic backsliding among its members, but played no special leadership role when Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth.<sup>43</sup>

The case of Fiji, which has undergone a troubled period of political turbulence and military coups that pitted native Fijians against a sizable minority of Indians, put pressure on New Delhi to intervene militarily, as it did in the Maldives in 1988. It chose instead to use the Commonwealth and ASEAN to exert diplomatic pressure to demand restoration of the constitution and suspension of regional ties as long as the coup plotters remained in power.<sup>44</sup> When Fiji endured another military coup in 2006, the Commonwealth suspended it from the Councils of the Commonwealth but did not suspend its membership entirely. Meanwhile, India chose to maintain bilateral relations and avoid sanctions imposed by Australia, New Zealand and the United States.<sup>45</sup> Fiji then asked India to help with electoral and other democratic reforms, with apparently limited success. When Fiji failed to meet the Commonwealth’s 2009

<sup>40</sup> *BBC News*, “India offers any Date for SAARC,” April 24, 2005. Available at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/4479087.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4479087.stm) (Accessed April 1, 2011).

<sup>41</sup> Nirupama Subramanian, “Why India Stopped 2005 Dhaka Summit,” *The Hindu Times*, March 29, 2011, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/the-india-cables/article1579428.ece> (Accessed April 1, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> *Defending Democracy*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>43</sup> Zimbabwe hasn’t been a member of the Commonwealth since it withdrew in 2003 in protest of its suspension.

<sup>44</sup> *Defending Democracy*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>45</sup> Jan Cartwright, “India’s Regional and International Support for Democracy: Rhetoric or Reality?” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 49, No.3, p. 417 (May-Jun, 2009).

demand that the island-nation commit to free and fair elections, India joined consensus in favor of suspension.<sup>46</sup>

India's concern to beat Pakistan for regional supremacy is the key factor that explains its active role in supporting the government in Kabul against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Consonant with India's cautious support for democracy, and its desire for closer relations with Washington, it joined the international community's efforts to build Afghanistan's democratic institutions by supporting construction of the Afghan parliament building, parliamentary training, and material support for elections in addition to over \$1 billion in other forms of assistance. India also worked closely with the United States and the European Union to pressure the monarchy in Nepal to accept far-reaching constitutional changes and an eventual fall from power in favor of representative democracy.<sup>47</sup>

India is starting to find its comfort zone in speaking on the global stage in favor of democracy as a preferred foundation for international peace and cooperation while insisting that its assistance be sought and not imposed on others. In responding to the wave of demands for democracy and human rights across the Arab world, India has largely hunkered down in the noninterventionist camp, adamant that it supports democracy in principle but that it should not interfere in the affairs of other states. Shortly after Hosni Mubarak

relinquished power in Egypt, Prime Minister Singh declared that "if the people of Egypt want to move toward the processes of democratization, they have our good wishes and that's true of all countries... though we do not believe it is our business to advise other countries, we welcome the dawn of democracy everywhere."<sup>48</sup> India's largely passive response to the Arab Spring not only reflects its general approach to global democracy and human rights but should come as no surprise given its complicated economic and expatriate ties to the Middle East.

In Egypt, the Indian government categorized the uprisings as an "internal affair" and prioritized the safety of its 3,600 citizens living in the country.<sup>49</sup> Despite the escalation of protests and international calls for Mubarak to step down, India insisted that "it's up to the people of Egypt to decide whether one should stay or go. India doesn't interfere in the internal affairs of other countries."<sup>50</sup> When Mubarak stepped down, the Indian External Affairs Minister, S.M. Krishna, welcomed the decision and considered it "in deference to the wishes of the people of Egypt."<sup>51</sup> In the domestic context, India did receive some criticism for this evasive approach. Jaswant Singh, the former Minister of External Affairs and current member of the opposition party, BJP, advised that "if you sit for too long on the fence, the fence enters your soul."<sup>52</sup> An Indian Express editorial categorized the government's reaction as "severe circumspection [that] is unbecoming of a rising global power

<sup>46</sup> Commonwealth news Release, "Fiji Suspended from the Commonwealth," September 1, 2009. Available at <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/press/31555/34582/213087/010909.htm> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>47</sup> C. Raja Mohan, "Balancing Interests and Values: India's Struggle with Democracy Promotion," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2, p. 110 (Summer 2007).

<sup>48</sup> Simon Denyer, "As Middle East Erupts in Protest, India Finds Comfort on the Fence," *The Washington Post*, February 19, 2011. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/02/18/AR2011021802699.html> (Accessed August 15, 2011).

<sup>49</sup> Sify News, "Krishna describes Egypt as internal affair," February 1, 2011. Available at <http://www.sify.com/news/krishna-describes-egypt-crisis-its-internal-affair-news-international-lc4d4hajj.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>50</sup> Rahul Kanwal, "We don't take positions in crisis of this kind, says Krishna," *India Today*, February 11, 2011. Available at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story/india-does-not-take-sides-in-crisis-like-egypt-says-s-m-krishna/1/128736.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> Sandeep Dikshit, "India welcomes Mubarak's decision," *The Hindu*, February 13, 2011. Available at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article1448108.ece> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>52</sup> Simon Denyer, "As Middle East Erupts in protest, India Finds Comfort on the Fence," *The Washington Post*, February 18, 2011.

currently on the UN Security Council and aspiring for a permanent seat.”<sup>53</sup>

Since Egypt commenced its transition in February 2011, both countries have continued to bolster their bilateral relationship. In March, Foreign Minister Krishna visited Egypt where he held meetings with government officials to discuss strengthening their bilateral relationship and reiterated “India’s continued support to Egypt during its historic transition process.”<sup>54</sup> The Minister also met with opposition leader, Mohammed ElBaradai, to discuss Egypt’s democratic transition. The Egyptian Foreign Minister visited New Delhi two months later and India again repeated that it “is ready to extend all possible cooperation” as Egypt formulates its next steps.<sup>55</sup> India also extended its gratitude to Egypt for helping an estimated 16,000 Indians (of 18,000 total) evacuate from Libya amidst violent conflict.<sup>56</sup>

When it came to Libya, as suggested by the above, India’s policy was preoccupied with the safety of its nationals living in the nation. Aside from deploring the use of force “which is totally unacceptable and must not be resorted to,” Indian policy was first and foremost concerned with evacuating its citizens.<sup>57</sup> In an intensive operation that came to be called “Operation safe homecoming,” the Ministry of External Affairs mobilized to evacuate its citizens, largely via Egypt. As international forces mobilized to protect civilians in Libya, India’s non-interventionist posture tangibly

manifested itself at the UN Security Council, with the exception of Côte d’Ivoire where, like Brazil, it joined consensus in favor of the use of force to protect civilians.

As a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council at the time, India had the opportunity to cast several votes related to Arab Spring tumult. When the Council passed Resolution 1970, extending sanctions on certain Libyan officials and referring the situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC), India joined unanimous endorsement. In his explanation of vote, Hardeep Singh Puri, India’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, stressed India’s hope that calm and stability would be restored and reiterated the country’s concern for its nationals, calling for further measures to ensure the safety of the Indian population in Libya, as well as those attempting to leave.<sup>58</sup> A month later, however, India abstained when the Council passed Resolution 1973 that authorized force to protect civilians and implemented a no-fly zone. In explanation of its abstention, India insisted that political measures ought to be the primary course of action for ending the violence.<sup>59</sup> During the second Africa-India Forum in May 2011, convened in Addis Ababa, India reiterated this preference for political solutions over military interventions. The summit’s declaration took note of the Security Council resolutions and signaled that NATO forces were violating its mandate, stressing that efforts to “implement [the resolutions] should be within the spirit

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<sup>53</sup> The Indian Express, “Too guarded,” February 17, 2011. Available <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/too-guarded/751200/> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>54</sup> External Affairs Minister, Shri S.M. Krishna, Opening Remarks at the Joint Press Conference following talks with Foreign Minister of Egypt,” May 30, 2011. Available at <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530117690> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, “Indians safe in Libya – avoid non-essential travel,” February 20, 2011. Available at <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530217201> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>57</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, “India deplors use of force in Libya,” February 22, 2011. Available at <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530217211> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>58</sup> Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Explanation of Vote on the Resolution Adopted Concerning Libya, The UN Security Council, February 26, 2011.

<sup>59</sup> Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, Explanation of Vote on the Resolution Adopted Concerning Libya, The UN Security Council, March 17, 2011.

of those resolutions. In this regard, we call for an immediate cessation of all hostilities in Libya and urge the parties in the conflict to strive towards a political solution through peaceful means and dialogue.”<sup>60</sup> India further bolstered its south-south solidarity credentials by endorsing the African Union roadmap for Libya, saying that decisions related to Africa “should be left to the Africans.”<sup>61</sup>

India’s natural non-interventionist tendency, coupled with its view that the NATO mission had exceeded the confines of its mandate, made it even less inclined to act in the context of violent crackdowns in Syria. As president of the Security Council in August 2011, India oversaw the process that delivered a condemnatory presidential statement, falling short of a binding resolution. The statement called for an immediate end to violence and called on Syria to fully cooperate with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which has still failed to gain access to the country.<sup>62</sup> In explaining why the Council could not agree on a binding resolution, Ambassador Puri cited concern over the Western military coalition’s operation in Libya. To several diplomats at the Council, he explained, the mission has exceeded its mandate to protect civilians and has effectively sided with one party in a civil war, making them wary of issuing similar resolutions.<sup>63</sup> In addition, it was reported that India—along with Brazil—insisted that the Syrian gov-

ernment, too, had been a victim of armed attacks amidst protests in the country. This concern was reflected in the statement’s call to halt violence, “including attacks against state institutions.”<sup>64</sup>

As recently as December 2011, in accordance with its noninterventionist approach, India was only one of six countries to abstain from a Human Rights Council resolution that condemned human rights violations in Syria and established a Special Rapporteur to monitor the situation. Joining Angola, Bangladesh, Cameroon, the Philippines, and Uganda in abstaining, the Indian delegation said it did not believe in intrusive monitoring and preferred to engage the regime in dialogue.<sup>65</sup>

Bilaterally, India continued its relationship with the Syrian regime, displaying its preference for mediation and political dialogue. The day before Puri presented the UN Security Council’s condemnatory statement, Syria’s Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs conducted an official visit to India. According to India’s External Affairs Ministry, the Syrian Vice Minister explained the causes of violence in his country and the Assad government’s proposed reforms. Foreign Minister Krishna “urged the Government of Syria to exercise restraint, abjure violence and expedite the implementation of political reforms taking into account the aspirations of the people of Syria.”<sup>66</sup> India’s

<sup>60</sup> Indian ministry of External Affairs, Bilateral Document, “Second Africa-India Forum Summit 2011: Addis Ababa Declaration,” May 25, 2011. Available at <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530517663> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>61</sup> P R Ramesh, “India Supports African Union stand on Libya crisis,” *The Economic Times*, May 25, 2011. Available at [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-05-25/news/29581862\\_1\\_libya-crisis-african-union-africa-india-summit](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2011-05-25/news/29581862_1_libya-crisis-african-union-africa-india-summit) (Accessed December 7, 2011). In March 2011, the AU roadmap for Libya called for: immediate cessation of all hostilities; the cooperation of the concerned Libyan authorities to facilitate the diligent delivery of humanitarian assistance to the needy populations; the protection of foreign nationals, including African migrant workers living in Libya; and the adoption of political reforms necessary for the elimination of the causes of the current crisis.

<sup>62</sup> UN Security Council Presidential Statement, UN Doc: S/PRST/2011/16, August 3, 2011.

<sup>63</sup> Column Lynch, “U.N. Security Council condemned Syria’s campaign against protesters,” *Foreign Policy*, August 3, 2011. Available at [http://turtlebay.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/08/03/un\\_security\\_council\\_condemns\\_syrias\\_campaign\\_against\\_protesters](http://turtlebay.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/08/03/un_security_council_condemns_syrias_campaign_against_protesters) (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>64</sup> UN Doc: S/PRST/2011/16.

<sup>65</sup> UN News and Events, “Human Rights Council established Mandate of Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic,” December 2, 2011. Available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11680&LangID=E> (Accessed December 11, 2011).

<sup>66</sup> Indian ministry of External Affairs, “Syrian Vice Foreign Minister visiting India,” August 1, 2011. Available at <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530217893> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

willingness to receive the Syrian envoy is consistent with its preference for sustained political dialogue and its concern for maintaining leadership amongst the G-77 countries. After all, India and Syria have long enjoyed a friendly relationship in the context of the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) and India had been particularly appreciative of Syria's endorsement for its bid to become a permanent member of the Security Council.<sup>67</sup>

In recent years, these partners had made concerted efforts to increase their bilateral trade and aimed to double their current \$500 million volume. India had even made available a \$100 million line of credit to be used by Syria in sectors of mutual agreement.<sup>68</sup> Still, Syria remained India's 78<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner in 2010 so the economic relationship was by no means a critical one. On the other hand, Iran—Assad's major patron—is one of India's largest suppliers of oil and thirteenth largest trading partner.<sup>69</sup> A desire not to disturb relations with Iran may have influenced India's reticence on the Assad regime's violent crackdown. Similarly, India's close economic ties to Tehran likely influenced it to vote against the UN General Assembly's Third Committee condemnation of Iran in November 2011.

Similar circumstances and priorities influenced India's reaction to uprisings in Bahrain. Like its dynamic with Iran, India requires a stable and peaceful relationship with Saudi Arabia—Bahrain's pa-

tron and India's primary oil provider and third largest trade partner overall.<sup>70</sup> This is, of course, the case for most net-oil-importing nations and largely explains international silence on Bahrain. India, however, has the additional complication of ensuring the safety of its more than 350,000 nationals—the largest of Bahrain's expatriate communities—residing in the island nation. During a visit to India in March 2011, the Bahraini Foreign Minister Al-Khalifa reiterated the Bahraini government's concern for the wellbeing of Indian nationals. Minister Krishna expressed “hope that the peaceful resolution of all issues through dialogue would pave the way for the continued economic development and prosperity of the friendly people of Bahrain.”<sup>71</sup> In this case, India's geopolitical and expatriate concerns precluded it from criticizing the regime's crackdown. India's reaction to turmoil in Yemen was similarly fraught with preoccupation over evacuating its expatriates, estimated at 14,000 in all.<sup>72</sup>

Overall, India's response to the Arab Spring is typical of its ongoing balancing act between supporting democratic values in principle, on the one hand, and noninterventionist pragmatism, on the other. Talking to reporters in Kuwait shortly after Mubarak stepped down, Foreign Minister Krishna characterized India's willingness to assist Arab democratic transitions: “India does not believe in interfering in the affairs of another country. We will take the cue at an appropriate time depend-

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<sup>67</sup> Smita Gupta, “President's UAE tour to focus on attracting infrastructure investment,” *The Hindu*, November 21, 2010. Available at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article903906.ece> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>68</sup> SME Times News Bureau, “India, Syria aim to double bilateral trade,” November 29, 2010. Available at <http://smetimes.tradeindia.com/smetimes/news/top-stories/2010/Nov/29/india-syria-aim-to-double-bilateral-trade.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>69</sup> Government of India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Commerce, Export Import Data Bank. More information Available at <http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/Default.asp>

<sup>70</sup> For information on Syria's overall rank as India's trading partner, see the Indian Department of Commerce, Export Import Bank: <http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/Default.asp>. For information on India's oil imports, see the U.S. Energy Information Administration background analysis on India, Available at here: <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=IN>

<sup>71</sup> Indian Ministry of External Affairs, “Visit of the Foreign Minister of Bahrain to India,” March 30, 2011. Available at <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530217486> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>72</sup> Alia Allana, “No funds or Passports, many Indians stranded in Yemen,” *Indian Express*, June 9, 2011. Available at <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/no-funds-or-passports-many-indians-stranded-in-yemen/801524/2> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

ing on how they want India to help. India will be willing to be of some assistance to them.”<sup>73</sup> For the most part, and because of its complicated economic and expatriate ties to the region, India has largely lived up to this noninterventionist pledge.

It is important to note, however, India’s actions that deviated from the noninterventionist approach like its endorsement of sanctions against Libya and referral to the ICC; its abstention (not opposition) to the Libya no-fly zone and intervention; its tempered leadership on the Security Council presidential statement; and its vote in favor of the use of UN forces to protect civilians in Côte d’Ivoire. These efforts reveal that as

India ascends to a leadership role, it is delicately attempting to maintain legitimacy in the West by supporting democracy while preserving its bonafides in the NAM. It is within this context that India engaged in multilateralist efforts to sanction Libyan officials, did not block military intervention, and issued a condemnatory statement on Syria as president of the Security Council. When willing to take up democracy and human rights in the context of the Arab Spring, India has shown a preference for multilateral diplomatic approaches. Its bilateral responses have been preoccupied with its material needs, concern for Indians abroad, and economic stability.

## A Sampling of UN Votes on Human Rights and Responsibility to Protect

	Libya		Côte d’Ivoire	Syria		Iran	
	UN SC 1970 No fly zone and referral to ICC (unanimous)	UN SC 1973 Authorization of force (10-0-5)	UN SC 1975 Authorization of force (unanimous)	HRC S/18-1: Special Rapporteur on Syria (37-4-6)	UNGA 3 <sup>rd</sup> Committee: Condemnation of human rights record (122-13-44)	HRC 16/9: Special Rapporteur on Iran (22-7-14)	UNGA 3 <sup>rd</sup> Committee: Condemnation of human rights record (86-32-59)
<b>Brazil</b>	Yes	Abstain	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Abstain
<b>India</b>	Yes	Abstain	Yes	Abstain	Abstain	N/A	No
<b>Indonesia</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	N/A	Abstain
<b>South Africa</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Abstain	N/A	Abstain
<b>Turkey</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	Absent

<sup>73</sup> Sandeep Dikshit, “India can help build democracy in Arab World, *The Hindu*, February 17, 2011. Available at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article1493338.ece> (Accessed December 7, 2011).



# INDONESIA: FINDING ITS PRO-DEMOCRACY VOICE

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Indonesia's remarkable transformation from an authoritarian system to an open, pluralist democracy in just ten years has been accompanied by a similarly notable reorientation in its foreign policy from a rejection of international norms of democracy and human rights as incompatible with "Asian values" to a leader in promoting the principles and values of democracy. This story of transformation, accompanied by consistently high levels of economic growth, a growing middle class, booming foreign direct investment and internal and external peace (relatively speaking), is precisely its greatest asset when it comes to projecting its interests and values in the Asian region. Its willingness to speak directly to its neighbors about the positive effects of democracy, however, has not yet demonstrated much impact given the plethora of Asian autocracies and the consequent inability to build meaningful regional mechanisms to support democratic change. Nonetheless, Indonesia has moved its foreign policy rhetoric more in line with its domestic credentials as the world's third largest democracy. Though it primarily focuses its attention on its neighborhood, Indonesia's democratic progress, coupled with its Muslim identity, have important implications for its potential influence in the Middle East and North Africa.

After decades of exercising a brand of self-protective isolationism and hostility toward external intervention in internal affairs, Indonesia has embarked on a regional strategy of preaching the merits of democracy to its neighbors. As President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono explained in an address to the World Movement for Democracy in April 2010, democracy is entirely compatible with economic progress, Islam, modernity, and domestic peace.<sup>74</sup> "I am convinced that ultimately the 21<sup>st</sup> century instinct is the democratic instinct," he told the international gathering of civil society activists, a sentiment he and other Indonesian officials have uttered repeatedly to government leaders and diplomats throughout the region. Indonesian officials have not been shy about admitting the difficulties of their own transition but go on to underscore that the results were worth the messiness of democratic politics, a point that goes to the heart of Asian governments' reluctance to shake up the status quo.

Beyond holding itself out as a successful example of democratic transition, Indonesia has taken some concrete steps to build up regional institutions and mechanisms to gently prod other governments in the region in a democratic direction, although with limited results. Through the

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<sup>74</sup> Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Keynote Address, World Movement for Democracy, 6th Meeting, April 12 2010, Jakarta, Indonesia, <http://www.wmd.org/assemblies/sixth-assembly/remarks/keynote-speech-dr-susilo-bambang-yudhoyono>, accessed 1 Apr 2011.

Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which it currently chairs, Indonesia has fought to incorporate democracy and human rights as a commonly held value, despite most of its members (Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines) falling in the non-democratic camp. Due in part to domestic political pressure from civil society and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Caucus on Myanmar, Indonesia has taken the lead in criticizing the military junta—opposing (but ultimately agreeing to) its admission to ASEAN, winning a strong ASEAN statement condemning the junta’s violent crackdown against unarmed demonstrators in 2007 and demanding the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners, for example. More recently, Indonesia joined an ASEAN statement “welcoming” the elections held in November 2010 as “part of a process which may open up the political architecture in Myanmar.”<sup>75</sup> Other established democracies considered the elections “severely flawed” and “not compatible with internationally accepted standards.”<sup>76</sup> The office of the UN Secretary General concluded that “the voting was held in conditions that were insufficiently inclusive, participatory and transparent.”<sup>77</sup> These criticisms have recently softened as the government of Myanmar takes steps to reach an accommodation with opposition forces, particularly Aung San Suu Kyi.

After years of negotiations, Indonesia managed to get its neighbors to create the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), a new human rights mechanism, but fell short of adding a protection mandate to the

body, which is now struggling to get off the ground with meager resources. Indonesia, joined by the Philippines and Thailand and with input from civil society, failed to get consensus on granting the body the power to investigate specific abuses, but did obtain a five-year review requirement in the hopes of revisiting the matter.<sup>78</sup> It appointed a leading human rights activist, Rafendi Djamin, to the commission and sought progressive rules of procedure, but has been overruled by states like Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos whose representatives on AICHR would not even meet with the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Myanmar.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the uphill battle it faces in convincing its neighbors to recognize universal principles of democracy and human rights, Indonesia forged ahead with its own initiative to promote democracy in the wider Asian region. Launched in 2008, the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) is conceived as a way to talk about democratic principles and practices in an inclusive dialogue among equals and has drawn a significant number of heads of state and ministers, including from China. The third meeting of the BDF, convened in 2010, even welcomed several states from the Middle East including Tunisia, Syria, and Libya. Jakarta also established a counterpart “Institute for Peace and Democracy” to serve as the programmatic arm and think tank attached to the BDF. The democracy promotion community has generally applauded these initiatives, further burnishing Indonesia’s credentials as a serious leader for democracy in the region and creating ongoing pressure to sustain its own process of political reforms at home.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Armando Siahhaan, “Indonesia Praises Release of Suu Kyi, But Says Burma Far from Democracy,” *Jakarta Globe*, 16 November 2010.

<sup>76</sup> U.S. Department of State, Press Release on Burma’s Elections, November 7, 2010. Available at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/11/150517.htm> (Accessed December 7, 2011). Declaration by the High Representative Catherine Ashton on behalf of the European Union, on the elections in Burma/Myanmar, Brussels, November 7, 2010.

<sup>77</sup> Statement attributable to the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General on Myanmar elections, November 8, 2010. Available at <http://unic.un.org/imucms/yanon/80/110/home.aspx> (Accessed November 7, 2011).

<sup>78</sup> Kelley Currie, “Mirage or Reality? Asia’s Emerging Human Rights and Democracy Architecture,” *Project 2049 Institute*, p 7, December 9, 2010.

<sup>79</sup> *Id.*, p. 8.

<sup>80</sup> Currie, pp. 21-22.



One should also note Indonesia's decision to accept independence for a democratic Timor-Leste after decades of repression and violence during the Soeharto regime. A struggling, impoverished small state, Timor-Leste has received significant UN assistance in its transition to democracy. As a member of the Security Council in 2007 and 2008, Indonesia supported consensus resolutions extending the mandate of the UN Mission in Timor-Leste. In 2011, Indonesia announced its support of Timor-Leste in its bid to become a member of ASEAN.<sup>81</sup> It is important to point out, however, that the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation—a bilateral reconciliation mechanism established by Indonesia and Timor-Leste in 2005—has been criticized by local and international human rights groups for providing amnesty for serious perpetrators, mainly Indonesian security forces.<sup>82</sup>

Outside of its neighborhood, Indonesia has been markedly less willing to take the rhetorical initiative on democracy and human rights. In the context of the Arab Spring, it has been ready to share lessons learned from its own transition only when prompted. When detailing its experience, Indonesia does so with candor and pride, explaining that the path to democracy was full of challenges that persist but that its success is testament to peaceful co-existence of Islam and democracy. After Hosni Mubarak stepped down in Egypt, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang had his ambassador in Cairo deliver a letter to the head of the ruling military council to share “messages,

views, and recommendations” based on Indonesia's experience.<sup>83</sup>

According to Indonesian Foreign Minister Natalegawa, Egypt “requested our assistance on the process of organizing an election and setting up regulations on political parties... the process is ongoing now but we have to do it wisely so that it doesn't seem as though we're preaching to them.”<sup>84</sup> This sensitivity that it not be seen as the tutor on democratic transitions reflects its noninterventionist tendencies and, in part, its recognition that its own transition has been a difficult one. In the context of the Arab Spring, President Yudhoyono has even gone as far to say that “our reform is actually painful” and that Indonesia subsequently is in no position to lecture Egypt.<sup>85</sup> Recognizing its own difficulties and continued challenges will likely make Indonesia an even more compelling model for transitioning countries in the Middle East. Instead of lecturing from an ivory tower, it can commiserate over challenges and provide experienced guidance about how to overcome setbacks.

After the Indonesian Foreign Minister visited Cairo in April 2011, the two states engaged in several activities to help inform the Egyptian transition. In May 2011, for instance, the Indonesian Embassy in Cairo hosted a conference on democratic transitions in partnership with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs. Among the topics discussed were the role of Islamist parties, the impact of democratic transition on foreign

<sup>81</sup> *The Jakarta Post*, “Indonesia Supports Timor Leste's ASEAN Membership,” March 22, 2011. <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/03/22/indonesia-supports-timor-lestes-asean-membership.html>

<sup>82</sup> *Justice Delayed, Justice Denied*, Amnesty International's submission to the UN's Universal Periodic Review on Timor-Leste, October 2011; *International Crisis Group*, “Managing Tensions on the Timor-Leste/Indonesia Border,” Asia briefing no. 50, May 4, 2006. Available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/timor-leste/b050-managing-tensions-on-the-timor-leste-indonesia-border.aspx>. (Accessed December 8, 2011).

<sup>83</sup> Lynn Lee, “Can Indonesia Help Egypt Find a Path to Reform?” *The Jakarta Globe*, February 17, 2011. <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/can-indonesia-help-egypt-find-a-path-to-reform/423172>

<sup>84</sup> Ismira Lutfia, “Egypt Asks for Indonesia's help in Implementing Democracy,” *The Jakarta Globe*, March 29, 2011. <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/egypt-asks-for-indonesias-help-in-implementing-democracy/432215>

<sup>85</sup> Vickie Walton-James, “Indonesia's President: Democratic Reform is ‘Painful,’” *NPR Newsblog*, May 19, 2011. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2011/05/19/136459947/indonesias-president-democratic-reform-is-painful>

policy, and freedom of the press. The Indonesian Charge d'Affaires offered an honest assessment of the fruits and difficulties of political transition: "Democracy poses a tough challenge. With the recognition of freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Indonesia, the Government of Indonesia is now expected to be more prudent in dealing with social-political strife and conflict that may occur as the price to be paid for establishing democracy."<sup>86</sup> In line with Indonesia's collaborative approach, the event welcomed keynote speeches from the ambassadors from Brazil and Poland so that attendees could learn from various experiences.

In other Arab Spring countries, Indonesia has been less active but has displayed a similar willingness to share its knowledge if asked. Hesitant to take an official policy position during protests in Tunisia, Indonesia agreed to assist with elections after Tunis requested help. When it came to UN action on Libya, Jakarta, which did not sit on the UN Security Council at the time, walked a fine line between interventionism and sovereigntism in its public statements. On the one hand, the Indonesian government demanded "UN to take action and reduce the intensity of the problem in Libya."<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, and as violence escalated, the president said that Indonesia had "rejected the use of force from the beginning because of the danger it posed to civilians."<sup>88</sup> In April 2011, Turkey and Indonesia together called for a cease-

fire, made commitments to help rebuild the country, and explained that it will not be "possible to have a closed regime [in Libya] ... democracy will come to this region and people in Libya should not suffer anymore."<sup>89</sup> In their joint statement, they "stressed the importance of the preservation of the sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity of Libya" and called for a UN presence to monitor any truce.<sup>90</sup> This dual approach was also apparent in Indonesian activism. More than ten thousand protestors rallied peacefully in Jakarta in March 2011 to condemn NATO airstrikes and demand Qaddafi step down.<sup>91</sup>

When it comes to Syria, Indonesia did not express criticism until violence escalated to a breaking point. After the Hama massacres in August 2011, the Indonesian government broke its silence: "The use of force will never solve problems. There's a need for a dialogue to reach a peaceful solution."<sup>92</sup> This relatively benign response is consistent with reactions elsewhere in the region and reflects its disinclination for name-and-shame tactics. Given its quiet response, Indonesia's support for the Human Rights Council's special session on Syria in August 2011 and the Council's subsequent establishment of a Special Rapporteur in December 2011 came as surprises.<sup>93</sup>

Indonesia's silence on Bahrain can be largely understood as an attempt to avoid tension in the Gulf, a region that houses millions of Indonesian

<sup>86</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, "Democracy Transition: Momentum for Strengthening Indonesia-Egypt," May 25, 2011. <http://www.deplu.go.id/Pages/News.aspx?IDP=4822&l=en>

<sup>87</sup> Camelia Pasandaran, "Indonesia Demands UN Intervention in Libya," *The Jakarta Globe*, March 2, 2011. Available at <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/indonesia-demands-un-intervention-in-libya/426165> (accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>88</sup> Camelia Pasandaran, "Indonesia Appeals for Cease-Fire in Libya," *The Jakarta Globe*, March 29, 2011. Available at <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/indonesia-appeals-for-cess-fire-in-libya/432211> (accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>89</sup> *The Jakarta Globe*, "Turkey, Indonesia Call for Ceasefire in Libya," April 5, 2011. Available at <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/turkey-indonesia-call-for-ceasefire-in-libya/433604> (accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>90</sup> *The Jakarta Globe*, "Turkey, Indonesia Call for Ceasefire in Libya."

<sup>91</sup> *The Boston Globe*, "Indonesian Muslims protest Gadhafi, international strikes," March 27, 2011. Available at [http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2011/03/27/indonesian\\_muslims\\_protest\\_gadhafi\\_intl\\_strikes/](http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2011/03/27/indonesian_muslims_protest_gadhafi_intl_strikes/) (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>92</sup> Mustaqim Adamrah, "Indonesia urges Assad to stop violence," *The Jakarta Post*, August 2, 2011. Available at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/08/02/indonesia-urges-asaad-stop-violence.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>93</sup> In August 2011, Indonesia joined 33 member states in supporting UN Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC /S-17/L.1 that condemned human rights violations in Syria. In December 2011, Indonesia joined 37 member states in supporting UN Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/Res/S-18/1 that established a Special Rapporteur on Syria to monitor the deteriorating situation.

migrant workers. There are more than one million Indonesian workers in Saudi Arabia, for instance, as well as a significant population of workers in Bahrain itself.<sup>94</sup> Like India, Indonesia will navigate its relations in the Gulf, and the Middle East more broadly, with utmost concern for the wellbeing of its own citizens and economic implications of overseas labor, not unlike other democracies with their own sets of pressing security and economic interests. Indonesia has had infamous tension already with Saudi officials over treatment of migrant workers; this strain came to a head in August 2011 when Indonesia put a moratorium on sending more workers after one of its citizens was beheaded for murder.<sup>95</sup>

Aside from concern over its expatriate population, Indonesia is likely concerned with its growing trade ties in the region as well. Trade with Egypt increased from \$900 million in 2009 to \$1 billion in 2010 and trade with Tunisia has increased by nearly 30% from \$54.5 million in 2009 to nearly \$70 million in 2010.<sup>96</sup> In addition, Indonesia has been exploring ways to increase bilateral trade with Syria.<sup>97</sup> As one of the largest oil producers in Asia, Indonesia largely relies on its own oil production though it has increased imports in recent years to satisfy growing domestic demand.

Imports from the Middle East make up only seven percent of Indonesia's total fuel imports and 12 percent of its crude oil portfolio.<sup>98</sup> These are small numbers considering that Indonesia imports only 15 percent of its total consumption but if its domestic production continues to decrease, as expected, Indonesia would likely increase its energy ties to the region.<sup>99</sup>

Underlying Indonesia's general willingness to share lessons from its own political transition is pride in its democratic identity. President Bambang explicitly acknowledged in a recent interview that "Indonesia can be a model where Islam and democracy exist hand in hand, with no contradiction between the two."<sup>100</sup> He specifically advised that leaders in the Middle East and North Africa could learn from his country's reform process which forced the military to relinquish political power and improve respect for democracy and human rights. Indonesia enjoys geographic distance from the Middle East and a relative lack of complicating geopolitical interests, ostensibly providing more space to raise democracy and human rights. Its preferred approach so far in the Arab region has been to share its knowledge when asked and be careful not to preach.

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<sup>94</sup> Kathy Quiano, "After beheading, Indonesia stops sending workers to Saudi Arabia, CNN, June 27, 2011. Available at <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/06/22/indonesia.migrant.workers/index.html> (accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>95</sup> Sara Schonhardt, "Indonesia Imposes Moratorium on Sending Workers to Saudi Arabia," *Voice of America*, June 24, 2011. Available at <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/asia/southeast/Indonesia-Imposes-a-Moratorium-on-Sending-Workers-to-Saudi-Arabia-124490609.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>96</sup> *The Egyptian Gazette*, "Cooperation talks with Indonesia," April 14, 2011. Available at <http://213.158.162.45/~egyptian/index.php?action=news&id=17170&title=Cooperation%20talks%20with%20Indonesia> (accessed December 7, 2011); Veeramalla Anjaiah, "Tunisians celebrate freedom from colonialism," *The Jakarta Post*, March 22, 2011. Available at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/03/22/tunisians-celebrate-freedom-colonialism.html> (accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>97</sup> Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Indonesia and Syria to Step up Bilateral Ties," March 22, 2011. Available at <http://www.deplu.go.id/Pages/News.aspx?IDP=4543&l=en> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>98</sup> *The Jakarta Post*, "Middle East unrest not likely to affect RI oil supply," March 2, 2011. Available at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/03/02/middle-east-unrest-not-likely-affect-ri-oil-supply-evita.html> (accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>99</sup> Energy Information Administration Statistics and *International Energy Agency – Oil Market Report*, p. 28 Indonesia was net oil exporter until 2004 when domestic demand surpassed its production. Its domestic production is expected to decrease.

<sup>100</sup> *CNN World*, "Indonesia's President: 'We can be model for Islam and democracy,'" June 15, 2011. Available at [http://articles.cnn.com/2011-06-15/world/indonesia.president.yudhoyono\\_1\\_indonesia-president.suharto-islam-and-democracy?\\_s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-06-15/world/indonesia.president.yudhoyono_1_indonesia-president.suharto-islam-and-democracy?_s=PM:WORLD) (Accessed December 7, 2011).

# SOUTH AFRICA: ACTIVIST MEDIATOR, CONFLICTED INTERVENTIONIST

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Ironically, while South Africa's record on promoting democracy and human rights appears principled in many ways, it is perhaps the most disappointing case among the five. Its remarkable peaceful transition from apartheid to constitutional democracy, with the help of various facets of the international community, under the inspiring leadership of Nelson Mandela, raised high expectations that South Africa would privilege international solidarity in support of other peaceful democratic movements both in and outside of Africa. In fact, when faced with tough choices, South Africa's four post-apartheid presidents usually have aligned themselves with nationalist impulses, pan-African and south-south solidarity, and neutrality vis-à-vis autocratic regimes. Faced with entrenched economic and social challenges at home, South Africa prioritizes relations that help it address domestic priorities like rural development, creation of decent jobs and crime prevention.

On paper, South Africa's foreign policy claims to be inspired by core values of democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law. The African National Congress (ANC), as early as 1993, set forth six pillars that on paper have evolved into the main principles of the government's foreign

policy, including respect for human rights, promotion of democracy, respect for international law and international peace and security.<sup>101</sup> In seeking to reintegrate itself into the global governance system, the ANC's South Africa also declared a strong preference for multilateralism, with priority placed on its special role in southern Africa and the rest of the African continent. It remains especially sensitive to shed its apartheid-era reputation of regional hegemon, an image reinforced ironically by Mandela after aggressive attempts to reverse democratic crises through economic and military interventions in Lesotho in 1994 and 1998 and in Nigeria in 1995.

In practice, South Africa's brand of multilateralism has privileged continental unity and championed the cause of developing countries at the United Nations and other international bodies, often at the expense of finding common ground with developed countries more inclined to favor international action over the status quo. South Africa's preferred role as mediator in several conflicts on the continent—Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and others—also has led them to avoid taking sides in internal political disputes. This is evident even when the region's governments have agreed to recognize the winner

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<sup>101</sup> Nelson Mandela, 'South Africa's Future Foreign Policy' in *Foreign Policy* 72(5), 1993.

of contested elections, as in Côte d'Ivoire in 2010, or when its own interests in preventing migration flows would suggest a heavier hand in containing regime-sponsored violence, as in neighboring Zimbabwe.

When it comes to endorsing international initiatives aimed at stabilizing internal or cross-border conflict, South Africa has regularly voted in favor of UN or regional interventions and deployed military and police personnel in support of such peacekeeping missions. When it served on the UN Security Council in 2007-08, for example, it endorsed all seven resolutions related to creating or strengthening mandates on Sudan. Likewise, it supported all 13 Security Council resolutions relating to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including extending the arms embargo. South Africa has also been a stalwart promoter of incorporating progressive standards of good governance and human rights in regional instruments such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism, the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

In specific cases of multilateral action relating to democracy and human rights, however, South Africa's record demonstrates the difficulties of reconciling its stated principles with its practice. South Africa's pursuit of quiet diplomacy to address Zimbabwe's ongoing political and human rights crisis offers a telling example of this paradox.<sup>102</sup> Throughout Mbeki's term, South Africa used SADC to pursue negotiated outcomes that de facto favored the hardline regime of Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party, ideological brothers-in-arm during the apartheid years. In June 2001, for example, South Africa and SADC sent observers

to monitor the polls but remained largely silent in the face of electoral violence perpetrated by the Mugabe government. In the 2002 presidential elections, Mbeki diplomatically warned against the prospect of flawed elections and, with Malawi and Mozambique, chastised Mugabe for the rise in political instability, yet strongly opposed the sanctions proposed by domestic constituencies and Western governments. Despite the flawed process, SADC and South African observers concluded the elections were "substantially free and fair."<sup>103</sup> Under pressure from his Commonwealth colleagues, Mbeki reluctantly conceded to a one-year suspension of Zimbabwe from the organization. He then tried unsuccessfully to remove the Secretary General as a show of protest and invested his efforts instead in mediation toward a government of national unity.<sup>104</sup>

To be fair, South Africa was not alone, at least within SADC, in favoring quiet diplomacy over public condemnations, despite Zimbabwe's flagrant disregard of AU, SADC and NEPAD principles. Given Mbeki's personal involvement in mediating the crisis on behalf of SADC, however, and with few results to show for the efforts, he bore the brunt of the domestic and international criticism for the deteriorating situation. Even with the negotiated government of national unity, brokered by Mbeki in the wake of dramatic electoral violence committed against the opposition's leaders and supporters in 2008, South Africa's international credibility has emerged wounded from the affair.

In the matter of Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa's policy follows a similar pattern of early condemnation of unconstitutional interruptions followed by a preference for neutrality for the sake of

<sup>102</sup> James Hamill and John Hoffman, "Quiet Diplomacy' or Appeasement? South African Policy toward Zimbabwe," *The Round Table*, vol. 98, No. 402, 373-84 (Routledge Press, June 2009).

<sup>103</sup> Herman and Piccone, *Defending Democracy*, pp. 178-79.

<sup>104</sup> A number of African states, including Botswana, Zambia, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Kenya and Rwanda, roundly criticized the 2008 Zimbabwean elections. Hamill and Hoffman, p. 377.



mediation. South Africa condemned the coup that led to the overthrow of democracy in Côte d'Ivoire in December 1999 and joined a ten-nation OAU effort to increase diplomatic pressure on the military regime to give up power. In 2005, after years of conflict that killed thousands of people and left millions homeless, Mbeki helped broker a peace deal through a series of talks hosted in Pretoria. One of the thorniest issues in the negotiations was the eligibility of opposition politician Alassane Ouattara to compete for the presidency against President Laurent Gbagbo.

Five years later, Côte d'Ivoire again erupted in flames after elections in which UN, African and other international observers declared Ouattara the winner. South Africa, faithful to its preference to remain as a neutral arbiter, claimed the elections were “inconclusive.” “Our view is that we don't demand that one leader should go,” stated President Jacob Zuma in an effort to protect its role as a leading mediator in the crisis.<sup>105</sup> South Africa, represented on the AU mediation body by former President Mbeki and President Zuma, drew criticism from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and human rights groups for placing a South African warship offshore and putting forward proposals that departed from the West African, EU, and UN consensus that Ouattara should be declared the victor.<sup>106</sup> “South Africa's involvement thus far—in mediating the Ivorian conflict—raises profound questions about whose interests it is pursuing... Sadly the evidence suggests that Pretoria's sympathies are ambiguous at best, and at times publicly lean toward defending Gbagbo,” according to Human Rights Watch.<sup>107</sup> Its rivalry with Nigeria for regional leadership was also a factor in South

Africa's demand for a negotiated settlement. In the face of overwhelming pressure to address the spreading conflict, including from other African states, South Africa reluctantly voted for the UN Security Council resolution authorizing use of force to protect civilians and dislodge Gbagbo from his heavily guarded hotel room.

As evidenced by these two prominent episodes on the continent, South Africa appears to have a strong preference for playing the role of African arbiter, muting concern for democratic principles in favor of negotiated settlements of apparent incremental change but few results.

When it comes to recent upheaval in the Middle East and North Africa, South Africa again showed its preference for African-led mediation efforts and to a lesser extent internationally sanctioned intervention. However, when these two approaches are at odds—as they were in Libya—the pan-African solidarity instinct won out.

In Tunisia and Egypt, South Africa remained largely on the sidelines before changes in leadership in each country. Unwilling to take a position before Mubarak relinquished power, the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation issued a statement calling on the “government and people of Egypt to seek a speedy and peaceful resolution to the current crisis.”<sup>108</sup> After Mubarak stepped down, however, President Zuma signaled that he endorsed the decision, saying that the Egyptian strongman's departure showed he had “thought like a leader” and would allow Egyptians to “pick up the situation and build a government that will be based on the will of the people.”<sup>109</sup> He reiterated South

<sup>105</sup> *All Africa*, “Zuma Looks to AU to Solve Côte d'Ivoire Crisis,” January 21, 2011. Available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201101240029.html> (Accessed December 27, 2011).

<sup>106</sup> Bashir Adigun, “Ecowas Criticises SA Warship off West Africa,” Mail and Guardian Online, 9 February 2011.

<sup>107</sup> Siphokazi Mthathi, “President Zuma Should Be on the Side of Justice in Ivory Coast,” *The New Age (South Africa)*, 22 February 2011.

<sup>108</sup> South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), Media Statement on the situation in Egypt, January 31, 2011. Available at <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2011/media0131.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>109</sup> *Mail and Guardian Online*, “Zuma: Mubarak made correct decision,” February 11, 2011. Available at <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-02-11-zuma-mubarak-made-correct-decision> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

Africa's support for homegrown political transitions in his State of the Nation address later that month, explaining that "we firmly believe that the course and the content of the transition as well as the destiny that these sister countries choose, should be authored by them. In this regard, South Africa lends its support to efforts aimed at introducing and implementing political reforms that will ensure a smooth and peaceful transition in Tunisia and Egypt."<sup>110</sup>

South Africa's response to Libya illustrated its inconsistency in responding to revolutions and regime change in the Middle East. South Africa joined international condemnation and endorsed strong international action then quickly changed its tune by criticizing the NATO mission's turn toward regime change and pursuing mediation with the Libyan regime. As violence escalated in Libya, the South African Foreign Ministry issued a statement similar to its initial position on Egypt but going a bit further in supporting opposition forces by calling on "the government and people of Libya to seek a speedy and peaceful resolution to the current crisis in accordance with the will of the people."<sup>111</sup> A few days later, South Africa joined unanimous support for Security Council resolution 1970 that extended sanctions. In its explanation of vote, South Africa reiterated its support for the "will of the people."<sup>112</sup>

Unlike India, South Africa voted for the Security Council's second resolution on Libya that authorized the use of force to protect civilians and the implementation of a no-fly zone. Its explanation

of vote, more detailed than its previous explanation, illustrated South Africa's concern for both protecting democracy and human rights and ensuring the sovereign integrity of a nation. South Africa's representative to the United Nations explained that "a holistic political solution must be found that would respect democracy; political reform; justice; human rights as well as the socio-economic development needs of the people of Libya; in order to ensure long-term peace and stability" in Libya.<sup>113</sup> The statement considered the Security Council resolution appropriate in order to implement the previous resolution but added that its support came "with the necessary caveats to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya; and rejecting any foreign occupation or unilateral military intervention under the pretext of protection of civilians."<sup>114</sup>

As the NATO intervention proceeded along with a growing chorus of statements that "Gaddafi must go", South Africa became highly critical of the military intervention's alleged contravention of its original mandate. In part, the government was likely responding to some domestic criticism, including within the ANC, about authorizing the NATO intervention. Parliamentary members of the United Democratic Movement accused the government of being "duped into supporting military intervention by the [NATO]" and insisted the resolution "had now become about regime change and not about saving civilian lives."<sup>115</sup> The government also faced criticism from civil society: thousands of union-organized protestors gathered in Pretoria to object to the NATO intervention in early July.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Statement by President Jacob Zuma at Joint Sitting of Parliament, February 10, 2011.

<sup>111</sup> DIRCO, Media Statement on the situation in Libya, February 21, 2011. Available at <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2011/libya0221.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>112</sup> Statement in Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Baso Sangqu on Resolution on Libya in the UN Security Council, New York, February 26, 2011. Available at <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2011/unsc0226.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>113</sup> DIRCO, "South Africa welcomes and supports the UN Security Council's resolution on no fly zone in Libya," March 18, 2011. Available at <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2011/liby0318.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Wyndham Hartley, "Government slated for being soft on Libya," *Business Day*, June 1, 2011. Available at <http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.aspx?id=144404> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>116</sup> Associate Press, "South Africans protest NATO bombing of Libya," July 6, 2011.

Some leading observers of South Africa's foreign policy do not consider its policy on the Libya intervention as inconsistent or random. Instead, as Adam Habib suggests, South Africa's endorsement of the intervention in Libya at the UNSC, and its subsequent criticism of NATO's actions, can be interpreted as an attempt by South Africa to reconcile its desire to ensure that the international community does not neglect its humanitarian responsibilities—as it did in Rwanda—and its fear that intervention can be manipulated for political gain—as it was in Iraq.<sup>117</sup>

South Africa's criticism of the UN-mandated NATO intervention can be partly explained by its leadership role in the AU-led mediation effort in Libya. Established on March 10, 2011, the AU ad-hoc high level Committee on Libya was co-chaired by President Zuma and the presidents of Mauritania, Congo, Mali, and Uganda. In line with its mandate to “engage with all parties in Libya and continuously assess the evolution of the situation on the ground [and] facilitate an inclusive dialogue among the Libyan parties on the appropriate reforms,” the Committee met with Qaddafi, the Libyan Transnational Council, and rebels in Benghazi during two trips to Libya.<sup>118</sup> In addition, the Committee was mandated to engage other multilateral partners like the League of Arab States, the UN, the OIC, and the EU in an effort to find a resolution to the crisis. The text of the communiqué deplored violence in Libya but also reaffirmed the AU's “strong commitment to the respect of the unity and territorial integrity of Libya, as well as its rejection of any foreign military intervention, whatever its form.”<sup>119</sup>

As the NATO intervention in Libya escalated, Zuma distanced South Africa from its endorsement of the Security Council resolution and insisted on an African-led solution. Zuma concluded that the NATO intervention had overstepped its mandate and “undermine[s] the efforts of the African Union in finding solutions to the problems facing its member states.”<sup>120</sup> The AU's efforts to resolve the conflict, however, were not finding much traction. Qaddafi had accepted the AU roadmap but the TNC rejected the five-point proposal because it failed to demand that Qaddafi relinquish power.<sup>121</sup> By the sixth meeting of the high-level Committee in June 2011, the AU continued to call on the UN to work with the regional body to implement its roadmap, demanded a political solution to the conflict and insisted that the Security Council resolution was adopted to protect civilians and was “not about regime change and assassinations...[and] believed the implementation [of the resolution] should NOT go against the letter and spirit” of its original intention.”<sup>122</sup>

Even when Qaddafi's exit was imminent, and the NATO mission was claiming victory, South Africa continued to condemn the UN-mandated intervention. In an effort to ease domestic criticism for inconsistency and hypocrisy, South Africa began to insist that it supported humanitarian intervention in principle, but opposed member state manipulation of the Security Council mandate. During a public speech on the topic, Deputy Foreign Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim explained that “NATO misused the UN resolution to carry out bombing escapades on a defenseless African

<sup>117</sup> Adam Habib, “Is South African Foreign Policy at a Crossroads in Libya?” *The New Age*, 2011. Available at [http://www.thenewage.co.za/blogdetail.aspx?mid=186&blog\\_id=548](http://www.thenewage.co.za/blogdetail.aspx?mid=186&blog_id=548) (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>118</sup> Communiqué of the 265<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council, March 10, 2011.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *All Africa*, “Libya: Zuma Weighs in on NATO Bombings,” June 15, 2011. Available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201106150501.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>121</sup> *Aljazeera*, “Libyan rebels reject African Union road map,” April 12, 2011. Available at <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2011/04/201141116356323979.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>122</sup> DIRCO, Minister's Media Conference on Climate Change and Libyan Issues, June 16, 2011. Available at <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2011/liby0616.html> (Accessed December 7, 2011).



country... this action completely ignored the other important aspects of the resolution.”<sup>123</sup>

Aside from criticizing NATO’s misuse of its mandate, South Africa advocated for African-led mediation and attacked the international power structure that interferes with the principle of regional primacy. Invoking strong anti-imperialist rhetoric, Ebrahim Ebrahim bemoaned that “it is unfortunate that right from the start the AU was never given an opportunity to lead in finding a solution in Libya. The African Leadership, against all odds, continued to seek to engage all parties... All of this never worked because powers outside the continent were determining the future of Libya, and ceaselessly worked not for a political solution but regime change.”<sup>124</sup> This gets at a critical point in understanding South African foreign policy. When approaching conflicts on the continent, South Africa will insist on inclusive mediation led by Africans. As Ebrahim Ebrahim noted in the same speech: “The current situation in Libya is a result of the failure to transform the global system of governance. Powerful states remain dominant and imposing over the powerless.”<sup>125</sup> South Africa—like other rising democracies—will continue to raise issues of global governance reform both to justify criticism of the Northern-dominated system and to demand its seat at the table.

Similar to India and Brazil, South Africa’s concern with NATO’s overstep in Libya directly influenced its unwillingness to endorse Security Council action on Syria. After the Hama massacres of July 31, the South African Foreign Ministry released a

press statement, declaring that “the only solution to the current crisis is through a Syrian-led political process that is inclusive, with the aim of effectively addressing the legitimate aspirations and concerns of the population which will allow for the full exercise of fundamental freedoms, including that of expression and peaceful assembly.”<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, the statement expressed appreciation for “the actions already taken by the Syrian Government in launching dialogue as well as the reform measures already announced” and called on the government to implement said reforms.<sup>127</sup> Deputy Minister of International Relations Ebrahim Ebrahim hosted his Syrian counterparty later that week where he was briefed on the ongoing situation. According to Ebrahim, South Africa took the opportunity to “welcome the announcement by President Assad to allow for multi-party democracy in Syria, and urge the government to speed up the reform process” and made an appeal that “the media should have free access in Syria, because we believe this would help to have a more objective view on the developments.”<sup>128</sup> In line with South African preference for multilateral action, Ebrahim reiterated South Africa’s endorsement of the Security Council’s presidential statement on Syria and suggested that the UN Human Rights Council would be the appropriate place to continue the discussion.

Supporting the UNSC presidential statement seems as far as South Africa is willing to go so far on Syria. When explaining its abstention on an October 2011 Security Council vote that would have condemned Syrian authorities for their violent crackdown but drew vetoes from China and

<sup>123</sup> Speech by Ebrahim Ebrahim, “Libya, the United Nations and the African Union and South Africa: Wrong Moves?” September 15, 2011.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> DIRCO, “South Africa is concerned about the situation in Syria,” August 1, 2011. Available at <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2011/syri0802.html> (Accessed December 10, 2011).

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> South African Government Information, Statement by Deputy Minister Ebrahim after bilateral meeting with Syrian counterpart, Mr. Mikad, August 9, 2011. Available at <http://www.info.gov.za/speech/DynamicAction?pageid=461&sid=20566&tid=38961> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

Russia, South Africa referred explicitly to Libya. In its explanation of vote, South Africa expressed concern over recent Security Council “resolutions [that] have been abused and [whose] implementation went far beyond the mandate of what was intended...this [Syria] resolution should not be part of a hidden agenda to yet again institute regime change.”<sup>129</sup> South Africa maintained its neutral position in November 2011 at the UNGA’s Third Committee when it abstained on a resolution condemning Syria’s human rights abuses. Curiously, South Africa also voted against a NAM-sponsored effort to block consideration of the resolution. This inconsistent approach is typical of South Africa’s apparent attempt to demonstrate concern for human rights violations while opposing or abstaining on serious international action to stop them, particularly when it is led by the EU or the United States. This tacit approval of the measure but neutrality on the outcome may be emblematic of the country’s support for international action in principle but its conflicting concern that such action can easily be manipulated for political gain.

It is interesting to note that in the context of Syria, activists have identified South Africa as a potential leader on human rights. In early July, a group of Syrian human rights defenders traveled to South Africa to lobby the government to condemn Syria. One of the activists, Iyas Maleh, noted that they turned to South Africa because they consider it “an up-and-coming power that has a future role on the international stage.”<sup>130</sup> The pressure, however, didn’t seem to translate into

action. South Africa remained opposed to a Security Council resolution, offering its support only to a nonbinding presidential statement a month after the activists visited.

In Bahrain, South Africa has been silent. There were isolated reports of South African protestors gathering at the Saudi Arabian embassy in Pretoria to oppose the use of violence by Bahraini and Saudi troops. The demonstrators also “demanded that the South African government make clear its position on the crackdown in Bahrain.”<sup>131</sup> But their demands led to no apparent action. Like other states, South Africa’s silence on Bahrain is likely rooted in its concern for stability with its major trading partner, Saudi Arabia. South Africa imports 67 percent of the oil it consumes and nearly a third of it comes from Saudi Arabia.<sup>132</sup> South Africa’s trade with the Gulf nation grew nearly 30 percent from 2010 to 2011.<sup>133</sup> Similar circumstances are probably influencing South Africa’s reticence on Syria. South Africa imports nearly a quarter of its oil from Syria’s closest regional ally, Iran—South Africa’s sixth largest supplier of goods overall.<sup>134</sup> Iran’s role as supplier to South Africa grew more than 10 percent in recent years.<sup>135</sup>

While Egypt and Libya play no major trade roles individually for South Africa, their economic livelihood is essential to ongoing plans to create an African free trade zone. Originally launched in 2008, the “Cape to Cairo” trade bloc plans to integrate the 26 nations, 600 million people, and nearly \$1 trillion market of the South African

<sup>129</sup> South Africa abstains on the Vote in the UN Security Council on the situation in Syria, October 5, 2011.

<sup>130</sup> Scott Baldauf, “Syrian Activists Hope South Africa can Pressure Assad,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 8, 2011.

<sup>131</sup> Press TV, “South Africans stage ant-KSA rally,” July 3, 2011. Available at <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/183082.html> (Accessed December 19, 2011).

<sup>132</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, Background Analysis on South Africa, October 2011. Available at <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=SF> (Accessed December 11, 2011).

<sup>133</sup> South Africa Department of Trade and Industry, Statistics by Country. Available at: <http://apps.thedti.gov.za/econdb/raportt/rapcoun.html>

<sup>134</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Background Analysis on South Africa*, October 2011.

<sup>135</sup> South Africa Department of Trade and Industry, Statistics by Country.

Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC), and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), into one free trade zone. South Africa is the leading driver of this effort and forged ahead with its second meeting in June 2011 amidst revolutions in the region. This long term, pan-African plan largely influences South Africa's preference for mediation and continental unity.

Despite South Africa's failure to champion democracy and human rights in the context of the Arab Spring, its foreign policy practitioners continued to insist that these values play a central role in the formulation of its policy. In a March discussion at the University of Pretoria on South Africa's goals as a member of the UN Security Council, Marius Fransman, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, said South Africa's work at the body would "be grounded or built on our domestic priorities and on our country's vision of an African continent that is prosperous, peaceful, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and united

and which contributes to a world that is just and equitable."<sup>136</sup> In another speech a few months later, the same official again declared that South Africa's "international agenda is anchored on the goal of creating a better South Africa, and contributing to a better and safer Africa in a better world. The advancement of human rights and the promotion of democracy are pillars on which South Africa's foreign policy rests."<sup>137</sup>

South Africa has proven disappointing and inconsistent in its support for demands for democracy and human rights on its continent and in the Middle East. Much of the disappointment lies in its failure to translate its strong constitutional and rhetorical endorsement of these values into actions. Its inconsistency can be explained in part by its overlapping and at times conflicting personalities—as an outspoken advocate for pan-African and South-South solidarity, its strong preference for mediation and conflict resolution through dialogue, and its desire to maintain close ties to the West.

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<sup>136</sup> Address by Deputy Minister Marius Llewellyn Fransman during a Panel Discussion on South Africa's Second Term on the UN Security Council, Center for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, March 30, 2011. Available at <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/2011/cmchr0331.html> (Accessed December 2, 2011).

<sup>137</sup> Deputy Minister Marius Llewellyn Fransman, Speech entitled "South Africa's Role in the International Arena," May 12, 2011. Available at <http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/2011/frans0512.html> (Accessed December 2, 2011).

# TURKEY: TRENDING TOWARD DEMOCRATIC ACTIVISM

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Turkey stands apart from the other cases reviewed here because of the way its experience as a candidate to the European Union (EU) elevated the importance of its own transition to democracy. The attraction of accession to the EU no doubt has played a major role in bringing Turkey's own domestic standards and practice of democracy in line with liberal international norms, although with some important ground still to cover. Even so, if anything, the story of Turkey's role in the field of international democracy and human rights is a testament to the positive impact of EU enlargement in expanding the circle of democratic, rights-respecting states throughout wider Europe. It is precisely Turkey's gradual evolution from a secular, military-dominated state with weak checks and balances to a competitive, multi-party and multi-ethnic society in which Muslim democrats now win elections that endows it with its power as a promoter of democracy and human rights. The democratic wave sweeping the Middle East offers a key opportunity for Turkey's preferred style of holding itself out as an inspiring example of the compatibility of democracy and Islam, one that it is seizing with relish.

Even before the last decade of democratic reforms, Turkey was a relatively constructive if quiet player in supporting democratic transfor-

mations, mainly due to its alignment with the United States, NATO and the EU. Turkey participated in electoral monitoring missions, and gave rhetorical support to democratic developments in its region, particularly in the Balkans, and "made significant contributions to peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction efforts that were essential in preparing the ground for establishing democratic regimes."<sup>138</sup> Its primary motives in foreign policy, however, remain the protection of Turkey's economic, energy and other strategic interests in Central Asia, Russia and the Middle East and North Africa. Under the conservative leadership of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his activist Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, this trend has accelerated. The governing Freedom and Justice Party (AKP) has pursued a "zero problems with neighbors" policy in which it seeks to resolve old disputes and expand relations with bordering countries, ranging from democratic Cyprus, Greece and Bulgaria to entrenched autocratic regimes in Syria, Iran and Azerbaijan. In seeking to maintain maximum flexibility as its economic interests and leverage expand, the pragmatists in Ankara walk a careful line between rhetorical support for democratic pluralism and case-by-case neutrality when it comes to international action to protect democracy and human rights.

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<sup>138</sup> Herman and Piccone, p. 198.

On human rights-related resolutions at the United Nations, Turkey has performed consistent with its orientation toward Western alliances, albeit in a low-key way. It played a pivotal role in supporting the international campaign to remove the Taliban in Afghanistan, currently deploying 1,799 troops and committing 1.5 million Euros since 2007 to support the NATO-ANA trust fund that is dedicated to equipping and sustaining the Afghan National Army (ANA).<sup>139</sup> Its development assistance agency, which has grown exponentially in the last ten years, spent 45 percent of its funds to support reconstruction in Afghanistan as of 2008. At other times, as in the case of the U.S. invasion of neighboring Iraq, Turkey went its own way, refusing, for example, to allow the coalition's planes to use Turkish airspace to sustain the operation. Nonetheless, Turkey has engaged both bilaterally and multilaterally to support a variety of reconstruction and training efforts in Iraq. Turkey has been a contributor to and participant in NATO's Training Mission in Iraq since 2005, hosting specialized courses to train security officers.<sup>140</sup> In cooperation with the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), Turkey hosted a conference on Iraq's constitution in 2006 in Istanbul that brought together members of all Iraq's political parties. In addition, Turkey initiated the Neighboring Countries Process, a forum which brings together Iraq, its neighbors and others for ministerial consultations to support Iraq's democratic transition.<sup>141</sup>

Financially, Turkey has also been very supportive of multilateral reconstruction efforts in Iraq. It pledged \$50 million during the 2003 Madrid Donors conference—of which more than 20 per-

cent has been allocated—and an additional \$10 million to the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI), a joint World Bank-UN trust fund that helps coordinate support for Iraq. Since 2003, Turkey's humanitarian aid sent to Iraq has exceeded more than \$5 million.<sup>142</sup> As a member of the Security Council in 2009 and 2010, Turkey joined consensus resolutions to extend the UN Mission in Iraq. Parallel to these efforts, Turkey has pursued closer ties to the clerical regime in Tehran not only by steadfastly avoiding resolutions on Iran's human rights record but by leading efforts, with Brazil, to avoid increasing international sanctions on its nuclear program.

Turkey's consistent rhetorical support for democratic transition and good governance in the Arab region and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), and more recently its muscular posture on Syria, set it apart from the others in this study. As early as January 2003, for example, Prime Minister Erdogan made the case for the compatibility of Islam and democracy in the Middle East. "It is obvious that the Turkish example demonstrates the invalidity of the exceptionalism paradigm," he told an audience at Harvard University and later in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. "Democratisation in the Middle East is an outcome that must be attained. Therefore, the question is not whether ... but how to meet the yearning of the masses in the Middle East for democracy." He went on to outline the case for a consistent, gradualist approach toward "deep democracy" based on widespread social consensus, establishment of stable institutions, gender equality, education, civil society and transparency. He also emphasized the importance

<sup>139</sup> For more information on Turkey's contribution to NATO's mission in Afghanistan, see: <http://www.isaf.nato.int/troop-numbers-and-contributions/turkey/index.php>

<sup>140</sup> General Michael D. Barbero, Speech: "Turkey, NATO, and Iraq: 2011 and Beyond," Center for Middle East Strategic Studies, October 12, 2011. <http://www.aco.nato.int/page12822541.aspx>

<sup>141</sup> For more information see the website of the Turkish Foreign Ministry: [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-contributions-to-iraq.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-contributions-to-iraq.en.mfa) and [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/3-november-2007\\_-final-communicue-of-the-ministerial-conference-of-the-neighboring-countries-of-iraq\\_-egypt-and-bahrain-and-the.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/3-november-2007_-final-communicue-of-the-ministerial-conference-of-the-neighboring-countries-of-iraq_-egypt-and-bahrain-and-the.en.mfa)

<sup>142</sup> Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's Contributions to Iraq. Available at [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-contributions-to-iraq.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-contributions-to-iraq.en.mfa) (Accessed December 8, 2011).

of peaceful external conditions, linking Israeli-Palestinian peace and the territorial integrity of Iraq to the prospects for successful democratization.<sup>143</sup> He sought to put Turkey at the center of a proposed “Istanbul process,” a comprehensive security and cooperation mechanism similar to the Helsinki process that helped pave the way for the democratization of Eastern Europe.

While this specific initiative did not prosper, Turkey continued to hold itself out as an inspiring example of a large, economically dynamic, Muslim-majority country that is both democratic and secular. Its status as a “work in progress” further amplified its ability to speak as peers to other governments about the dangers of the status quo and the benefits of a gradual process of democratization. As then Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul told a meeting of OIC ministers in May 2003, Muslim countries needed to pay greater attention to human rights, women’s rights and transparency, language that Ankara pushed for in the OIC Summit declaration a year later in Istanbul, the OIC’s ten-year program of action in 2005, and the new Charter of the OIC at the Dakar Summit in 2008.<sup>144</sup> Meanwhile, it continued to play a bridge-building role between East and West as an active participant in the Bush Administration’s Broader Middle East and North Africa democracy project, the Foundation for the Future and the Democracy Assistance Dialogue.

Now, as the wave of demands for democracy sweeps across the Arab world, Turkey is continuing to play a rhetorical and demonstrative role as a positive and relevant example of democratization.

By and large, Turkey has manifested careful consideration for its economic and security interests in its reaction to uprisings in the neighborhood. With that said, Turkey has largely supported the democracy and human rights activists in the region with various tactics, ranging from name-and-shame condemnations to private mediation. Though these efforts have been inconsistently applied, Turkey has shown an explicit willingness to raise these issues, even with some of its most critical partners. Furthermore, Turkey’s activism in these areas reveals that as an advancing democracy in a region full of authoritarian regimes, it is responsive to domestic demands for solidarity with the cause for democratic change.

In Egypt, Libya, and Syria, Turkey has been critical of regimes’ hardline tactics to suppress dissent and with varying vigor, supportive of those demanding their rights. Amidst protests in Egypt, Prime Minister Erdogan was among the first world leaders to call on President Hosni Mubarak to step down. He urged him to “meet the people’s desire for change with no hesitation” and went on to say that “in our world today, freedoms can no longer be postponed or ignored.”<sup>145</sup> Erdogan further announced that “no government can survive against the will of its people. The era of governments persisting on pressure and repression is over...”<sup>146</sup> A few weeks later the Prime Minister’s office confidently announced that “since the start of the mass demonstrations in Egypt, Turkey has supported the Egyptian public’s legitimate demands for democracy and freedom.”<sup>147</sup> As Western powers hesitated to support the protestors and safely urged all to eschew violence, Erdogan took

<sup>143</sup> Address by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan at Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, 30 January 2003, in *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, [www.turkishweekly.net](http://www.turkishweekly.net).

<sup>144</sup> Kemal Kirisci, Nathalie Tocci, and Joshua Walker, A Neighborhood Rediscovered: Turkey’s Transatlantic Value in the Middle East, Brussels Policy Forum Paper Series, German Marshall Fund, p. 18.

<sup>145</sup> Joshua Keating, “Erdogan’s Cairo Speech”, *Foreign Policy*, 2 February, 2011. Available at: [http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/02/02/erdogans\\_cairo\\_speech](http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/02/02/erdogans_cairo_speech)

<sup>146</sup> Benjamin Harvey, “Erdogan Says Turkey Sides with the Egyptian People,” *Bloomberg News*, February 1, 2011. Available at: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-02-01/erdogan-says-turkey-sides-with-the-egyptian-people-update1-.html>

<sup>147</sup> *Reuters*, “Turkey Calls for Constitutional Democracy in Egypt”, 12 February 2011. Available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/12/us-egypt-turkey-idUSTRE71B0OZ20110212>



an unequivocal stance in support of the Egyptian protestors. Interestingly, the former Prime Minister of Belgium and current Liberal Group Chairman of the European Parliament, Guy Verhofstadt, dubbed Erdogan's call for Mubarak to step down "the only European reaction so far," noting that Ergodan "was backing the masses and their appeals for more democracy 100 percent, without hesitation, without 'ifs' and 'buts.'"<sup>148</sup>

Turkey's reaction to the first uprising in the region, however, was not as quick and unambiguous as its reaction to protests in Egypt. In Tunisia, Turkey was largely caught off-guard and did not take an official stance in support of democratic demands until President Ben Ali fled the country. Instead, Foreign Minister Davutoglu neutrally observed amidst protests that "social explosions are common in societies absent of democracy and free elections."<sup>149</sup> In the aftermath, Davutoglu took great offense at criticism that Turkey remained silent during Tunisia's uprisings, insisting that the government supported a principled policy and that it attaches great importance to democratic values as well as to stability and internal peace in friendly and neighboring countries.<sup>150</sup>

Whether loud and definitive as in the Egyptian case or more measured in the Tunisian case, Turkish support for protestors in either of these countries posed no great challenge to Turkish foreign policy or bilateral relations. In the case of Tunisia, though Ben Ali had been an ally and economic relations with Tunisia had increased under

the AKP government, the relationship was by no means a critical one.<sup>151</sup> Moreover, it was consistent with AKP ideology to support Tunisian protestors against Ben Ali, a staunch secularist similar to AKP's domestic opponents. In Egypt, the bilateral relationship was stronger than that with Tunisia and the economic stakes higher. Turkish investments alone in Egypt rose to \$1.5 billion in 2010 from \$60 million in 2005. Since signing a free trade agreement in 2007, the volume of trade between the countries has more than doubled from \$1.5 billion annually to \$3.2 billion in 2010.<sup>152</sup> Despite these stakes, Mubarak's exit represented an auspicious opportunity for Turkey to expand its regional leadership as the ousted Egyptian strongman had represented prime competition for influence in the region.

When it comes to Libya and Syria, Turkey has similarly supported opposition forces but its security and economic interests strongly influenced the timing and nature of the support. At the onset of protests in Benghazi, Turkey was benefiting from \$2.4 billion in annual trade with the Qaddafi regime and that number was expected to increase to \$10 billion in the near future, according to the Foreign Ministry. In all, Turkish companies had conducted more than \$20 billion worth of construction projects in Libya, second only to Russia in Turkish construction investment.<sup>153</sup> In addition, more than 25,000 Turkish citizens were living in Libya as the crisis unfolded. Turkey's initial silence and refusal to criticize the Qaddafi regime coincided with intensive efforts to rescue its

<sup>148</sup> *Today's Zaman*, "Erdogan's Egypt Remarks teach EU lesson on Democracy," February 12, 2011. Available at: <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-235374-erdogans-egypt-remarks-teach-eu-lesson-on-democracy.html>

<sup>149</sup> *Today's Zaman*, "Davutoglu dismisses claims Turkey silent over Tunisia, Egypt," February 2, 2011. Available at: <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-234221-davutoglu-dismisses-claims-turkey-silent-over-tunisia-egypt.html>

<sup>150</sup> *Today's Zaman*, "Davutoglu dismisses claims Turkey silent over Tunisia, Egypt."

<sup>151</sup> According to the Turkish Foreign Ministry, the volume of trade between Turkey and Tunisia increased from \$357 million in 2004 to \$995 million in 2010. Though this increase is large, it amounts to less than one percent of Turkey's export volume annually. For more information, see: [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-tunisia.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-tunisia.en.mfa)

<sup>152</sup> Turkish ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey-Egypt Economic and trade Relations. Available at [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-egypt.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-egypt.en.mfa) (Accessed December 12, 2011).

<sup>153</sup> For more information on Turkey's economic relations with Libya, see the Turkish Foreign Ministry's website: [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-libya.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-libya.en.mfa)

expatriates and mediate the conflict. Accordingly, Turkey at first opposed the UN Security Council's resolution to establish a no-fly zone and the subsequent NATO intervention.<sup>154</sup>

Eventually, however, Turkey decided to support NATO's efforts to dislodge Qaddafi. After reaching a compromise with fellow NATO governments, Turkey agreed to pass the mission from U.S.-led forces to NATO in March 2011. In May, Prime Minister Erdogan finally called on Qaddafi to step down, saying that "one cannot establish future, liberty, stability, peace and justice on blood. Therefore we wish Libyan leader immediately pulls out from Libya and steps down for himself and for the future of the country."<sup>155</sup> A few months later, Turkey officially recognized the Libyan opposition, the Transitional National Council, as the rightful representatives of Libya and pledged \$300 million to them.<sup>156</sup> Turkey's approach in Libya evolved from measured criticism to explicit support for the opposition. In this process, Turkey sought to position itself as a leader with a preference both for mediation and democratic change. As co-chair with the United Arab Emirates of the fourth meeting of the Libya Contact Group, for instance, Turkey hosted the group's meeting in Istanbul in July 2011 and presented its roadmap to resolve the conflict.

The uprisings in neighboring Syria represent the Arab Spring's most complicated quagmire for Turkey. The AKP had invested precious time and resources in their relationship with the Assad

government and the normalization of diplomatic and trade relations with Syria had been the crown jewel of Erdogan's "zero problems" policy. The volume of trade between the two countries rose from \$752 million in 2004 to \$2.3 billion in 2010. The Foreign Ministry had hoped that the 2004 free trade agreement between the countries would increase trade volume to \$5 billion in the near term.<sup>157</sup> Aside from these economic risks, chaos in neighboring Syria has very tangible implications for Turkish security and this is playing out as tens of thousands of Syrians have sought refuge across the 822-kilometer border the two countries share.

Initially and with these interests in mind, Turkey tried to use its influence to convince the Assad regime to pursue democratic reforms. In response to Assad's failure to implement meaningful changes, Erdogan remarked: "He says, 'I will do it.' But I have a hard time understanding if he is being prevented from doing it or if he is hesitating."<sup>158</sup> Erdogan went on to criticize the regime for its "savagery," adding that "sadly, they don't behave like humans."<sup>159</sup> When responding to the July 2011 massacres in Hama, the Foreign Ministry first responded with a measured press statement that expressed "suspicions regarding the intention and sincerity of the Syrian administration to resolve the issue through peaceful methods" and called upon the government "to end the operations and resort to political methods, dialogue and peaceful initiatives in order to reach a solution."<sup>160</sup> Ankara, however, grew increasingly tired as Assad failed

<sup>154</sup> Turkey was not sitting on the UN Security Council and thus did not have a vote on the resolution.

<sup>155</sup> *BBC News*, "Turkey's PM Erdogan urges Colonel Muammar Gaddafi to quit," May 3, 2011. Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13265825> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>156</sup> Zaid Sabah and Kim Chipman, "Turkey Recognizes Libyan Rebels, Gives \$300 Million," *Bloomberg News*, July 3, 2011. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-07-03/turkey-recognizes-libyan-rebels-gives-300-million-ap-reports.html>

<sup>157</sup> For more information on Turkish-Syria economic relations, see the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-syria.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-syria.en.mfa)

<sup>158</sup> *Today's Zaman*, "Erdogan warns Assad against division of Syria," May 2, 2011. Available at <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-242543-erdogan-warns-assad-against-division-of-syria.html> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Release Regarding Recent Developments in Syria, No. 178, July 31, 2011. Available at [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_178\\_31-july-2011\\_press-release-regarding-the-recent-developments-in-syria.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_178_31-july-2011_press-release-regarding-the-recent-developments-in-syria.en.mfa) (Accessed December 7, 2011).



to deliver on promised reforms while insisting on ramping up the violence. Deputy Prime Minister, Arinc Bulent, finally confessed that “what’s going on in Hama today is an atrocity,” and that those responsible “can’t be our friend...they are making a big mistake.”<sup>161</sup> In a seemingly last-ditch maneuver to influence the situation, Erdogan sent Davutoglu to Syria in August 2011 to “deliver a decisive message personally to Assad.”<sup>162</sup> In the meantime, Turkey has been actively providing refuge for tens of thousands of Syrians fleeing violence, permitted Syrian opposition forces to meet on Turkish soil and has even provided food aid across the border.

Having grown tired of Assad’s unwillingness to reform, Erdogan finally concluded that the Syrian leader will be the next Arab dictator ousted. Erdogan declared in a September 2011 interview that Assad’s days as leader “might be extended a little bit more, but sooner or later in Syria...people want to be free,” further noting that “autocratic systems are getting eliminated once and for all to move toward democratic systems.”<sup>163</sup> In perhaps his harshest words about his Syrian counterpart—in a speech to Turkish Parliament—Erdogan compared Assad to recent and historic madmen who notoriously violated their people’s rights:

*“Assad is showing up and saying he would fight to the death. For God’s Sake, against whom will you fight? Fighting against your own people is not heroism, but cowardice. If you want to see someone who has fought until death against his own people, just*

*look at Nazi Germany, just look at Hitler, at [Benito] Mussolini, at Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania. If you cannot draw any lessons from them, then look at the Libyan leader who was killed just 32 days ago in a manner none of us would wish for and who used the same expression you used.”<sup>164</sup>*

As the situation in Syria further deteriorated and the Arab League agreed to isolate and sanction the Assad regime, Erdogan translated his critical rhetoric into action. The Turkish government announced in November 2011 that because the “Syrian Government gave more priority to security measures that falls into the spiral of violence than [to] democratic openings, in spite of our recommendations, warnings and convictions,” it is necessary to “increase the regional and international pressure on the Syrian Administration and to take steps in order to curtail the capacity of this administration to engage in cruelty against its people.”<sup>165</sup> Accordingly, the Turkish government announced economic sanctions and the suspension of the high-level strategic cooperation mechanism between Turkey and Syria “until a democratic administration comes to power.”<sup>166</sup> Whether Turkey will go any further, for example opening humanitarian corridors to facilitate aid to protestors, remains an open question but one that is fraught with risks considering Iran and Syria’s ability to mobilize the Kurdish insurgency in Turkey. Turkey may grow even more cautious about this risk given the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and its implications for stability in the predominantly-Kurdish north that borders Turkey.

<sup>161</sup> Nada Bakri, “Casting Aside Criticism, Syria Invades Town,” *The New York Times*, August 3, 2011. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/04/world/middleeast/04syria.html> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>162</sup> Simon Cameron-Moore, “Turkey’s Friendship with Syria nears breaking point,” *Reuters*, August 8, 2011. Available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/08/us-turkey-syria-idUSTRE7773J320110808> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>163</sup> CNN, Fareed Zakaria Interview with Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, September 25, 2011.

<sup>164</sup> *Today’s Zaman*, “Erdogan tells Assad to draw lessons from fate of Gaddafi, Hitler,” November 22, 2011. Available at <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-263554-erdogan-tells-assad-to-draw-lessons-from-fate-of-gaddafi-hitler.html> (Accessed December 5, 2011).

<sup>165</sup> Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Statement by Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu Regarding Measures Adopted vis-à-vis the Syrian Administration, November 30, 2011. Available at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/press-statement-by-h e -mr -ahmet-davutoglu -minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-turkey -regarding-measures-adopted.en.mfa> (Accessed December 7, 2011).

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

In Bahrain, Turkey has been noticeably less willing to lead on democracy and human rights. Similar to other countries, Turkey reacted to oppression in Bahrain with foremost concern for broad stability in the Gulf. When Foreign Minister Davutoglu visited Manama, in April 2011 he explicitly prioritized stability in the Gulf: “Bahrain and the Gulf countries are the backbone of stability in this region; therefore we do not want any tension in this strategic and economically important part of the world.”<sup>167</sup> Though this approach to Bahrain noticeably lacked any discussion of democracy and human rights, Davutoglu did make a point to meet with opposition representatives in addition to government officials during his trip to the country. In Yemen, this administration has been conspicuously silent on the ongoing political crisis. It may have decided against risking deeper economic and security ties with Yemen in recent years and its intention, announced in early 2011, that the two would mutually lift visa requirements.

In its response to protests in the Arab World, Turkey has, on the whole, displayed a willingness to publicly criticize antidemocratic regimes and support demands for democracy and human rights. Its desire to lead in the region was best articulated during parliamentary elections in June 2011 when AKP politicians explained the benefits of Turkish leadership in the region and the inextricable link between foreign policy and domestic politics. When delivering the party’s victory address, Erdogan alluded to Turkey’s aspiration to be a voice in the West for the Middle East and the Muslim World, saying that “Sarajevo won today as much as Istanbul, Beirut won as much as Izmir, Damascus won as much as Ankara, Ramallah,

Nablus, Jenin, and the West Bank, Jerusalem won as much as Diyarbakir.”<sup>168</sup>

Aside from an explicit aspiration to achieve leadership in the region, the AKP has made it clear that as a democratic state, Turkey and its ruling party must respond to domestic demands. While campaigning, Davutoglu articulated this connection: “If your foreign policy, however sophisticated it might be, doesn’t have a ground in public opinion, then that foreign policy is not sustainable... this is democracy.”<sup>169</sup> Accordingly, non-governmental stakeholders have been actively influencing the Turkish reaction to the Arab Spring. The Turkish Foundation for Human Rights and Humanitarian Relief (IHH), for instance, was central in bringing and distributing supplies to Benghazi rebels and with another NGO, Mazlum-Der, hosted an initial meeting of the Syrian opposition in Turkey. These and similar organizations will continue to influence the formulation of Turkish foreign policy just as NGOs do in the established democracies but the Islamist angle of these groups make their relations with the AKP government quite amenable.

Turkey’s reaction to the Arab Spring has been characterized by a desire to tout its democratic status and be on the side of the protestors—even if it can’t do so consistently. President Gul bluntly explained that Turkey “is with people, not with regimes”<sup>170</sup> while Foreign Minister Davutoglu cited his country as a “source of inspiration” for the region amidst widespread demands for democracy and human rights.<sup>171</sup> So far, Turkey’s support has been greatly appreciated by the people of the region. During a September 2011 “Arab Spring Tour” to Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya, Erdogan was

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<sup>167</sup> *Today’s Zaman*, “Davutoglu’s visits crisis spots on day of whirlwind diplomacy,” April 7, 2011. Available at [http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?newsId=240409](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=240409) (Accessed December 10, 2011).

<sup>168</sup> Soli Ozel and Gencer Ozcan, “Do New Democracies Support Democracy? Turkey’s Dilemma,” *Journal of Democracy*, October 2011.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> Mustafay Aykol, “Turkey’s Maturing Foreign Policy: How the Arab Spring Changed the AKP,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 7, 2011.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

greeted by thousands of enthusiastic supporters. In recent polling in the region, Erdogan is by far the most popular leader.<sup>172</sup> The AKP's Islamic roots also help explain its popularity with aspiring Muslim democrats from Egypt to Tunisia, as well as the AKP's enthusiasm for building alliances with them.

Like advanced democracies, Turkey will not stand up for rights at every turn of the transition. It has, however, successfully conveyed a willingness to defend these values, share its experience and even impose sanctions to dislodge a neighboring regime.

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<sup>172</sup> Shibley Telhami, 2011 Annual Arab Public Opinion Survey, conducted in October 2011 in Egypt, Jordan Lebanon, Morocco, UAE. For more information, see: [http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2011/1201\\_israel\\_poll\\_telhami.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2011/1201_israel_poll_telhami.aspx)

## CONCLUSION

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Our review of the rhetorical and behavioral components of the foreign policies of five rising democracies—Brazil, India, Indonesia, South Africa and Turkey—leads to several overarching observations and conclusions:

- All five countries have made unequivocal commitments to democratic and human rights standards both as a goal of national development and as a principle of their foreign policies. This shared starting point offers a number of advantages in finding common ground with each other and with more established democracies on strategies for addressing a range of scenarios where democracy and human rights are implicated. This can be seen in the way Turkey and Indonesia, for example, have offered assistance to democratic transitions in the Arab world in ways that are largely complementary to efforts by more established democracies.
- A wide gap exists, however, regarding the preferred means and methods of international action in this arena: The rising democracies have a strong preference for what they describe as constructive engagement, mediation, quiet diplomacy and dialogue as tools of international intervention, while the established democracies are more quick to pursue condemnation, sanctions and, in extreme cases, military action, as in the cases of Libya and Côte d'Ivoire. IBSATI countries stand ready, however, to provide help on democracy and human rights when requested by a transitioning state and have shown a willingness to join international consensus when situations reach crisis level.
- As these countries continue to globalize their own trade and investment relations around the world, they are facing many of the same difficult tradeoffs that established democracies confront regarding if and how to prioritize concern for democracy and human rights in their foreign policies. Business interests, energy dependency, migration flows, and aspirations for regional and global leadership all weigh significantly toward careful, cautious and ad hoc policies concerning these issues.
- Each country's history of overcoming authoritarian, military, racist and/or colonial legacies which were directly supported or abetted by Western powers, in favor of establishing constitutional democracy does not necessarily translate into unquestioned support for international interventions to protect democracy and human rights. The memory of external imposition or

endorsement of odious regimes runs deep. This leads policymakers in these countries to prioritize principles of national sovereignty and non-intervention and to resist or oppose traditional means of “regime change” in favor of peaceful, mediated or longer-term processes of change.

- All five, to varying degrees, strongly object to the current distribution of power in the global order, leading them to oppose robust international actions on grounds of selectivity, double standards and hypocrisy and to claim a greater voice in structures of global governance, like the UN Security Council. To secure a permanent seat on that body, states like Brazil and India seek to win as many friends as possible, thereby mitigating overt criticism of non-democratic regimes and reinforcing the bonds of south-south solidarity. Moreover, their common quest for greater equity in the global architecture is often expressed as opposition to UN interventions led by the established democratic powers.
- The India-Brazil-South Africa forum (IBSA), which explicitly endorses democracy and human rights as a shared value proposition and thereby distinguishes itself from the BRICS, offers a potentially important platform for coordinated diplomacy on issues of democracy and human rights that would be even more powerful with the addition of Turkey and Indonesia in a new grouping known as IBSATI.
- The Arab Awakening presents a positive narrative that underscores the universal nature of democracy and human rights and the importance of popular will in the definition and legitimacy of national sovereignty.

It offers a unique opportunity for the IBSA-TI countries, individually and as a group, to share their own recent experiences of democratic transition with the Arab world within a context of multilateral cooperation and respect for human rights. Joint action by these countries has begun to occur already. In March 2011, the IBSA countries coordinated a high-level mission to Syria that coincided with a comparable Turkish diplomatic visit. Though neither of these efforts yielded progress from the Assad regime, they demonstrate both a willingness to coordinate diplomacy as well as a shared methodology for conflict resolution.

- There is a growing tendency to insist on deference to regional institutions as the gate-keepers to wider international intervention in political crises, a position that has the dual benefit of limiting Western involvement and reinforcing their own roles as leaders in their respective regions. In this regard, to the surprise of many observers, the Arab League’s endorsement of NATO intervention in Libya and the support of the African Union and ECOWAS for UN force in Côte d’Ivoire have compelled IBSATI states to go along with or not block outright interventions in these countries in the name of protecting civilians.
- While transitions in the Arab world will be rocky, we are optimistic that the demand for universal rights, in concert with the rise of democratic powers in the global south that are committed to international norms, will reinforce longstanding trends toward democratic governance and respect for human rights around the world, including international efforts to support transitions to democracy.

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