

<b>Institution: City University London</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 21 Politics and International Studies</b>
<b>Title of case study: Challenges for and Assessment of British and EU Policies in the Mediterranean Neighbourhood (Relating to 'Arab Spring' and Syria Crisis in particular)</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>(1) European Commission officials and humanitarian aid agency representatives based their discussion of European Union (EU) and humanitarian policy options in Syria and their ultimate recommendations to United Nations officials in Geneva on the findings of a policy options paper prepared by Professor Rosemary Hollis of City University London. In addition, senior UK military planners incorporated Hollis's findings in contingency planning in April 2012 and April 2013 following her invited participation in brainstorming sessions.</p> <p>(2) Hollis's research findings expanded UK-Turkish dialogue and contributed to the success of a key forum (<i>Tatlidil</i>, Istanbul, October 2012) aimed at deepening bilateral relations between the two countries.</p> <p>(3) The 2013 Foreign Policy Report of the Foreign &amp; Commonwealth Office (FCO) on the 'Balance of Competences' between the UK and the EU was substantiated with evidence from her research.</p> <p>(4) Her research informed and shaped media coverage and civil society debate about Arab uprisings during the period 2009-2012.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The Principal Investigator for the underpinning research is Professor Rosemary Hollis, Professor of Middle East Policy Studies, Department of International Politics at City University London. Since her appointment at City in March 2008 Hollis has pursued three interconnected lines of research on (a) contemporary UK policy in the Middle East; (b) EU policies in the Mediterranean and the wider Middle East including Iran; and (c) international engagement in the quest for resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In all cases Hollis's research has combined analysis of UK, EU and US policies with work on the drivers of political change and conflict in the Middle East. Hollis's research has also benefited from informal collaboration with other staff in the Department (Aran, Collantes-Celadore, Silvestri); other colleagues at City in the Department of Journalism, The City Law School, Cass Business School, the Department of Psychology and the University Counselling Service; and colleagues at the Universities of Durham, Bradford, St Andrews, Cambridge, Exeter, Queen's University Belfast and King's College London.</p> <p><u>Key findings</u> of this research which specifically underpin the impact achieved include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contemporary developments in the Middle East can be best understood as the latest phase in an evolution which dates back to the creation of the Arab state system and drawing of borders (largely by Britain and France) in the immediate aftermath of the First World War and collapse of the Ottoman Empire. That system meant that dictatorial regimes (challenged recently in the 'Arab Spring') emerged at the expense of democracy and human security in the region.</li> <li>2. Since the mid-twentieth century Western policy-makers have generally given precedence to establishing working relationships with dictatorial Arab regimes rather than challenging them about their human rights record or failure to promote democracy. After 9/11 in particular, security and intelligence cooperation with such regimes took precedence over democracy promotion, even though the US, Britain and the EU launched initiatives and programmes with the latter goal during the 1990s and 2000s.</li> <li>3. Policy-makers can be trapped in a 'mindset' that may be informed by accurate information initially but atrophies over time and is rarely revisited or reconsidered. Thus British (and US) policy-makers dealing with President Mubarak of Egypt in the years immediately prior to his ousting in 2011 became convinced that he was a fixture and 'useful' and were blinded to his vulnerability.</li> <li>4. Britain's New Labour governments allowed policy presentation to take precedence over content. By associating Britain with the promotion of 'values' such as democracy and human rights, the Government sought to maximise British influence overseas under the rubric of 'making Britain a</li> </ol>

force for good in the world'. Yet miscalculation and inadequate capacity to deliver on UK objectives in specific contexts, notably in Iraq, damaged Britain's reputation, led to accusations of hubris and failed to disguise the Government's associations with some Arab dictators.

5. The focus of UK foreign policy shifted from a regions-based approach to one which sought to maximise British influence in key power centres (including Washington, the EU, the International Monetary Fund, the G8 and NATO). After 9/11 the emphasis changed from making Britain a 'force for good in the world' to combatting 'evil', by which was meant, essentially, Islamist-inspired terrorism. In response to the Arab uprisings, there was a further recalibration of policy, this time to 'partner' with Arab civil society groups seeking democracy. It proved to be too little, too late to reverse Britain's declining unilateral influence and impact.

6. EU policy initiatives in the Mediterranean are framed to 'export European values' to neighbouring countries, thereby prompting resistance on the receiving end. Meanwhile, EU measures to combat terrorism and control migration rely on the cooperation of the very dictatorships they purport to want to change.

7. On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the EU approach has ameliorated the impact of continued occupation of the West Bank and blockade of Gaza but in so doing it has perpetuated, rather than ended, both. Declaratory statements about what the parties to the conflict *should* do have taken the place of strategies to effect change.

The research that produced the above findings involved individual investigation of documentary and media sources covering a 20 year period; interviews with decision-makers and practitioners; and participation in numerous workshops with fellow academics, politicians, business and the military in Brussels, Paris, Berlin, London, Washington, Istanbul, various Arab states, Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

### 3. References to the research

Hollis R. (2013). Mubarak: the Embodiment of 'Moderate Arab Leadership'. In L. Freedman & J. Michaels (Eds.), *Scripting Middle East Leaders: The Impact of Leadership Perceptions on US and UK Foreign Policy* (pp.171-193). London: Bloomsbury Academic Press. This was the output of research (June 2011 to January 2012), undertaken by invitation from other academics at King's College London and in US, as part of a study sponsored by the Research Councils UK Global Uncertainties Programme.

Hollis R. (2013). Europe in the Middle East. In L. Fawcett (Ed.), *International Relations of the Middle East* (3rd ed., pp.344-362). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hollis R. (2012). [No friend of democracy: Europe's role in the genesis of the 'Arab Spring'](#). *International Affairs*, 88(1), 81-94.

Hollis R. (2011). [The UfM and the Middle East 'Peace Process': An Unhappy Symbiosis](#). *Mediterranean Politics*, 16(1) 99-116.

Hollis R. (2010). *Britain and the Middle East in the 9/11 Era*. London: Wiley-Blackwell and Chatham House.

The work cited underwent rigorous academic review processes prior to publication. The publishers are all highly regarded in the academic domain.

### 4. Details of the impact

- (1) EC officials and humanitarian aid agency representatives based their discussion of EU and humanitarian policy options in Syria and their ultimate recommendations to UN officials in Geneva on the findings of a policy options paper prepared by Hollis. In addition, senior UK military planners incorporated Hollis's findings in contingency planning (April 2012; April 2013) following her invited participation in brainstorming sessions. The fact that the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) and the UK military asked Hollis to contribute to their deliberations derived in part from their acquaintance with her work through her prior participation in the deliberations of these bodies and decision-makers. Specifically, between 2008 and 2012 she contributed to several policy workshops and publications of the EUISS in Paris; presented research findings to military service personnel on a series of Ministry of Defence short courses on the Middle East run by The Department for Peace Studies at Bradford University; and

served on a six-person international support team helping a group of European elder statesmen/women, led by Lord Patten and former French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine, to develop policy initiatives for the EU regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was on the basis of this track record and access that Hollis was invited by the Director of the EUISS in late 2011 to formulate a policy options paper for humanitarian intervention in Syria, commissioned for the EC. Her paper outlined three scenarios for the Syria crisis and their implications. The EUISS then used those scenarios to frame a discussion with EC officials and humanitarian agency staff in Paris on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012. The findings of that discussion were then used as the basis for a follow-up discussion with UN officials in Geneva, which in turn fed into the UN initiative headed by Kofi Annan to seek a diplomatic solution to the Syria crisis. The impact of Hollis's work was in informing the discussion about scenarios and thence contingencies and possibilities. In a similar vein, when the UK military was engaged in developing contingency plans for military and/or humanitarian intervention in Syria (2012-2013) Hollis was one of five UK academics with Middle East expertise to participate in two brainstorming sessions of senior British military personnel in April 2012 and April 2013 specifically to provide input on the likely regional repercussions of such intervention.

- (2) Research findings expanded UK-Turkish dialogue and contributed to the success of a key forum (*Tatlidil*, Istanbul, October 2012) aimed at deepening bilateral relations between the two countries. For the purpose of developing a closer bilateral UK-Turkey relationship, senior parliamentarians, led by Jack Straw on the UK side, set up a Forum called the *Tatlidil*, which first met at Ditchley Park in October 2011. Hollis was one of the invited participants and during that meeting she learned that the Turkish delegation would have liked more input about UK policy in the Middle East to parallel their input on Turkish policy. Consequently, at the second meeting of the *Tatlidil* (12-14 October 2012 in Istanbul) Hollis presented a summation of her research findings on the British response to the Arab uprisings which served as a counterpart to a parallel Turkish policy presentation. This prompted a lively debate about UK actions, choices and lessons learned which was pronounced by participants the most vigorous and engaging discussion of the whole Forum. Hollis was commended (among others) for her input by former UK Ambassador to Turkey Sir David Logan and Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary Douglas Alexander. She helped to expand and progress the bilateral dialogue and with it bilateral relations. The Turkish Ambassador to the UK attested to this when he specifically asked Hollis to be sure to save the dates of the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Tatlidil* (November 2013) so that she could again be present.
- (3) The 2013 Foreign Policy Report of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) on the 'Balance of Competences' between UK and EU was substantiated with evidence from Hollis' research. In 2012 the UK Government began preparation of its 'Balance of Competences' review to inform debate and thence decision-making on UK membership of the EU. Hollis was one of the individuals invited by the FCO (7<sup>th</sup> December 2012) to submit evidence to inform the part of the review devoted to foreign policy and to participate in a preparatory consultation at the FCO on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2013. Hollis made several interventions at the consultation meeting to clarify the questions that the FCO wished her to address in the evidence submitted. The evidence she subsequently submitted drew directly on research undertaken on the substance and impact of UK and EU policies in the Mediterranean neighbourhood. This evidence was quoted four times in the *Review of the Balance of Competences between the United Kingdom and the European Union Foreign Policy* (July 2013, pages 45, 46 and 47) in its Case Study on the 'Arab Spring'. It served to substantiate the argument advanced there that the EU has added value to the pursuit of UK policy and interests. Of the 64 'Academics, Thinktankers and Other Individuals' who submitted evidence for this report, 13 were academics, representing ten UK universities (with two each from the Universities of Oxford, Birmingham and City University London). Hollis and Professor Alan Riley (The City Law School) were City's two contributors.

Regarding UK policy in response to the Arab Spring (2010-2012), the FCO and Department for International Development (DFID) have set up an Advisory Group to provide feedback on their Arab Partnership Initiative. In June 2012 Hollis was invited to serve on the Arab Partnership Advisory Group. Her contributions to the biannual meetings of this group (at the FCO) have drawn directly on her research on UK and wider EU initiatives to promote reform in the 'Arab

Spring' countries. This work has informed the government assessments of the value and limitations of what their partnership can achieve.

- (4) Research informed and shaped media coverage and civil society debate about Arab uprisings during the period 2009-2012. Hollis is frequently invited to give expert analysis on broadcast media on the basis of her research and expert reputation. Between 2011 and 2013 she presented her analysis and offered commentary on BBC Radio 4 (*The Today Programme*, *Start the Week*, *Any Questions*), the BBC News Channel, Sky News, the BBC World Service, Al Jazeera, Voice of Russia Radio and TV, Radio France International, LBC, BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Radio Wales; RTE (Ireland), British Forces Broadcasting (BFBS), CNN, CNBC, CBC (Canada), Austrian Radio, ABC (Australia), and National Public Radio (USA). She received 855 mentions in the media between December 2010 and December 2012. Foreign Office Minister Alastair Burt was prompted to invite Hollis to join a group of specialists for a brainstorming about the implications for Britain of the Arab uprisings on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2011 as a result of having heard her comment on *The Today Programme*. Hollis's contributions to media output have contributed to a wider public understanding of and engagement with her areas of research expertise, including the Middle East and the Syrian conflict.

Hollis has also been requested to provide commentary for *The Huffington Post*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Times*, *LA Times* and *Reuters*. Hollis also gave a number of public lectures and talks to general audiences outside academia, including school groups, civil society activist groups and participants in current affairs meetings for non-academics.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

The items listed below are numbered to match and provide corroboration for the four demonstrations of impact detailed above.

- (1) Copy of Hollis's written contribution to an EUISS report for the EU on the implications of the Syria crisis '*Syria and Its Neighbours*' (February 2012); a copy of the follow-up invitation to a brainstorming at EUISS about scenarios for Syria and Humanitarian responses; list of attendees at brainstorming; draft agenda for follow-up in Geneva with UN. Confirmation that Hollis's scenarios were used to frame discussions can be provided by the then Director of EUISS.
- (2) Letters of invitation to the *Tatlidil*; invitation to speak at the second *Tatlidil*; letter of commendation for Hollis input from senior British MP. Confirmation of value of Hollis's input can be obtained from former UK Ambassador to Turkey and orchestrator of *Tatlidil* agenda.
- (3) *Review of the Balance of Competences between the United Kingdom and the European Union Foreign Policy* (July 2013) pages 45, 46 and 47 where Hollis's evidence is quoted. Minutes of Arab Partnership Advisory Group.  
[www.gov.uk/government/policies/working-for-peace-and-long-term-stability-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/supporting-pages/the-arab-partnership](http://www.gov.uk/government/policies/working-for-peace-and-long-term-stability-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/supporting-pages/the-arab-partnership).
- (4) E-mailed responses to Hollis's media appearances sent by viewers/listeners previously unknown to her.  
 Sample clips of media appearances (e.g., BBC Radio 4 'Start the Week' 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2011; BBC Radio 4 'Any Questions' 21<sup>st</sup> October 2011; BBC Today Programme 29<sup>th</sup> August 2013 with audience figures).