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**The Geopolitics of the Arab Spring**

***Expert Seminar, Brussels, 3 July 2014***

The Arab Spring, which has brought hope to a generation that has rejected authoritarianism and corruption, has affected, to a different degree, all countries of the Arab world.

Internal political change, which has brought religious parties in power (though for how long remains to be seen), has consequences that surpass the national borders. A region characterized by a certain stagnation has now at least partially become a zone of turbulence, of civil war even. The international repercussions play out at the regional, at the Euro-Mediterranean, and at the global level, as the great powers (the US, Russia and China) are adapting and designing a response to new challenges.

New regimes may lead to new alliances, but also to new or renewed antagonisms. That there is a great impact on the foreign and security policy of the EU is obvious. What is our agenda? Is a collective European geopolitical analysis feasible, and which EU strategy would it produce?

This international expert seminar aims to assess the internal developments in the region, and the foreign and security policies of the key actors, in order to feed a thorough strategic reflection in Europe:

* Starting from a interim assessment of where the Arab Spring has brought the region, panel 1 will seek to identify the main challenges, for the countries concerned and their immediate neighbours as for Europe.
* Panel 2 will assess the role of external powers, regional and global, from the United States (in the midst of its re-balancing towards Asia) to China, Russia and the Gulf states.
* Panel 3 will address EU strategy for the region, in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy as in development and reconstruction.

The seminar is organized by the Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations and the Institut d’Hautes Études de Défense Nationale (IHEDN), with the kind support of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC).

*Participation by invitation only – Working languages English ad French with simultaneous translation The Chatham House Rule applies*

**Programme**

09.00–09.30 *Welcome coffee*

09.30–09.45 **Welcome and Introduction**

Prof. Dr. Sven Biscop, Director, Europe in the World Programme, Egmont & Lt.Gen Jean-Marc Duquesne, Director, IHEDN

09.45–11.00 **Panel 1: European Interests in Interesting Times**

Chair: Amb. Nicolas Normand, Deputy Director International Activities, IHEDN

* Amb. Denis Bauchard, Advisor Middle East, Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI)
* Flavien Bourrat, Head, North Africa/Middle East Programme, Institut de recherche stratégique de l’Ecole militaire (IRSEM)
* Prof. Dr. Luis Simón, Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

11.00–11.30 *Coffee*

11.30–13.30 **Panel 2: Power Games**

Chair: Prof. Dr. Sven Biscop, Egmont

* Dr. Ian O. Lesser, Executive Director Transatlantic Center Brussels, German Marshall Fund of the United States
* Prof. Dr. Gerd Nonneman, Dean of the School of Foreign Service in Qatar, Georgetown University
* Philippe Migault, Director of Research, Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris

13.30–14.30 *Standing lunch*

14.30–16.30 **Panel 3: Towards a European Strategy?**

Chair: Prof. Dr. Alexander Mattelaer, Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

* Patrice Bergamini, Head, Directorate for the Middle East, North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, EEAS
* Dr. Haizam Amirah Fernández, Senior Analyst, Real Instituto Elcano, Madrid
* Amb. Marc Franco, Senior Associate Fellow, Egmont

16.30–16.45 **Concluding Remarks**

Amb. Marc Otte, Director-General, Egmont & Lt.Gen Jean-Marc Duquesne, Director, IHEDN