

The Obama Doctrine, Expanding “The NATO Zone” as an Instrument of Global Warfare

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The US has spent more than \$4 trillion on the Iraqi War. It is argued that more than 4,000 American soldiers have been killed. The number of civilian deaths is not less than 250,000. In other words, US foreign policy under the Bush Doctrine was a kind of disaster. It was very costly, and bloody. Worse, it ruined US prestige in the Muslim world. Yet, the usual pace of US foreign policy was also very slow, so much so that it tended to take decades for it to realize anything.

But things are different today. In sharp contrast, the former regimes and rulers of Libya, Tunisia and Egypt were ousted in less than eight months. I am not saying that the US was behind the Arab Spring, but the US successfully oriented it to move in line with US interests. US-educated academic Abdurrahim El-Keib was appointed the new Libyan prime minister. Prominent Ennahda figures have been talking positively of the US. Since President Harry Truman, with the mild exception of Bill Clinton's time, it is only now that the US has acquired the capacity to generate some level of soft power in the Middle East. Consequently, the US is now forming effective coalitions with states such as Turkey and France on the matter of the Arab Spring, as well as with the various factions of the opposition, including Islamists and seculars. All such developments make it possible to talk about a new doctrine prevailing in US foreign policy: the Obama Doctrine.

One can identify certain characteristics of the Obama Doctrine, such as (1) the prioritizing of the domestic opposition: Unlike in the past, foreign intervention is no longer the “agent” of regime change. Instead, that agent is now support for the domestic opposition. This support, we are all sure, includes military issues as well. (2) Rapid contact with the opposition: This contact quickly ends up as official recognition of the opposition as the new-regime. (3) There is room for Islamist groups: Some effort is made to persuade them that they will not be excluded. (4) Keeping the Israeli profile lower: Israel is still very influential, but it is no secret that Barack Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu hate each other. The Obama Doctrine does not constitute a serious deviation from the traditional American-Jewish alliance. However, it certainly requires Israel to maintain a low profile while Arab politics heat up. (5) Using Arab politics to exclude or isolate Russia, China and Iran in the Middle East: The shadow agenda of excluding these states coincides with all major issues on the US agenda regarding Arab politics. (6) The return of NATO as an influential instrument.

The NATO issue deserves more attention. It would not be wrong to describe the huge area from Spain to eastern Turkey, including North Africa, as the “NATO zone.” NATO is the most important rule-maker in this large geographical area. This colossal and still-expanding zone

transforms the traditional diplomacy and strategy of the West. The present-day NATO reminds us that, as in the early '50s, NATO is working to consolidate its zones of influence. This rise of NATO is somehow about the failure of the EU in global politics. For instance, convinced of this failure, Turkey has upgraded its relations with the US and NATO. It is not surprising to see that, during the Arab Spring, the US and Turkey became close allies once again.

However, there is one important question here: Where is the anti-NATO zone being formed? Soon, states like China, insecure about what is happening in the Middle East, will react. This reaction will determine the new politico-tectonics of global politics.

Although everything has gone almost well between Turkey and the US during the Arab Spring, Turkey may yet surprise the US when it comes to relations with the anti-NATO zone, notably with China. True, Turkey is historically part of the Western system. But it has also been the historic "zone broker" state. Thus, Turkey has been both part of one zone, and the contact broker for it and the other zone. Turkish foreign policy jargon — full of binaries such as "dialogue between East and West," "Islam and the West," "Iran and the West" — should be read as the language of a zone-brokering state. Consistent with this, Turkey will seek to be the zone broker in the upcoming competition between NATO (mainly the US) and China, in order to profit from that competition.

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