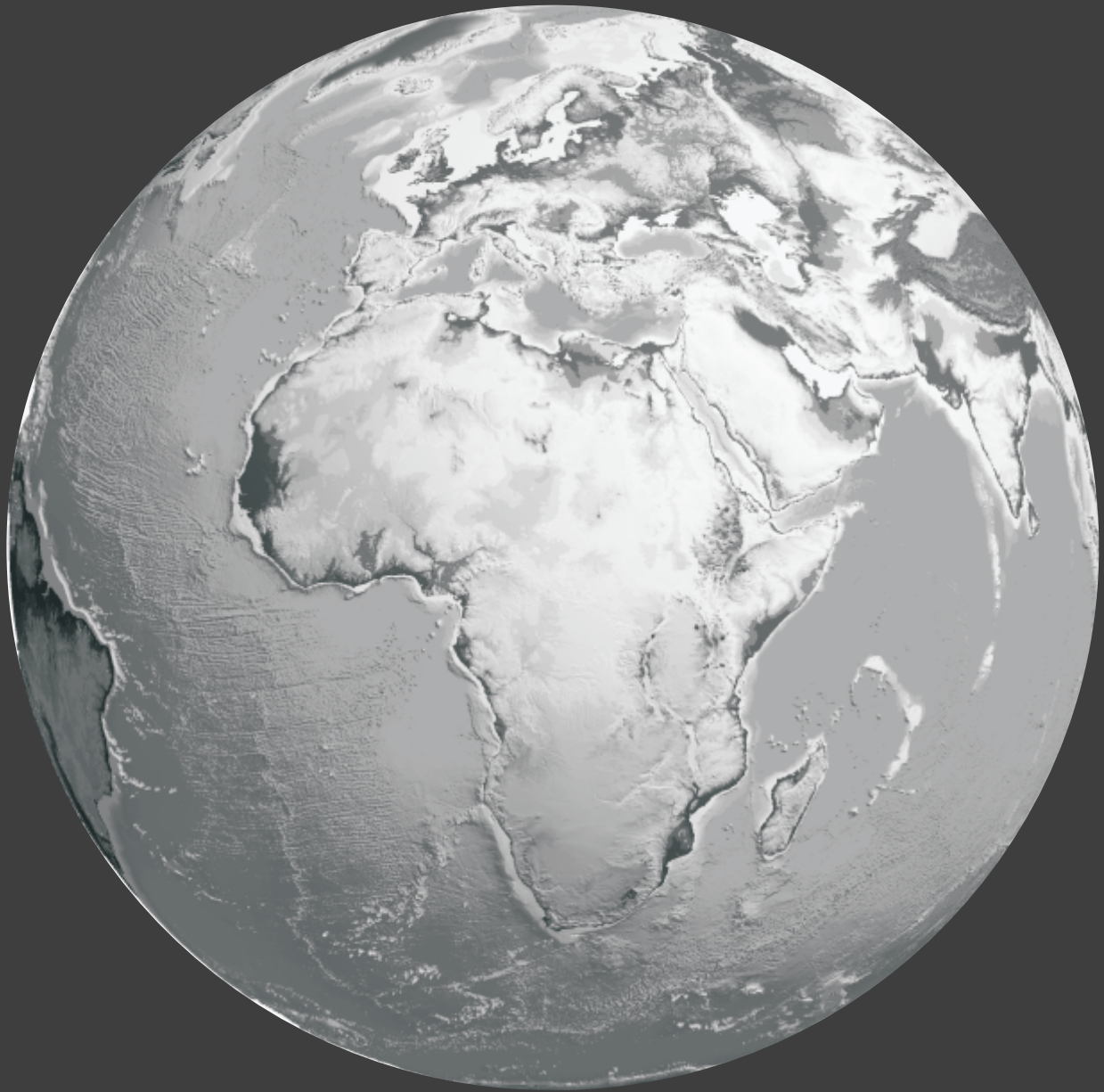


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Editor's Note

We are pleased to bring to you the second issue of Africa Trends for 2018.

The issue highlights some political and geostrategic developments in Libya, Comoros and Nigeria, and presents an analysis of the state of blue economy initiatives in Africa. The cover story by Njoki Mboce makes suggestions regarding what can be done to achieve a more effective multinational and multi-agency framework of collaboration among countries in Africa for purposes of nurturing a sustainable blue economy. A commentary by Prasanta Kumar Pradhan points to the importance of holding elections in Libya and the challenges that are likely to come in the way of Libyan reconstruction. A second commentary by Maitreyee Shilpa Kishor dwells on the strategic importance of Comoros for China in a region that has substantial Indian presence. In the viewpoint, Sanjay Badri-Maharaj posits that the Nigerian navy has put its modest budgets to judicious use and rejuvenated its fleet to perform EEZ patrols. Reviewing an edited volume entitled *Political Change in the Middle East and North Africa*, Nagapushpa Devendra highlights the many changes that have come about in the Arab world post the "Arab Spring".

We look forward to your feedback.

Cover Story

FUNCTIONAL MARITIME SECURITY ENFORCEMENT COLLABORATION: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY IN AFRICA

Africa has an extensive and strategically located maritime space. This domain is vital for various reasons, including its abundance of economic resources and as a conduit for trade. Unfortunately, the potential of the African maritime space is being undermined by persistent, multifaceted and fluid domestic, regional and international threats and vulnerabilities. To tackle this, littoral African states have entered into various collaborative engagements at international and inter-agency level. The success of these arrangements is in turn greatly hampered by various practical challenges, including mistrust, diversity, 'silo approach' and lack of identified common Afro-centric security priorities and protocols. An urgent need for a functional collaborative engagement emerges as vital for a sustainable blue economy in Africa.

Njoki Mboce*

Africa's Majestic Maritime Space and its Vulnerabilities

The blue economy is often referred to as the "New Frontier of African Renaissance".¹ This comes as no surprise because Africa's blue economy comprises an extensive ocean resource base as well as vast lakes and rivers.² In fact, thirty-eight of the fifty-four African states are littoral.³ It is actually reported that maritime zones under Africa's jurisdiction total about 13 million square kilometers including territorial seas and approximately 6.5 million square kilometers of the continental shelf.⁴ Additionally, more than 90 per cent of Africa's imports and exports are conducted by sea and some of the most strategic gateways for international trade are in Africa.⁵ This underscores the economic and geopolitical importance of the seas. Nevertheless and perhaps as a consequence of these majestic features, Africa's maritime space is plagued by some major man-made security threats. Further, many of the threats continue to evolve as well as

...many of the threats continue to evolve as well as to transplant themselves in newer areas.

* Ms Njoki Mboce is a lawyer, consultant, academic and policy advisor. She has been a Visiting Fellow at the ALACUN Centre, IDSA, under the Africa Visiting Fellowship Programme.

to transplant themselves in newer areas. For instance, while piracy appears to have been greatly suppressed in East African waters, it has become quite prominent in the West African waters, especially within the Gulf of Guinea.⁶ Fish poaching is yet another challenge. These threats hamper Africa's sustainable blue economy. However, the good news is that there have been a significant rise in the number of regional initiatives for combating these threats.

The existing regional collaborative framework

Several collaborative regional engagements on maritime security have been initiated in Africa. They include adoption of regional strategies as well as frameworks and institutions. Some of the instruments that spell out the need and frameworks for such collaborations include the following:

- African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) (1985).⁷
- Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (1998) whose ultimate goal is to identify and eliminate substandard ships from the region.⁸
- New Partnership for Africa's Development Planning and Coordinating Agency, established (NEPAD) (2001) re-named as African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) in November 2018.⁹
- Africa Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) (2002).¹⁰
- Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (2006).¹¹
- Djibouti Code of Conduct (2009).¹²
- Amended Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean (2010).¹³ This is an amendment to the Original Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (1985).
- Gaborone Declaration (2012), aimed at ensuring that contributions of natural capital to sustainable economic growth, maintenance and improvement of social capital and human well-being are quantified and integrated into development and business practice.¹⁴
- 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2012).¹⁵
- Agenda 2063 (2013).¹⁶ This is a 50 year strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over.¹⁷ It builds on, and seeks to accelerate the implementation of past and existing continental initiatives for growth and sustainable development, such as the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty, the Minimum Integration Programme, the Programme for Infrastructural Development in Africa (PIDA), Regional Plans and Programmes and National Plans.¹⁸

Recent successes

The good news is that the African renaissance deriving from the blue economy has greatly enhanced Africa's global position. Thus, Kenya hosted the first global conference on the sustainable blue economy, in Nairobi from November 26 to 28, 2018.¹⁹ The event attracted over 18,000 participants from around the world.²⁰ Concrete commitments were made by various stakeholders, many of which were contained in a statement of intent.²¹ In February 2016, the potential power of the cooperative inter-regional maritime security architecture initiated by the Yaoundé Code of Conduct in June 2013 was clearly demonstrated.²² In this case involving M/T MAXIMUS, the navies of a number of regional states worked together to track and interdict a tanker that had been hijacked sixty miles off the coast of Cote d'Ivoire.²³ The pirates were either killed or captured, the hostages freed, and the vessel was returned to its owner.²⁴

...the African renaissance deriving from the blue economy has greatly enhanced Africa's global position.

Challenges

The foregoing discussion demonstrates the existence of a shared vision of a secure and sustainable blue economy, across Africa. Nevertheless, the following issues need to be addressed urgently.

- The prevalence of a 'silo approach' domestically, regionally as well as internationally. Since compliance as well as operationalising of all these instruments depends on state commitments and every state and every region, is to a large extent operating in silos, it becomes practically challenging to efficiently combat maritime threats.
- Divergent concepts of threats to maritime security and strategic priorities, leading to diverging priorities.
- Limited capabilities and capacity, consequently, many African countries are unable to effectively govern most of their maritime territories.²⁵
- Limited political will to commit to and implement collaborative agreements.
- Unstable governments, such as in Somalia, often leading to competing centres of governance exposed to external elements.²⁶
- Diverse, ever evolving, sophisticated, fluid and therefore cross-jurisdictional nature of maritime security threats.
- Increasing cooperation among maritime criminals in Africa.²⁷
- Increasingly sophisticated mechanics for engaging in maritime crime. This therefore frequently presents new challenges.

- Sea-blindness among many African countries translates into minimal expectations from the maritime space. Subsequently, little focus is paid to the blue economy resources as compared to the attention and investment placed on land-based resources.
- Dominance of the regional maritime threat perspective. This means that the interaction that many African countries have had with the sea has been in the context of maritime security threats, such as piracy. Therefore when many of the policy and law makers sit to make decisions regarding the maritime space, the decisions take a reactive 'defence posture', seeking to combat threats, as opposed to a proactive 'wealth perspective' seeking to harness the resources Africa needs to shift from the traditional approach of chasing after maritime security threats, to developing its maritime space.

Sea-blindness among many African countries translates into minimal expectations from the maritime space.

Recommendations for a Way Forward

Despite the many practical justifications for holding back on collaboration, the need to combat maritime security threats as well as to sustainably optimise on the opportunities and gains far outweigh the challenges. Consequently, there is need for greater focus on a functional framework to establish a more collaborative, pro-active and adaptable enforcement system of maritime security. Some useful suggestions have already been made. These include first, a strengthening intelligence collaboration to assist in risk mitigation against such violent and destabilising threats.²⁸ The challenge facing this recommendation is mistrust, diversity and a lack of established security priorities and protocols.²⁹ Second, a deliberate adjustment of the existing systems towards less burdensome network-based ones that can concentrate on issue-specific competencies and commonalities among states.³⁰

...there is need for greater focus on a functional framework...of maritime security.

There are however at least four other ways to circumvent the contentious issues and arrive at such a framework.

First, charting an Afro-centric agenda. To do this, Africa should adopt a more holistic and inward looking "maritime wealth perspective", based on the following:

- An assessment of, what Africa has, what Africa wants out of it and how to go about getting it. Africa will actually appreciate the great global potential that lies within the maritime space.
- An assessment of terrain.
- An assessment of threat(s).

Second, greater international multi-disciplinary research on the subject. Third, inter-national and inter-agency exchange of ideas. For instance, while Kenya is in the process of establishing her Coast Guard, countries such as South Africa and Mauritius have had a coast guard for more than 5 years. A lot of benefit can be drawn from a wider exchange on this among countries. And finally, empowering existing institutions such as the regional maritime rescue co-ordination centres.

Conclusion

There are several deficiencies in the existing collaborative framework, which hinders the growth of a sustainable blue economy in the region. To address this challenge, Africa needs to deliberately delineate her maritime interests. This requires a more Afro-centric focus on the potential, needs and subsequent functional arrangements. If this is not done, Africa will remain bereft of the fruits of her maritime labour.

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- ¹ Ken Findlay and Narnia Bohler-Muller, "South Africa's Ocean Economy and Operation Phakisa", *The Blue Economy Handbook of the Indian Ocean Region*, 2018, p. 231.
 - ² United Nations (ed.), *Africa's Blue Economy: A Policy Handbook*, Economic Commission for Africa, 2016.
 - ³ Ibid.
 - ⁴ Ibid.
 - ⁵ Ibid.
 - ⁶ Sean C Cornell, *Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea: Responses under International Maritime Law*, University of South Florida, St. Petersburg 2018.
 - ⁷ "African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)", at <https://www.preventionweb.net/organizations/4820>, (accessed on July 18, 2018).
 - ⁸ "Home- Welcome to Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control", <http://www.iomou.org/> (accessed January 7, 2019).
 - ⁹ New Partnership for Africa's Development, "About NEPAD", at <http://www.nepad.org/content/about-nepad#aboutourwork>, (accessed on July 18, 2018). The rationale behind the establishment of the African Union Development Agency is that it shall be a vehicle for the better execution of the African Union's Agenda 2063.
 - ¹⁰ African Ministers' Council on Water, "Welcome to AMCOW Where Every Drop Counts", at http://www.amcow-online.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=69%3Aabout-amcow&catid=34%3Aabout-amcow&Itemid=27&lang=en (accessed on July 18, 2018).
 - ¹¹ *Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA)*, at <https://www.apsoi.org/> (accessed on July 23, 2018).
 - ¹² *The Djibouti Code of Conduct*, at <http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/PIU/Pages/Content-and-Evolution-of-the-Djibouti-Code-of-Conduct.aspx> (accessed on July 23, 2018).
 - ¹³ "Amended Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean", at <http://web.unep.org/nairobiconvention/amended-nairobi-convention-protection-management-and-development-marine-and-coastal-environment-0> (accessed on July 23, 2018).

- ¹⁴ Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa, at <http://www.gaboronedeclaration.com/> (accessed on March 29, 2019).
- ¹⁵ African Union, *2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 Aim Strategy)*, at <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20180220/2-0-5-0-africa%E2%80%99s-integrated-maritime-strategy-2050-aim-strategy> (accessed on December 13, 2018).
- ¹⁶ African Union, *Agenda 2063*, at <https://au.int/en/agenda2063>, (accessed on December 20, 2018).
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ "Sustainable Blue Economy Conference", Nairobi, Kenya, 2018 at <http://www.blueeconomyconference.go.ke/> (accessed on December 20, 2018). The conference was held in collaboration with Canada and Japan.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Defence IQ, "Cooperative Security to Counter Cooperative Criminals", at <https://www.defenceiq.com/naval-maritime-defence/articles/cooperative-security-to-counter-cooperative#.XBqy8BR7ZJ8.gmail> (accessed on December 20, 2018).
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Teresa Whelan, "Africa's Ungoverned Space", *Nação e Defesa*, Instituto da Defesa Nacional, 2006, at <https://comum.rcaap.pt/handle/10400.26/1102> (accessed on March 29, 2019).
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Op. cit, n.22.
- ²⁸ Julia V McQuaid, *Maritime Security: Strengthening International and Interagency Cooperation*, Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria VA, 2009.
- ²⁹ Jamal Barnes and Daniel Baldino, "A Network Maritime Security Approach to Intelligence Sharing in the IOR", *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, Vol.14, Issue 3, 2018, pp.315-330.
- ³⁰ Ibid.

Commentary

LIBYA'S POLITICAL PROCESS: DELICATE PROGRESS, GIGANTIC CHALLENGES

While the political process is delicately poised and is making slow progress, there remain gigantic challenges to surmount. The main issues of contention among the different groups are sharing of political power, fight for control over Libya's huge petroleum resources, and accommodating the armed groups loyal to different factions into a unified national military force.

Prasanta Kumar Pradhan*

In the last few months of 2018, there was some significant and tangible progress in the Libyan political process. The major players in the Libyan political spectrum came to the negotiating table with the active mediation of UN and some other international actors. Since the UN-mediated Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) was signed in December 2015, there have been two major political factions controlling Libya. One is the Tripoli based government of Fayeze Al Sarraj which is recognised by the UN and some members of the international community; and the other is the Tobrouk-based government in the East that is backed by General Khalifa Haftar with the Libyan National Army. The presence of two parallel, competing and self-proclaiming governments with their own armed militias is a major hindrance in the process of transition in Libya.

Militia and terror groups creating hindrances

The southern part of the country has become particularly vulnerable and is infested with militia...

There are several militia groups actively operating across Libya and they are formed on the basis of their ethnicity, tribal and regional affiliations. The southern part of the country has become particularly vulnerable and is infested with militia groups as they find a conducive atmosphere in the absence of a legitimate central law enforcement authority.

Some militia groups from the neighboring countries are also operating in that region. This renders the southern international boundary violated; and a large swath of Libya's southern territory falling into the hands of the armed militias who indulge in illegal and criminal activities. Besides, terrorist groups such as ISIS and Al Qaeda have also found a safe haven in the south. Continuing instability has created a breeding

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ground for the terrorist groups in the country. The militia and terrorist groups not only present a hindrance to the political process but also create an atmosphere of deep insecurity and instability by often indulging in bloody clashes among themselves and attacking public and private property and institutions.

Negotiations between rival factions

In an effort to break the political stalemate, a meeting with the key stakeholders was held in Paris in March 2018. Key Libyan leaders such as Prime Minister Fayez Al Sarraj; General Khalifa Haftar, the president of the House of Representatives, Aguila Saleh; and the head of the council of state, Khaled Al Mishri participated in the conference. This was facilitated by France with many other countries and UN representatives participating in the discussions. The Paris meeting became the icebreaker between the governments of Tripoli and Tobrouk. In the meeting, the leaders agreed to hold the Parliamentary and Presidential elections on December 10, 2018, and more importantly, to accept the results of the election. They also agreed for unification of the central bank, establishing a unified national army and abolishing parallel governments and institutions.

In November 2018, another meeting was convened in Palermo, Italy, with the mediation of Italy. In the Palermo conference also key leaders Fayez Al Sarraj, Khalifa Haftar, Aguila Saleh and Khaled Al Mishri participated in the meeting along with representatives from around 20 countries and the UN in attendance. Though nothing more emerged from the meeting, it turned out to be another confidence building exercise in the fragile Libyan political process. All the parties reiterated their support for holding elections, to respect the election results, reunification of financial and security systems and so on. As result of continuous engagements, Khalifa Haftar has indicated not to attack Tripoli until such time as elections are held. Also, both factions came to the negotiating table and have agreed to participate in the transition process in a democratic manner. This in itself is a major breakthrough in the Libyan political process.

...both factions came to the negotiating table and have agreed to participate in the transition process in a democratic manner.

UN and the Libyan National Conference

Apart from its efforts to bring the political leaders to the negotiating table, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has also engaged with the general populace of Libya by facilitating the Libyan National Conference. During the consultative phase of the conference, several meetings were held in different parts of the country from April to July 2018 where people from different sections of the society participated and shared their views on the key issues facing them. A wide range of suggestions and opinions have been collected from the consultations with the citizens and the final phase of the conference is scheduled to be held in early 2019 before the parliamentary and presidential elections are held.

A wide range of suggestions and opinions have been collected from the consultations with the citizens...

The crucial 2019 elections

As per the Paris meeting, parliamentary and presidential elections should have been held in December 2018. But unregulated violence and armed conflict hindered creating a favorable atmosphere for holding the elections. The elections are now deferred to 2019. The 2019 elections to a large extent will determine the future political course of Libya. Importantly, the High National Elections Commission (HNEC), which is in charge of managing the elections, has received support from both the political factions. The HNEC has already started its preparations for holding elections in early 2019. As a favorable security environment is a necessary condition for the polls to take place, holding elections in the presence of terrorists and militia groups remains the major challenge for Libya. While the UN and several other members of the international community are working in the direction of conducting a peaceful election and subsequent transition of power to one central authority in Tripoli, the vested interests of the various political and militia groups in the country are the main hurdles on the way.

...the High National Elections Commission (HNEC)...has received support from both the political factions.

Challenges that remain

While the political process is delicately poised and is making slow progress, there remain gigantic challenges to surmount. The main issues of contention among the different groups are sharing of political power, fight for control over Libya's huge petroleum resources, and accommodating the armed groups loyal to different factions into a unified national military force. Thus, forming a unified central political authority, fair distribution of national wealth and legitimate security and military establishments under one civilian political authority would need to be achieved in the aftermath of the elections. Building consensus among the Libya's fractured political leadership on these critical issues to rebuild the country remains the foremost challenge for the Libyan political process. The progress made so far, as a result of the various meetings and negotiations among the parties, represents a unique opportunity for Libyan leaders to restore peace and stability in the country. Derailment of elections or backtracking from the agreements achieved by parties at the Paris and Palermo meetings would severely jeopardise all the efforts made in the direction of political transition and stabilisation.

Commentary

UNDER THE RADAR: CHINA'S GROWING TIES WITH COMOROS

Aid to, and investment in, strategically located countries in the IOR to establish a strong presence has been the thrust of the Chinese strategy. The steadily growing economic cooperation with Comoros is part of this strategy. For a China with global aspirations and a large economy to bankroll that aspiration, the engagement with Comoros promises to yield significant benefits in return for relatively little.

Maitreyee Shilpa Kishor*

The re-conceptualisation of the Indian and Pacific oceans as an interconnected whole – the Indo-Pacific – is an idea that has gained momentum in the strategic circles of most countries that have a presence in the region. By encompassing the stretch from Eastern Africa to Western Americas as a single region, it sheds light on China's increasingly visible attempts to assert itself as a maritime power capable of operating in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Aid to, and investment in, strategically located countries in the IOR to establish a strong presence has been the thrust of the Chinese strategy. The steadily growing economic cooperation with Comoros is part of this strategy. For a China with global aspirations and a large economy to bankroll that aspiration, the engagement with Comoros promises to yield significant benefits in return for relatively little.

The Comoros Factsheet

Comoros is an archipelagic country composed of 3 major islands – Grande Comore (Ngazidja), Anjouan (Nzwani) and Moheli (Mwali). It also claims Mayotte (Maroé), a fourth island that was part of Comoros under French colonial rule, but was retained by France through a controversial referendum before granting Comoros independence in 1975. It straddles the northern mouth of the Mozambique Channel between Mozambique and Madagascar¹, a region where offshore oil was recently discovered and is being further explored.

As a multi-ethnic country, it has had a turbulent political history with over 20 coups or coup attempts and multiple secessionist attempts by islands wanting to return to France. The political instability combined with heavy export dependence on commodities with volatile

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prices², lack of domestic employment opportunities, erratic and insufficient electricity supply, and poor physical and digital connectivity had stagnated economy the economy until 2015.³ Currently, Comoros is classified as a Least Developed Country (LDC) and stands 165th on the Human Development Index (HDI)⁴ with a GDP per capita (PPP) of just over \$1400.⁵

It also relies on foreign aid, which until recently, came mainly from France,...

Comoros is highly dependent on remittances which contribute to over 21 per cent of the GDP⁶ and mostly flow in from expatriates living in France and Mayotte.⁷ It also relies on foreign aid, which until recently, came mainly from France,⁸ which also was its largest trading partner till 2014.⁹ However, tensions with France over the control of Mayotte and the presence of illegal Comorian immigrants in the French overseas department have led to a deteriorating relationship.¹⁰

China's engagement with Comoros

The politico-socio-economic situation in Comoros has given China the chance to step up its presence in the East African island country. According to Mohamed Soilih, Vice President of Comoros, "(A)fter 40 years, China has become the first partner. Before it was France, now it is China."¹¹ China has always had a steady relationship with Comoros and was the

...the relationship has been a mutually beneficial one with Comoros receiving aid, investment and exports from China in return for endorsing the One-China policy.

first country to recognise independent Comoros in 1975. Since then, the relationship has been a mutually beneficial one with Comoros receiving aid, investment and exports from China in return for endorsing the One-China policy. The trade-off for China has been extremely reasonable since the beginning. The economic costs of securing Comoros's support were low and the result was a staunch ally in international fora. Chinese engagement with Comoros spans high level diplomatic

visits, medical aid, financial aid to help build and renovate infrastructure and public facilities, visits by Chinese technical experts and doctors as well as donations in kind. So far, China has partnered in major infrastructure projects like the construction of a new airport complex and the renovation of the People's Palace in Comoros' capital city of Moroni and the construction of a new hospital in Anjouan but the cost of these ventures is miniscule for China.¹²

Though Sino-Comorian cooperation dates back to 1975, China's foray into the Indian Ocean has further increased the value of Comoros as an ally. Wary of India's presence in Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles, China's growing ties with Comoros can be seen as an effort to

...China's growing ties with Comoros can be seen as an effort to mitigate India's footprint in the region.

mitigate India's footprint in the region. The strategic location of Comoros at the mouth of the Mozambique Channel gives China a legitimate reason to maintain a presence there, and though there are currently no reports of it building a military base in Comoros, this possibility cannot be entirely ruled out. China is reportedly providing military and Mandarin language training to Comorian soldiers in Beijing which

opens doors to further defence cooperation. Comoros is also the ideal location to set up a surveillance and listening station, similar to India's "listening post" in northern Madagascar.¹³

Given Comoros's large Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and its lack of resources to sustainably exploit it, Chinese support is crucial to further this "pragmatic cooperation"¹⁴. Recent discoveries of offshore oil and gas reserves off the coasts of Tanzania, Madagascar and Mozambique increase the importance of Comoros. Not only does it lie astride shipping lanes that carry oil to China, but explorations in the Comorian EEZ are likely to yield oil and natural gas¹⁵ which would help China's quest for diversifying its sources of fossil fuel imports. The waters around Comoros are important fishing grounds that could bolster China's seafood cache. Comoros had an agreement with the European Union (EU) to allow tuna fishing in its EEZ until it was terminated by the EU citing "the national authorities' poor or non-existent monitoring and control capacities"¹⁶. China has a similar agreement with Madagascar¹⁷ and has expressed the intention to finalise one with Comoros soon.

The waters around Comoros are important fishing grounds that could bolster China's seafood cache.

The cooperation between the two countries is set to improve in the future as Comoros has requested a visit from President Xi Jinping, who said he was "in favour" of this suggestion.¹⁸ China has also forgiven Comorian debt in November 2018¹⁹ and committed to further invest in connectivity projects to help President Azali Assoumani realise his vision of making Comoros a "developing country" by 2030.²⁰ So far, the state-controlled Comorian media looks positively at Chinese involvement in Comoros and reports public opinion to be largely pro-China. Juxtaposing China with France, former Vice President Fouad Mhadji argued that Chinese aid and investment has come without interference in domestic politics and is long term, which will substantially benefit Comoros.²¹

Friction in the relationship

However, discontent against China has started brewing. Fish stocks in the waters around Comoros are depleting and this is adversely affecting fishing – one of the three major occupations in the country. The fishing communities believe overfishing by Chinese vessels in traditionally Comorian fishing grounds is the reason. This story was reportedly suppressed by the government at the insistence of Chinese authorities.²²

...China will find it increasingly difficult to remain aloof from domestic politics in Comoros...

In addition, a politically charged high stakes election is coming up in early 2019. The incumbent president has drastically revised the constitution through a referendum to do away with the contested system of a rotating presidency²³, which the opposition boycotted.²⁴ In such a tense political scenario, China will find it increasingly difficult to remain aloof from domestic politics in Comoros and maintain the positive public opinion that currently exists.

Conclusion

Despite the current satisfaction with the Chinese model of investment, examples from other countries show that it is generally unsustainable. Debt driven infrastructure development, largescale environmental degradation and lax regulatory standards are the side effects of engagement with China that smaller developing nations are forced to accept. Moreover, since a presence in Comoros is vital to securing interests in the Mozambique Channel, India and France are also trying to rekindle ties with the island nation. The competition between these powers could spill over into Comoros, causing damage to its political stability, sovereignty and economy. The highly asymmetrical relationship between China and Comoros is one of convenience and mutual benefit that has worked out well so far. However, the lack of a deeper cultural, ideological and historical connection makes it vulnerable to the forces of international competition for influence in the East African region.

The highly asymmetrical relationship between China and Comoros is one of convenience and mutual benefit...

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- ¹ "CIA World Factbook – Comoros", at <http://www.ciaworldfactbook.us/africa/comoros.html> (accessed on December 13, 2018).
 - ² Comoros primarily exports ylang-ylang, vanilla and cloves.
 - ³ Toussaint Houeninvo, "Perspectives Économiques en Afrique 2018: Union des Comores", (Economic Perspectives in Africa 2018: Union of Comoros, translation mine), *African Development Fund*, at https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Generic-Documents/country_notes/Comores_note_pays.pdf (accessed on December 13, 2018).
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 - ⁶ Ibid.
 - ⁷ "FACTBOX: Relations between France and Comoros", March 27, 2008, at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-comoros-island-france/factbox-relations-between-france-and-comoros-idUSL2777864820080327> (accessed on December 15, 2018).
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 - ⁹ "The Observatory of Economic Complexity: Comoros", at <https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/com/> (accessed on December 18, 2018).
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Viewpoint

NIGERIA'S NAVAL POWER - REVIVING CAPACITY AFTER PROLONGED DECLINE

The Nigerian Navy is slowly clawing its way back to being a viable force capable of performing critical missions in respect of EEZ surveillance and patrol. It possesses an adequate fleet of inshore and riverine patrol craft and its growing refit and overhaul capabilities should prove adequate to the task of maintaining these vessels and augmenting them with new construction. However, the Nigerian Navy continues to face capability gaps in respect of the number of major surface combatants as well as the weapons systems available to the fleet.

Sanjay Badri-Maharaj*

Nigeria's navy is easily the largest in West Africa, with some 25,000 personnel and roughly 200 platforms.¹ However, its capabilities are not commensurate with its size as it is a force currently lacking modern surface combatants capable of any significant combat tasking. Perhaps in recognition of its limitations, the Nigerian navy has sensibly concentrated its efforts on procuring a fleet of offshore and inshore patrol vessels, augmented by local construction... craft have also been extensively deployed against Boko Haram.

...the Nigerian navy has sensibly concentrated its efforts on procuring a fleet of offshore and inshore patrol vessels, augmented by local construction...

Years of Expansion and Neglect

The late 1970s and 1980s saw a major expansion of the Nigerian navy's surface fleet. By 1981, the Nigerian Navy was, at least on paper, a potent force with a German designed MEKO 360H class guided-missile frigate – the NNS Aradu – spearheading a fleet that included a smaller, older frigate, the NNS Obuma, four corvettes of the Dorina and Erin'mi classes and six missile boats – three Ekpe class of German design and three Siri class of

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French design.² In addition to these vessels, there was a capable force of minesweepers, seaward defence boats and patrol craft.³

At the time, the Nigerian navy was arguably the best equipped surface fleet in sub-Saharan Africa. However, even as its capabilities increased, its training and maintenance capabilities failed to keep pace with the ever increasing demands of its vessels and chronic serviceability issues began to manifest themselves and the number of operational platforms plummeted, compounded by financial problems brought about by falling oil prices.⁴ Nigeria's Naval headquarters, in its overview of serviceability between 1999 and 2009, shows that of twenty-five major surface assets – combatants and support ships – no fewer than twenty were non-operational in 2009.⁵

...even as its capabilities increased, its training and maintenance capabilities failed to keep pace with the ever increasing demands of its vessels...

The lack of spares, adequately trained personnel and routine maintenance was acutely felt in respect of the relatively modern frigate Aradu and the missile boats. The Aradu suffered the ignominy of breaking down off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia in 1997 while deployed in support of Nigerian troops operating as part of ECOMOG.⁶ While the Aradu was restored to surface and participated in a number of exercises between 2005 and 2007, the vessel was operating at well below its optimal capacity.

Not only was the serviceability of surface assets severely compromised by internal shortcomings and lack of funding, the ordnance available to the major service combatants was also adversely affected. The OTOMAT anti-ship missiles equipping the Aradu and Ekpe classes were never subject to a life-extension program and no new missiles were ever purchased. This also applied to the Exocet anti-ship missiles of the Siri class and the Aspide surface-to-air missiles of the Aradu.⁷

Efforts to overhaul and maintain the fleet locally, through the Nigerian Naval Dockyard (NND) were only partially successful. Of 36 Inshore Patrol Craft (IPC) in the Nigerian Navy inventory docked at the NND between 2002 and 2007, only 11 IPC representing 30.5% were operational while the remaining 25 IPC - 69.5% - were non-operational. Furthermore, out of the 16 major surface ships refitted between 2003 and 2007, only seven, or 43.75%, were operational while the other 9 - 56.25% - were not operational.⁸

The Demise of the Aradu and Refitting older ships

Despite the prestige attached to its large flagship, the NNS Aradu seems to have met its end. After being docked alongside for some nine years, the condition of the vessel is now so poor that the Nigerian Navy needs USD 250 million to refit the Aradu – money which is simply not available.⁹ Given existing budgetary constraints, it is unlikely that a replacement for the Aradu, similar in size and capability as envisaged in its modernisation plans will come to fruition.¹⁰

On a more positive note is the fact that the six missile boats are showing some signs of re-entering service, albeit without their missiles. In 2016, all three Siri class vessels were observed

...restoring these six vessels to service will give the Nigerian navy effective patrol assets.

undergoing refits at the NND.¹¹ In addition, the three Ekpe class vessels were filmed also undergoing refits.¹² While somewhat less potent without their missiles, restoring these six vessels to service will give the Nigerian navy effective patrol assets. More importantly, the restoration of these vessels will serve as a morale boost for the navy and improve the confidence of the NND to undertake refits of naval vessels. However, despite being in refit for at least three years, there is as yet no sign of any of these vessels participating in naval exercises or operations.

Second-Hand Assets

The Nigerian Navy has acquired a significant number of reconditioned United States Coast Guard Vessels.

The Nigerian Navy has acquired a significant number of reconditioned United States Coast Guard Vessels. Two second-hand Hamilton class OPVs have been delivered to Nigeria and now form the country's largest operational naval assets.

In 2011, the USCG Chase was decommissioned and donated to the Nigerian Navy, which commissioned her as a frigate, NNS Thunder, although she lacks little by way of armament appropriate to such a role. The Thunder was commissioned into Nigerian service on January 23, 2012 but shortly thereafter, in March 2012, it collided with a vessel owned by Total S.A. on the Bonny River. More recently, the NNS Thunder, after being grounded since 2016 was declared unfit to sail following the failure of its critical components and machinery. However, in 2018, after strenuous efforts complicated by a lack of spares for the ageing vessel, the ship re-entered service.¹³ The second vessel, USCG Gallatin served with the United States Coast Guard until 31 March 2014, when she was decommissioned and thereafter she was transferred to the Nigerian Navy and renamed the NNS Okpabana.

The Hamilton class vessels though large and possessing significant range and endurance, are roughly five decades old and are at best an interim measure. The vessels are armed with 76mm gun but their electronics fit is dated and some of the sub-systems are non-operational.

It should be noted that the Hamilton class vessels are not the first former US Coast Guard ships procured by Nigeria. They had earlier taken delivery of an eclectic mix of former US Coast Guard vessels which included four 60 year old Balsam class buoy tenders.¹⁴ These vessels continue to serve the Nigerian Navy remarkably well despite their advanced age.

New Vessels

Nigeria's acquisition of new assets began in a modest manner. Priority was given to purchasing plethora of patrol craft the largest of which were two modern Sea Eagle patrol vessels each 38m in length to strengthen its offshore patrol assets. Additional acquisitions included inshore patrol vessels, the principal among them being five Shaldag class vessels from Israel, 22 Manta class craft from Singapore and 15 Defender class boats from the United States.¹⁵

Nigeria's most capable acquisitions came from China when, Nigeria ordered two P18N Offshore Patrol Vessels from CSOC in April 2012 for US\$42 million each.¹⁶ These are based on the Chinese Navy's Type 056 missile corvettes but have a dramatically reduced armament of a single 76mm gun, with a secondary armament of two 30mm and two 20mm guns. Unlike the Type 056, the P18Ns have helicopter hangars and an oil support recovery system for dealing with oil spills. The first vessel, the NNS Centenary, was commissioned in February 2015¹⁷ while the second ship, the NNS Unity, was commissioned in December 2016.¹⁸

Nigeria's most capable acquisitions came from China...

These two OPVs, alongside the two Hamilton class vessels represent the most potent surface assets available to the Nigerian Navy. Fortunately, Nigeria faces little by way of a conventional military threat from any of its neighbours and while the prestige of having missile frigates like the Aradu and a force of missile boats is undoubtedly attractive, Nigeria seems to have eschewed such an approach in favour of acquiring patrol vessels to secure its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and to deal with maritime crimes such as piracy, oil bunkering and smuggling and to combat terrorists operating in maritime and riverine areas. Piracy, in particular has been a chronic problem for Nigeria and the Nigerian Navy has deployed significant assets to contain piracy in the Gulf of Guinea as well as criminal elements using the country's waterways.¹⁹

...the Nigerian Navy has deployed significant assets to contain piracy in the Gulf of Guinea as well as criminal elements using the country's waterways.

To this end, on 3 September 2018, in a ceremony held at the Nigerian Naval Dockyard in Lagos, the Nigerian Navy commissioned sixteen new patrol boats. These included six French built OCEA fast patrol boats and ten new small boats.²⁰ The OCEA boats include two FPB 110 MKII hulls - Nguru (P 187) and Ekulu (P 188) - and four smaller FPB 72 MKII hulls - Shiroro (P 185), Ose (P 186), Gongola (P 189), and Calabar (P 190).²¹ These vessels represent repeat orders for OCEA craft following the delivery of three OCEA FPB 72 vessels in 2012-2013 and one FPB 98 in 2013.²²

While surface assets have shown a significant improvement in respect of numbers, their capabilities are modest though with the caveat that these capabilities are quite adequate for the off-shore, inshore, riverine and littoral patrol tasks that they are required to perform. Rather surprisingly, air support is very limited with two Nigerian Air Force ATR-42 maritime reconnaissance aircraft²³ being augmented by four surviving A109E light utility helicopters of the Nigerian Navy.²⁴

Local Construction Begins to Show Results

Though the Nigerian Naval Dockyard has long been involved in a difficult effort to refit and overhaul Nigeria's fleet, it is only recently that efforts in indigenous warship construction have started to show results. In 2012, the NNS Andoni, a Seaward Defence Boat, was commissioned into the Nigerian

...efforts in indigenous warship construction have started to show results.

Navy.²⁵ This modest 31m vessel was intended to be the first of a class of three and represents a major step forward in Nigerian shipbuilding capabilities. A second vessel, the NNS Karaduwa, was commissioned in December 2016 but is larger at 40m with a third vessel of 50m in length being planned.²⁶

Challenges Abound

The Nigerian Navy is slowly clawing its way back to being a viable force capable of performing critical missions in respect of EEZ surveillance and patrol. It possesses an adequate fleet of inshore and riverine patrol craft and its growing refit and overhaul capabilities should prove adequate to the task of maintaining these vessels and augmenting them with new construction. However, the Nigerian Navy continues to face capability gaps in respect of the number of major surface combatants as well as the weapons systems available to the fleet. Nonetheless, it is possible that with its current more modest inventory, the Nigerian Navy may be capable of sustaining itself on a modest budget far more effectively than in the past when the prestige and lure of missile-equipped vessels perhaps overextended the limited resources made available to the navy.

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Book Review

Inmaculada Szmolka, *Political Change in the Middle East and North Africa*, (1st ed.), Edinburgh University Press, UK, 2017, Pp 446.

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Nagapushpa Devendra*

The Arab Spring, which has led to a series of pro-democratic uprisings in several Middle East and North African countries (MENA) in 2011, has generated a vast amount of academic literature. Even today, many are trying to study and understand how and why Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen entered into an uncertain period of transition; Syria and Libya were drawn into civil conflict; while the wealthy monarchies in the Persian Gulf remained largely unshaken by these events. In this context, the book titled, *Political Change in the Middle East and North Africa* edited by Inmaculada Szmolka provides an exceptional and robust academic analysis of the region. The key distinguishing feature of the book is that using a comparative approach it analyses and explains the consequences of the political change that have taken place since 2011, not only at the national level (within political regime), but also at regional and international level (the MENA region and Western policies towards the countries).

The book is organised into four sections. In part I, Szmolka reflects on the existence of a new wave of democratisation in the wake of Arab Spring. He states that while simultaneity, contagion, diffusion and emulation did feature in the political dynamics of change following the Arab Spring, the democratic tsunami did not manifest in all the countries in the region. He argues that political change can and often does take different directions, not all of which necessarily lead to a regime change. A regime might move from authoritarianism towards democracy (Tunisia), but the transition can also lead to a new form of authoritarianism (Morocco, Jordan, Algeria and Oman). Therefore, he posits a more appropriate phrase 'wave of political change', involving different processes and varying outcomes, as compared to the inaccurate and simplistic term 'Arab Spring'.

To substantiate Szmolka's theory, Rafael Bustos analyses the wave of political change from the perspective of four different mainstream IR theories –neo-realism, social constructivism,

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liberalism and critical theory. The neo-realists tend not to focus on the Arab Spring itself but rather on the possible threat that follows from it (an increase in jihadism, nuclear proliferation), and the consequences for - US interests. But the critical theorist stresses on the economic causes and implications of armed intervention (distribution of market, the military advantage of the US hegemony). The liberals move between rational calculations regarding the ability of institutions (UNSC) to deal with the emerging situations and a nuanced defence of the doctrine of responsibility to protect, despite the evident lack of restraint shown in the Libyan case. Constructivists questioned the very thesis that the countries of the North and the European Union were the 'natural transmitter of norms' when Arab societies of the south empowered themselves through the Arab Spring. Bustos also points out the direct effects of foreign policy intervention and support to non-democratic and aggressive regimes (Saudi Arabia and UAE), where there has been no evidence of any significant political changes since 2011.

Part II of the book opts for a horizontal comparative analysis by themes: parties and political groups, elections, constitutional framework, power-relations, governance, civil society, media, rights and freedom.

Lise Storm explains how despite the fact that some authoritarian regimes fell and electoral processes were established, politics is still dominated by political parties supported by the hegemonic power (Morocco, Kuwait, Jordan and Bahrain). Guadalupe Martinez-Fuentes point out the heterogeneity of the MENA countries in terms of advance, regression, stability and fluctuation in electoral integrity (EI). Martinez-Fuentes argues that the 'EI' has not had any relationship with other variables, such as the kind of regime that emerges from the political transition, the timing of transition and the way the transition is conducted. Therefore, it is worth debating if the expectations of democratisation that are associated with progress in EI in some countries are realistic or overly optimistic.

Ewa Strzelecka and Maria Angustias Parejo focus on constitutional reforms in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. Except in Tunisia, the scope of the constitutional amendments has been limited and has perpetuated the dominance of the authoritarian rulers. Victoria Veguilla, in elaborating on the role of government in the uprisings explains how in the majority of cases, it played a subordinate role as compared to the other executive and legislative institutions, such as the president, monarch and other national (Egypt) and armed groups (Libya, Syria and Yemen) or international actors (Saudi Arabia and Iran). As a result, there is a greater concentration of power in the MENA region, with the exception of the new democratic regime of Tunisia. Raquel Ojeda and Francesco Cavatorta highlight the lack of good governance in the MENA region, which they believe is not a story of poor achievements in employment, the legal system, or political stability, but a much broader failure of international institutional policies.

On the role of civil society and liberties in the aftermath, Carmelo Perez-Beltran and Ignacio Alverz-Ossorio claim that the civil societies that emerged are highly politicised. They draw this conclusion by analysing aspects such as the autonomy of civil society vis-à-vis the state; civil society's mediatory role between the population and the state; and its role as an

alternative power base and as a pressure group in controlling political actions. On the other hand, Luis Melian illustrates how in the majority of the countries, the situation of civil liberties is either precarious or alarming. Instead, Javier Garcia-Martin explains that one of the major results of the uprising has been the attempt to further control information flows, except in Tunisia and Algeria. The most common method has been the attempt to homologue information on the internet with information provided by traditional media and, thus to apply the same laws to it. Governments in Turkey and Saudi Arabia consider the free flow of information on the internet as one of the causes of the uprising, so a significant part of new media law is aimed at controlling it.

In Part III, Jordi Quera and Eduard Solar evaluate the impact of internal political change on the regional order. They appear to believe that the constitutional elements of the regional order continue to operate as usual and that the slight changes in the fundamental institutions since the Arab Spring generally related to a more fundamental systemic change that took place in the context of the 2003 war in Iraq. Marien Duran and Victor Bados talk about the Islamic State that brought a new dimension to the war in Iraq and Syria as well as to the new mode of governance in the conquered territories, thereby a security framework in the MENA region. They further analyse the implications for security throughout the region taking into account the international community's response and the new configurations of regional and global alliance.

On the international front, Irene Fernandex-Molina and Juan Tovar, explore the continuity of EU and US policies in the MENA region since the Arab Spring. On the one hand, Molina claims that the EU policies towards the countries of the southern Mediterranean neighbourhood changed drastically. Today the EU has put a stronger and seemingly self-critical emphasis on supporting 'democracy transformation' and 'building deep democracy' by applying greater differentiation and positive-negative conditionalities. On the other hand, Tovar argues that the US doctrine has well changed, but it has emphasised vital and core strategic interests such as the need to fight terrorism, the defence of the renunciation of military intervention in Syria against Assad and the need for military withdrawal from Iraq.

Part IV analyses the processes of political change because of the Arab Spring. Szmolka reasons that the only successful democratisation that occurred in Tunisia is due to the agreement between the political parties, the concession made by the dominant party and a strong and participative civil society. These agreements were lacking in Egypt and suffered due to the lack of prior institutional architecture in Libya. In addition, the empowerment of old regime elites in the transition process, the exclusion of revolutionary movement, and the antagonism between political forces and their regional backers in Yemen led to the failure of the democratisation process. Moreover, Szmolka along with Irene Fernandez-Molina also scrutinize the political liberalisation process in other MENA countries such as Morocco, Jordan, Oman and Algeria. They state that the political reforms were largely cosmetic and therefore have not led to a change in the authoritarian nature of the political regimes. Lastly, Szmolka and Marien Duran dwell on countries that experienced negative change following the Arab Spring, Turkey, Kuwait and Bahrain.

Overall, the book covers a number of issues and underscores the tenuous nature of early post- Arab Spring politics in each of the MENA countries. Most of the chapters provide a good overview of the key variables for understanding why, in some countries, social and political movements degenerated, while others remained completely unaffected. However, the book has some limitations that are often witnessed in edited volumes. Some chapters appear to deal with the central theme of the volume – authoritarianism and democratisation processes – as something of an afterthought. There is also some redundancy in the book, with some thematic chapters providing much of the historical narrative that should be left to the case studies.

Not every aspect of an issue can be touched upon in any given book. Notable among the omissions in this one is a discussion of the regional dynamics, especially the alleged influence of Iran, which led to an aggressive reaction from Saudi Arabia in the region. For instance, in the case of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia sent its troops to support the Sunni-minority regime, arguing that the uprising in the country was orchestrated by Iran to support the rise of the Shia majority. Moreover, while the book leaves few stones unturned in achieving a synoptic view on the role of EU and the US, it fails to address the role of Russia, a more active player attempting to defend its growing interest in the MENA region during the Arab Spring. Russia feared that the rise of Islamic State in North Africa could negatively affect other regions including its North Caucasus. And in the Middle East it feared the downfall of the Assad regime as the end of an important obstacle that has served to contain the rise of a Sunni fundamentalist movement, directed by Saudi Arabia. These factors led to the greater involvement of Moscow in the MENA region, especially in Libya and Syria where its policies converged and diverged with the West on several grounds. While the West turned a deaf ear to Russia's warning over external military interference in Libya, they could not take down Assad regime against Moscow's will. Thus, the clash of interests of the international actors during and after the Arab Spring is yet another uncovered aspect.

A third aspect that it does not dwell on is at the local or national front. There have been several interesting reactions and measures adopted by the people, especially the minorities in the MENA region to cope with the changing socio-economic and political process, both in a positive and negative way. For instance, how are the Kurds, who have often been a proxy for regional or international players, dealing with the change in political process in the aftermath of Arab Spring in Iraq (authoritarianism to democratization), Syria (civil war situation) and Turkey (democratisation to authoritarianism)? What are the hitherto repressed youth, who are better educated and-aware now, dealing with both authoritarianism and democratisation? While some authors do talk about the rights and freedom, media rights, the status of civil society before and after the uprising, it is noteworthy, most of the authors who contributed to this book share a western perspective. This was reflected in some authors' recommendations where they suggested quick fixes. The ground-realities in the MENA region could have been gleaned by conducting fieldwork that is more rigorous, interviews, and interactions with people.

Despite all these factors, the book does provide a much-needed update on the emerging facets of political change in the region in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.

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Articles could be of approximately 2000 words. Commentaries can range between 1,000-1,500 words (excluding footnotes) and book reviews between 600-1,000 words. Guidelines for contributors may be found at: <http://www.idsa.in/africatrends>. Submissions may be emailed to the Editor at idsa.africatrends@gmail.com.

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