

The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in **INTELLIGENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY**

Published online: 06 Feb 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2018.1434449>

Rubén Arcos & José-Miguel Palacios (2018) The impact of intelligence on decision-making: the EU and the Arab Spring, *Intelligence and National Security*, 33:5, 737-754, DOI: 10.1080/02684527.2018.1434449

The impact of intelligence on decision-making: the EU and the Arab Spring

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The impact of intelligence on decision-making: the EU and the Arab Spring

Abstract: This article examines the 2007 EU all-source intelligence assessment ‘Worst Case Scenarios for the Narrower Middle East’ and the lack of policy response to the warning provided. SIT-6577/07 mostly predicted and provided forewarning on some of the events lately known as the Arab Spring, as well as a rise of anti-European terrorism, and an increase of refugees and migrants in the European Union. The article offers a post-mortem analysis of the key judgements and main findings of the most significant intelligence product declassified by the EU and discusses the main question: Why the warning was not effective? For that purpose, the article draws on Treverton and Miles’ post-mortem of the NIE 15-90 that predicted the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, and comparatively examines their main findings and conclusions on the lack of impact of good intelligence on policy-making.

Keywords: post-mortem analysis; intelligence assessment; EU SITCEN; CFSP; Solana; Arab spring; Middle East; worst-case scenarios

Introduction

It is a common place to state that the West in general and the European Union in particular were unprepared for the series of events known as the Arab Spring (2010-2011). Scholars and journalists¹ have frequently repeated this assertion, one that is also accepted by many politicians.² The aim of this article is to conduct an *ex post facto* evaluation or post-mortem of the declassified all source intelligence report ‘Worst Case Scenarios for the Narrower Middle East’³ and the apparent lack of policy response to the warning it provided.

This report was developed by the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) of the European Union and disseminated to EU intelligence customers on 12 July 2007. The examination of the product and its lack of impact on European policy-making, in spite of the clear warning on the likely consequences for Europe of a crisis in the Middle East region, is relevant for three reasons. First, the assessment predicted a rise of anti-European terrorism, an increase of refugees and migrants in the European Union, provided warning on the risks of social disintegration and chaos as possible alternatives to the authoritarian regimes of the region, as well as other major policy implications. Second, the assessment is an example of good intelligence that does not make an impact on decision making. Third, it is also the first significant example of an intelligence document having ever been declassified by the EU.⁴

Intelligence post-mortems usually come after failures, not after successes.⁵ This explains why the definitions of what is a post-mortem analysis in the open specialized literature usually link post-mortems to intelligence failures. For example, a *NATO Review Magazine* article on the 13 November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris provided the following definition: ‘A post mortem report is an evaluation of what went wrong in the intelligence cycle that led the security services not to detect a threat or prevent an attack’.⁶ Likewise, Richards J. Heuer links ex post facto analyses with intelligence failures when he points out the central question of post-mortems:

A fundamental question posed in any postmortem investigation of intelligence failure is this: Given the information that was available at the time, should analysts have been able to foresee what was going to happen? Unbiased evaluation of intelligence performance depends upon the ability to provide an unbiased answer to this question.⁷

However, assuming that post-mortem analyses should be conducted after intelligence failures becomes a problem for shedding light on intelligence defects because there are no available analyses on successful cases to compare with.⁸ At the same time, we agree with Tom Holland that post-mortems should be guided by the principle of caution and that ‘with the benefit of hindsight, everyone knows what side to be on’.⁹

On the other hand, as Mark Lowenthal has pointed out, there is still a pending discussion involving intelligence stakeholders (policymakers, the media, academic scholars and civil society) and the intelligence community on ‘how right intelligence analysis should be how often on which issues’.¹⁰ That is to say, what is good intelligence? The response to this question and the subsequent discussion is of utmost relevance since it shapes our expectations on analytic performance. For the purpose of this paper, we consider the predictive accuracy of judgements and assessments and the ways the warning was transmitted (clarity, political conditions, appropriate communication of uncertainty, address implications, etc.) are the main qualities of good analytic tradecraft.¹¹ For further discussion on the issue of what constitutes good intelligence, Mark Lowenthal has identified timeliness, digestibility, clarity (in conveying what is known, unknown, and believed) and the need for intelligence to be bespoke to the client requirements as the main attributes of good intelligence.¹²

This article is inspired by the work of Gregory Treverton and Renanah Miles, ‘Unheeded warning of war:

why policymakers ignored the 1990 Yugoslavia estimate'.¹³ In their work, Treverton and Miles study the lack of policy response to the NIE 15-90¹⁴ that predicted the disintegration of Yugoslavia roughly one year before it started. The underlying core question - why was good strategic warning unheeded?¹⁵ - may also be relevant to other intelligence communities working in support of decision-making systems that are very different from that of the US. This article argues that the declassification of SIT-6577/07 reveals that EU Intelligence did not fail to anticipate the 'Arab Spring', but rather there was a lack of receptivity or policy response to the warnings received. On the issue of intelligence receptivity, Erik Dahl has argued that, 'the question of why intelligence policymakers do or do not listen to intelligence depends less on leaders' predispositions than on two critical factors: their belief on the seriousness of the issue or the threat involved, and their trust in the utility of the intelligence received.'¹⁶ As we will show later, in the behaviour and public statements of the report's recipients we see almost no indication that the main messages of the report had been received and assumed.

EU decision-making and intelligence

Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks have explained EU decision-making with the help of the 'multi-level governance model'.¹⁷ Nation states no longer monopolize EU-level decision-making as they have been joined by other actors, such as supranational, sub-national and transnational institutions, as well as by non-governmental organizations. The multiplicity of actors involved in EU-decision making will have to be taken into account when assessing the impact of the 'Worst Case Scenarios for the Narrower Middle East' report.

In 2007, when the SIT-6577/07 paper was issued, the European Council, composed of the Member States' Heads of State and Government, already was the main decision-making body on Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) issues. In practice, CFSP-related decisions were previously discussed and prepared in the Foreign Affairs Council, where Ministers of Foreign Affairs met once a month. At a lower level, the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which included all Member States' Ambassadors, met twice a week in order to monitor the evolution of the international situation and was in charge of making recommendations on policy options to the Foreign Affairs Council and the European Council.

Stefan Lehne, a former Austrian diplomat who was the Director for the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the Council's General Secretariat between 2005 and 2008¹⁸, has pointed out that

‘Foreign ministers have lost influence in recent decades, and prime ministers have emerged as the central foreign policy actors’. The main consequence at EU level is that the European Council ‘has also become the central EU institution in the area of external relations’. This has important implications for the role of intelligence in the decision-making process, given that Heads of State or Government have less time and ‘tend to approach foreign policy from a short-term and media-driven perspective and through the prism of domestic politics’. As a result, the ‘European Council operates under severe time constraints and handles foreign policy almost exclusively in a crisis-management context. With rare exceptions, it does not fulfil its task of giving EU foreign policy strategic direction’.¹⁹

In theory, the High Representative Javier Solana played only a supporting role in CFSP decision-making, although in practice his freedom of manoeuvre grew with time. Solana was particularly careful not to go beyond the bounds of the existing consensus between Member States, but in the last years of his long mandate he enjoyed considerable autonomy, particularly at the operational level. Otherwise, EU officials working for Solana in the Council’s General Secretariat assured the continuity between successive rotating presidencies. If the presidency (sometimes, under the pressure of some Member States) had always the final say on agenda items, Solana and his office were heavily involved in the technical part of the job and could often put forward some proposals.

The Commission’s role in conducting the EU’s external relations was also significant. Although the Commission received political guidance from the European Council, it had its own budget and usually enjoyed a rather large freedom of action. It is true that the Commission’s participation in crisis management was minor, but the dense network of European Delegations, covering most of the world, was part of the Commission’s structure and reported to the Commission’s DGs, particularly to RELEX (External Relations), Enlargement and Development. Furthermore, the structural policies that would eventually stimulate positive changes in countries at risk (enlargement, association, development, aid, etc.) were in the hands of the Commission.

The EU Situation Centre (SITCEN) was the civilian intelligence analysis component of the Council’s General Secretariat and worked directly for the High Representative Javier Solana as part of his Cabinet.²⁰ Together with its military counterpart, the EUMS (European Union Military Staff) Intelligence Division (EUMS INT), SITCEN formed the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC), a virtual entity able to offer all-source intelligence products based on the whole range of available information. All of SITCEN production went to Solana’s Cabinet and Solana himself was regularly briefed by Director

William Shapcott on some of the topics of greatest interest to him. By sending an alert to Solana and his closest advisors, SITCEN was also, in an indirect way, transmitting the alert to the Council and other CFSP decision-making bodies.

All SIAC assessments and many other SITCEN and EUMS INT analytical documents were distributed to the PSC. They could also reach the members of the Foreign Affairs Council (Ministers of Foreign Affairs) and the European Council (Prime Ministers/Presidents) if they were forwarded by the Permanent Representations in the EU, or shared by the respective countries' civilian or military intelligence organizations, which always received them by default. The influence of EU intelligence analyses on the positions of particular countries may have been significant in the case of some small and medium-size Member States and much smaller for the bigger ones, that had in fact an informal leadership role in CFSP issues, particularly in those of strategic significance. Together with SITCEN's reports, Member States also received the products of their own national intelligence communities and it is reasonable to expect that for the biggest countries the latter had greater credibility.²¹

In 2007 the Commission only received part of SITCEN's overall production, with DG RELEX, DG ENLARGEMENT (for products on candidate and potential candidate countries) and DG HOME (for counter -terrorist products) being the DGs mainly concerned.

The making of the assessment

The project was launched in February 2007 by SITCEN's Director William Shapcott, with the declared purpose of exploring possible worst-case scenarios and the paths leading to them. The dominant idea informing the work was that behind a façade of apparent solidity most regimes in the region were potentially unstable. Under certain circumstances, a crisis in any one of them could trigger a chain reaction affecting the whole of the region.

When the project was initiated the SIAC arrangement had just started working. The Secretary General had decided in June 2006 that all civilian and military analytical resources at his disposal would in the future produce jointly their assessments on the basis of the best information available, including classified information of civilian and military nature communicated by Member States. In line with the SIAC arrangement, that entered into force in January 2007, joint strategic analyses were produced according to a 'work programme (...) set each semester in agreement with each Presidency'.²² Additionally, both intelligence components could issue papers on topics not included in the Working

Programme, independently or in cooperation. There was a terminological difference between the main two categories of intelligence products. Analyses included in the Working Programme were called assessments, received a SN number as the documents produced by the Council's General Secretariat and always had Member States' PSC Ambassadors in the distribution list. Documents produced outside the Working Programme could be called non-assessments, notes or flash reports and bore SIT numbers (in the case of SITCEN documents) or EUMS numbers (EUMS intelligence documents).

SIT-6577/07 was produced under the lead of SITCEN in the framework of the SIAC arrangement. As it was acknowledged in the front page, the Commission assisted SITCEN and EUMS INT in the development of the project. Taking into account the nature of the paper, it seems obvious that RELEX (External Relations) was the DG involved.

Work around this project started in late February 2007. Given that the product was not released until early July, the production time was rather long, around four and a half months. A probable reason was that the project did not seem to be time sensitive and that papers included in the Working Programme may have been given priority.

The original classification level was CONFIDENTIAL. Taking into account that no sensitive information seems to have been used²³, the level of classification was probably due to the sensitivity of the content and the possibility that, if disclosed, it could be taken as indicative of the EU position. In 2007, EU intelligence documents used the same format as the rest of the Council documents, which could give reason for misunderstandings. Otherwise, the circle of recipients was very small. Apart from the High Representative Solana and his Cabinet, that received the whole of the SIAC production, copies were also distributed to the Policy Unit, the EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process and the Commission (RELEX).

Content analysis

The SIT-6577/07 in essence predicted the so-called Arab Spring. As anticipated in the report, anti-European terrorism and refugee flows towards Europe did increase as a result of unrest across the region. The SIT-6577/07 singled out a potential failure of the Middle East Peace Process as the most probable trigger for a chain reaction of unlucky events, which proved to be wrong, and did not even list Russia among the external powers that could effectively influence the evolution of the situation in the region, but most of the predictions turned out to be correct.

In this section, we will focus our attention on content elements that had a direct or indirect effect on the warning the paper wanted to convey.

Worst Case Scenario: what's in a title?

Titles are an important element in any piece of research. Titles create intended and unintended psychological expectations in the readership. The title of SIT-6577/07, 'Worst Case Scenarios for the Narrower Middle East' is explained in the first three paragraphs of the report. A worst case is defined as 'an event or series of events negatively affecting the vital interest of the European Union and its Member States'²⁴ while the 'Narrower Middle East' is considered a region comprising Egypt to Iran (excluding Israel and Turkey) and 'affected by two long-running conflicts (the Arab-Israeli and the Gulf/Iraq conflicts)'. On the other hand, SIT-6577/07 identifies the best case as a scenario in which major changes expected in the Middle East allow countries in the region 'to overcome their current backwardness'.

Worst case analyses or the development of extreme scenarios with harmful implications is a common practice in many decision contexts, including military, disaster, emergency, crisis, and business planning for testing how strategies currently implemented are likely to behave in hypothetical bad situations and for anticipatorily planning a response to mitigate the harmful effects of those scenarios. Nonetheless, the use of worst case scenarios might not always be a useful approach in strategic intelligence or warning for policy-making.

By labelling these scenarios as best and worst cases the report sets up the two extremes of the yardstick. However, there is a semantic difference between good/bad (adjectives), better/worse (comparative adjectives) and best/worst (superlative adjectives), and 'to judge an event or phenomenon as the worst requires a point of comparison'.²⁵ This may raise the question of whether the prospective scenarios should have been labelled differently –there is an escalation between bad and the worst (overwhelmingly bad). As observed by Lee Clarke, 'once people convince themselves that they have imagined the worst then they stop imagining more possibilities'.²⁶

Scenarios have been defined by Kahn and Wiener as 'attempts to describe in some detail a hypothetical sequence of events that could lead plausibly to the situation envisaged'.²⁷ According to Herman Kahn, the father of scenario analysis and construction, since decision-makers or planners dealing with international affairs and establishing policies with consequences in the distant future must make decisions or plans in the present but cannot think of or plan for everything, they should 'try to look at the

relevant range of possibilities, remembering the importance of examining possibilities which seem relatively unlikely but which would have very desirable –or catastrophic– consequences if they occurred²⁸.

There are a number of approaches to scenarios and scenario techniques. For instance, according to Jerome C. Glenn and The Futures Group International²⁹,

Herman Kahn tended to think in terms of three alternative scenarios applied to any subject: 1) surprise-free or business-as-usual that simply extrapolates current trends with interplay of the trends; 2) worst case scenario based on mismanagement and bad luck; and 3) best case scenario based on good management and good luck.

However, this approach has been not exempt from criticism in the relevant literature. The UK's Foresight Horizon Scanning Centre recommended exploring a range of plausible scenarios and 'to avoid falling into the trap of developing three scenarios that broadly correspond to the status quo, the ideal, and the worst-case scenario' because this approach 'increases the risk that the "extreme" scenarios are rejected'.³⁰

Similarly, on the value of generating multiple alternate scenarios, Michael Oppenheimer has written that although they are not predictive nor actionable for decision-makers, they can make them 'more receptive to early warning signs of new trends' and help policy makers 'overwhelmed by noise get out in front of the rush of ongoing events by discerning and focusing on the signals and testing policies of prevention or encouragement'.³¹ Michael Handel suggested that for the intelligence community the fear of intelligence failures is likely to result on basing assumptions and analysis on the worst that the adversary could carry out (worst-case approach). However, when employed frequently 'worst-case analysis can become an easy escape from analytical responsibility and reduce the quality of threat analysis'³². Similarly, Ken Booth's work *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*, points out two reasons underlying worst case forecasting: that the worst case is more easily definable than the more likely case, and that the analysts are free from guilt if the worst actually happens.³³ On the usefulness of worst-case analysis Mark Lowenthal has argued that unlike for defence planners assigning forces to combat, worst cases, as an analytical tool, may be an overestimate and much less useful.³⁴ Likewise, according to Thomas Fingar, worst-case analysis can be useless or even counterproductive when applied to non-military issues.³⁵ Worst cases can certainly be counterproductive if policy makers ignore warnings because they assume that it is a pattern used by analysts for never failing to forewarn them, or if the likelihood of a worst case is actually higher than assumed.³⁶ On the other hand, the worst case approach is a good way to call the attention of policy

makers toward threats that might not be top tier in their agendas at the moment or when a prolonged situation of status quo leads to lowering one's guard.

In the absence of a sufficient body of declassified products it is difficult to say whether the development of worst case scenarios was a common practice by the SIAC at the time.

Regional approach: the Arab Spring as the spillover of a conflict

SIT-6577/07 used the regional conflicts formation (RCF) approach to build worst-case scenarios. One of the three sources that the report quotes in its footnotes is Reinoud Leenders's article "Regional conflicts formations": is the Middle East next?' published on 2007 in the journal *Third World Quarterly*. The article made a methodological use of the RCF approach for studying the regional interconnectedness involving Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, and discussed the need for adding the regional symbolic capital to the RCF model. RCFs have been defined as 'sets of transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other throughout a region', producing more extended and stubborn conflicts.³⁷ According to Armstrong and Rubin 'RCFs are formed through political, economic, social, and security relationships involving state and non-state actors'³⁸; RCFs are characterized by complexity and interaction of factors including regional security competition between regional states, institutional weakness within states, transnational informal economy, trans-border social networks and transborder armed groups, organized crime and illicit trafficking of goods and people, natural resources, militarization and arms trafficking.³⁹ The report is imbued with the idea that a crisis affecting a country could easily spill over into neighbouring countries and produce a chain reaction throughout the Narrower Middle East. This is captured in the fourth key judgement and supported by the relevant literature. The work of Armstrong and Rubin on RCFs, quoted by the above-mentioned paper referenced in SIT-6577/07 pointed out that:

A growing body of scholarly evidence supports the thesis that conflicts reinforce each other within regions. In their 2002 annual review of world conflict, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute found that 11 out of 15 major armed conflicts "spilled over" into their neighboring states – thus belonging to what they called "regional conflict complexes." Another study, by James Murdoch and Todd Sandler, confirms that not only are neighbouring countries vulnerable to conflict within their region, but they often suffer the same magnitude of economic impact as those countries actively in conflict.⁴⁰

SIT-6577/07 identified Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria as the main regional State actors or game players in the Narrower Middle East. With regard to transnational players the report

explicitly mentions the Kurds, the Shias, the Muslim Brotherhood, and jihadi-terrorist organizations like al-Qaida as the most important in the region.

The report recognized the role of the United States and the EU as important international players in the region. At the same time, the public opinion polls quoted in the report confirmed the negative image of the US and Israel for Arab public opinion. This finding supported one of the argumentative lines of the assessment according to which the main regional players win symbolic political capital when they 'defeat, resist or refuse to cooperate' with Israel (or support the Palestinians), the US and the West. In the same line, a December 2006 Zogby International Poll report titled '5 Nation Survey of the Middle East' had found that 'overall Arab attitudes toward U.S. have worsened; negative attitudes have hardened' and summarized its findings in the following statement: 'Continuing Conflict in Iraq and Palestine Deepens U.S. - Arab Rift with Growing Costs to Both Sides'.⁴¹

Other international players explicitly mentioned in the SIAC report are China and India identified as economic actors and potential partners for Middle East countries. There is not a single mention of Russia as an international player in the Middle East. However, with its military support to the Syrian regime forces and also through its relationship with Iran, Russia has been a key player in preventing the collapse of the Assad regime.⁴²

Structure, Key Judgements and Main Findings

SIT-6577/07 is a 2,764 word-length report (including title and excluding annex) internally organized according to a structure followed by other European intelligence organizations, such as the British JIC⁴³, presenting firstly key judgements and then subsequent numbered paragraphs (27) included under different headings. The report is organized into eight sections:

- (1) introduction;
- (2) the threats;
- (3) the players;
- (4) the environment;
- (5) conflict extension;
- (6) contingencies leading to worst-case scenarios;
- (7) conclusions;
- (8) annex (not declassified).

Table 1 summarizes the reports' key judgements, assumptions, key driving forces, trends, and plausible contingencies leading to worst-case scenarios. The report's third key judgement and the conclusions allow a glimpse of concerns of an implosion of the Narrower Middle East region resulting from the collapse of existing pro-Western regimes, which were judged to be mostly politically obsolete. As noted above, the assessment in essence predicted the so-called Arab Spring. The increase of anti-European terrorism and refugees were consequences of conflicts spilling over throughout the Middle East Region. The report attributed a key trigger role –potentially leading to those implications– to an eventual failure of the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP), which turned out to be wrong. However, it could be argued that the analysis on the MEPP and its relation with the wins/losses of symbolic capital by key players is still relevant to date.⁴⁴

The Arab Spring events seem to echo if we look at the fourth key judgement in hindsight:

Local crises in the Narrower Middle East can easily spread from one country to another and rapidly take on a regional nature⁴⁵

This judgement seems to be partially based on the well-supported single information space assumption, explicitly commented in the report according to which 'thanks to Al Jazeera, other satellite stations and internet, individual States would find it almost impossible to isolate their territories from the flow of news and comments coming from outside their borders and not subject to their control'. The judgement assumes also the RCF and the findings on conflict spill over.

The first key judgement anticipates and forewarns of the implications of a main crisis in the region,

Western influence would probably be damaged in the case of major crisis affecting the region. For Europe, the disruption of energy supplies, a rise in anti-European terrorism and increased numbers of refugees and migrants trying to enter the European Union would be likely consequences.⁴⁶

The report was mostly right with regard to terrorism. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) – aka Daesh, IS, or ISIS – has indeed become a main threat to security in EU member states and claimed responsibility of a number terrorist attacks targeting civilians in Europe. The rise of ISIL in Syria came as a result of different factors after the beginning of the Syrian anti-government protests in 2011, including the American withdrawal from Iraq, the worsening of the Syrian conflict into a civil war, and the

perviousness of the Syrian-Iraqi border, among other factors.⁴⁷ When ISIL entered Syria it tried to take over the al-Nusra Front (until July 2016, an al-Qaida affiliate group in Syria⁴⁸) without success.⁴⁹

The SIAC report identified the al-Qaida influenced jihadist groups as important non-state players in the political game of the Middle East, and in the case of Syria, either a state of widespread chaos or an Islamist regime as the most likely replacement for the authoritarian al-Assad regime. The regime, however, never collapsed and, as pointed out by Avi Melamed, by the end of 2011 the war in Syria was no longer an internal conflict but had evolved into ‘both a Sunni-Shiite war and a war by proxies between an Assad-Iran axis and Sunni states led by Arabia Saudi, Qatar, and Turkey’.⁵⁰ Likewise the report predicted an increased number of refugees as a consequence of this likely contingency in Syria. Regarding the flow of migrants and refugees as a major implication of a crisis in the region, a June 2016 Pew Research Centre analysis reported that:

Conflict in Syria has displaced millions of citizens from their homes since protests against the al-Assad government began more than five years ago. An estimated 12.5 million Syrians are now displaced, amounting to about six-in-ten of the country’s 2011 midyear population – and up from less than 1 million in 2011⁵¹.

For the European countries, the consequence of the war was a sharp rise in asylum applications by Syrians. According to the UNHCR figures, a total of 952,511 first time asylum applications were received in Europe between April 2011 and July 2017 (the data include the 28 EU Member states plus Norway and Switzerland), although ‘the majority of those who have fled the conflict are hosted in Syria’s neighbouring countries’.⁵²

Regarding energy supplies, an in-depth examination of the effects of Arab uprisings for Europe provide a less impactful picture than initially expected. As a 2014 report of the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies found:

Although many disruptions did occur and oil prices did rise, especially following the Libyan revolution in 2011 and when fears of a potential military confrontation between Iran and the USA intensified in early 2012, the short-term effects on oil and gas markets of recent events in the region have been less dramatic than originally feared. The Arab Spring did not destabilize the large Gulf oil and gas producers; the rise in oil price induced by political and geopolitical factors proved to be transient; and oil and gas markets have

shown relative resilience in filling the supply gap and in redirecting oil and gas trade flows.⁵³

Key Judgements		
Kj1: 'Western influence would probably be damaged in the case of major crisis affecting the region. For Europe, the disruption of energy supplies, a rise in anti-European terrorism and increased numbers of refugees and migrants trying to enter the European Union would be likely consequences'.	Kj2: 'Western-style democracy is not an attractive model for the peoples of the Narrower Middle East. A certain neopopulism, rooted in political Islamism and strongly anti-Western, is the most credible alternative to the current regimes'.	Kj3: 'The interests of the current leadership are better served by the status quo. The changes may benefit non-State players. As a result, social disintegration, or even chaos, are real possibilities in several countries of the region'.
Kj4: 'Local crises in the Narrower Middle East can easily spread from one country to another and rapidly take on a regional nature'.	Kj5: 'Chinese or Indian regional prestige would probably not be affected, or only slightly. Their ability to take advantage of their relatively improved situation would depend on the situation emerging as a result of the crisis. Widespread chaos would jeopardise energy supplies, vital for those countries'.	
Assumptions	Key Drivers	Trends
Weak national consciousness across the region	Stability (or weakening) of Pro-Western regimes	Rise of populist Islamism
Most of the fault lines are within States in the Arab world	Role of non-state actors (jihadist groups, Muslim Brotherhood, and others)	Conflict and crisis spillover
Conflicts spread across borders	Rise of neopopulism and ethnic/sectarian variations	Fragmentation; specific fault lines: Sunni/Shias Arabs/Non-Arabs Poor/Rich Pro/Anti –Israel/US/West
Most regimes in the Middle East are politically obsolete	Symbolic capital (Gains and losses)	Contingencies leading to Worst-Case Scenarios (benefiting non-state players)
Centrality of the Palestinian conflict	Intra-State divisions	C ₁ : Failure of the Peace Process
At the end of the day, economic success and good standards for the majority of the population are the key for stability	Role of foreign players	C ₂ : Implosion of Iraq after US withdrawal: main winners those opposed to the foreign military presence and the Kurds
The Middle East population is anti-American and anti-Western	Flow of news and opinions throughout Single Arab information space	C ₃ : Western allies attack Iran
Russia is politically irrelevant in the Middle East (implicit). Emerging powers, such as China and India, may have a role to play the future.	Trans-border communities (Kurds, refugees, tribes, etc.)	C ₄ : Regime collapse in Syria leading to either a Islamist regime or widespread chaos
Sources (quoted in the report)		C ₅ : Regime collapse in Egypt being the Muslim Brotherhood the most likely successor
Supporting evidence provided by the following quoted sources: public opinion polls by Global Attitude Project (2007) and Zogby International (2007); UNCHR briefing (2007); Third World Quarterly (2007)		C ₆ : Regime collapse in Jordan
		C ₇ : Regime collapse in Saudi Arabia

Table 1. A snapshot of the SIT-6577/07

Estimative Language

The estimative language used in the key judgements includes mainly the words ‘probably’ and ‘likely’, which according to the SIAC Style Manual (2014 edition) has associated a numeric probability of fifty to seventy per cent. The UK Defence Intelligence Uncertainty Yardstick uses a similar range of fifty-five to seventy associated probability range for the linguistics markers probable or likely⁵⁴ while US Intelligence Community Directive 203 assigns a fifty-five to eighty per cent range for the same qualitative terms.⁵⁵ The recent scientific literature⁵⁶ on the communication of uncertainty in intelligence analysis offers different recommendations to intelligence organizations with this regard, like verifying the communication effectiveness with policy-makers – whether or not the terms used by the analysts have the same meaning as the meanings attributed to them by the policymakers - and using numerical probabilities instead of verbal probabilities.⁵⁷ An analysis of the word frequency of the linguistic likelihood markers in the report show a strong use of the words ‘could’ (n=21) and ‘probably’ (n=13), and less use of the words ‘may’ (n=5), associated with likelihood, and ‘likely’ (n=6). The word ‘will’ is used in ‘will probably’ and a single time to indicate a strong predictive statement regarding the driving factor character of ‘existing divisions in the Middle East’. Other stronger markers of likelihood or probability (very/highly likely/probable, remote, certain, etc.) are not used.

Impact

In September 2011, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alain Juppé, said that ‘for far too long, we admit, our relations with the southern and eastern Mediterranean were dictated by the goal of maintaining stability at all costs. For far too long, we are apt to consider authoritarian regimes as bulwarks against extremism’.⁵⁸ And that was the point. In 2007 the internal situation in most of the ‘Narrower Middle East’ countries was not seen as worrisome and the EU was making no particular effort to prepare itself for radical changes in the future. Continuity for the sake of stability was the driving motor of EU actions.

In 2007 the EU policy towards the Middle East was mainly focused on the Middle East Peace Process. Hamas’ electoral victory in January 2006 had led to the formation of a new Palestinian government chaired by Ismail Haniyeh, one of Hamas’ leaders, and the EU, together with the US and other Western actors, suspended cooperation with the Palestinian Government and all Palestinian

structures under the government's control⁵⁹. The MEPP was in a deadlock, despite EU attempts to keep it alive.

In June 2007, after months of escalating clashes between Hamas and Fatah members, Hamas forces gained full control over the whole of the Gaza Strip and removed Fatah officials, who until then held strong positions in the security apparatus. As a reaction, the Palestinian President Abbas dismissed Haniyeh and appointed a new Prime Minister close to Fatah. The conditions were finally ripe to resume the MEPP, and as a result President Bush announced on 16 July 2007 a new US peace initiative that would later crystallize in the Annapolis Conference (27 November 2007). A second point of interest in the region was Lebanon, where the situation had become very unstable after the killing of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri (February 2005), which had led to the full withdrawal of the Syrian troops stationed in the country since the Lebanese Civil War.

In this context, the report could be read as an argument in favour of resuming the MEPP and making an extra effort to make it succeed, given that otherwise serious consequences could follow for the whole of the region. On the other hand, it warned against excessive focus on the MEPP, forgetting other potential sources of risk (the internal situation in Syria or Egypt, for instance). Finally, it reminded readers that the most likely alternative to the existing regimes was a certain populism, 'rooted in political Islamism and strongly anti-Western'. In this sense, a necessarily non-exhaustive list of possible indicators of the report's impact would have been:

- (a) New EU emphasis on the Middle East Peace Process.
- (b) Political discussions on Middle East countries, different from Israel/Palestine and Lebanon in the European Council, Foreign Affairs Council or PSC.
- (c) Public references to the necessity of reform in countries of the region.
- (d) Public references to the danger of Islamist takeover in some of the countries in the region (or, alternatively, efforts to reach out to Islamist leaders in those countries).
- (d) Changes in the priorities of the Commission towards countries in the region.

High Representative Javier Solana was the main recipient of the report and in his behaviour (public activities) we see almost no indication that the main messages of the report had been received and assumed. Of course, as is frequently the case with other top-level diplomats, a significant part of Solana's foreign policy activities took place behind closed doors and have left no trace in published sources. In addition to being the EU High Representative, Solana was in his own right a world-class leader and had a

wide network of contacts at the highest level. To know, at least partially, what he may have spoken in confidence with them we will need to await publication of their memoirs⁶⁰.

Most of Solana's activities during the second half of 2007 were oriented to the preparation of the Annapolis conference. He attended a Quartet summit on 19 July 2007 and toured several Middle East countries (Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt) in early September. Later in the same month, Solana met in Brussels the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs and discussed the MEPP and the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan with him. On 12 November, he visited Egypt again in order to meet President Mubarak and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abu-al-Ghayt. The general impression that Solana still saw Egypt as a key partner in making the MEPP succeed is further reinforced by the fact that SITCEN's Director William Shapcott visited Cairo in mid-September⁶¹.

There is nothing really new in what is publicly known about Solana's positions during the second half of 2007. A few days after SIT-6577/07 was issued, the High Representative publicly praised in non-ambiguous terms the speech delivered by President Bush on 16 July: 'It is a speech that not only talks about but gives reassurance about the two-state solution and it goes beyond that to see how this model, this vision of two states can be realised in practice on the ground'⁶². With all his efforts focused on helping the Annapolis conference to be a success, in the following months Solana's line was completely aligned with the US positions. All the time Solana remained committed to working with the West's traditional allies in the region, most of whom, according to the SITCEN's report, were in a very fragile situation. Even if Solana had fully trusted the SITCEN analysis, the EU freedom of manoeuvre was severely restricted, with new Palestinian political actors just installed and the US having launched a major political initiative.

The Political and Security Committee met five times between 12 July and the beginning of the Council's summer holidays in early August and Middle East issues were not specifically discussed at any of these meetings. The Foreign Affairs Council only paid modest attention to the Narrower Middle East in its July meeting and the rest of the second semester of 2007. In July, October and November there were discussions on the MEPP and Lebanon, in which the EU member states agreed to fully support the Bush initiative. On Lebanon, the line adopted was based on supporting the country's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, unity and stability. For the EU the possibility of foreign (mainly, Syrian) interference was still the main potential source of instability.

In November, there was a ministerial meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The agreed conclusions did not reflect any particular change in the European approach to the region. In the same month, the High Representative submitted a new EU Action Strategy for the MEPP, based on the idea that ‘recent developments have created a sense of cautious optimism’, and tried to use the new momentum in the Peace Process for making substantial progress⁶³.

Finally, the European Commission had adopted in the first half of 2007 Country Strategy Papers for the region’s countries. Such papers cannot thus reflect any influence of the SITCEN’s report and, as a matter of fact, what they portray is the Commission’s perception on such countries at the time when the report was being drafted. No sense of alarm, no warning, can be found in the Strategy Papers. For example, in the case of Syria we can read that the ‘the country has been politically and economically stable since President Bashar al-Assad took office in 2000’⁶⁴. The paper on Egypt optimistically proclaimed that ‘over the last 20 years Egypt has made substantial progress on rebuilding internal and external security and pressing ahead with economic reform, slowly at first but ambitiously during the 1990s and with renewed vigour since July 2004. Social reform has lagged behind, but is now seen as a priority’⁶⁵.

Why was the warning not effective?

If we consider SIT-6577/07 in the light of the conclusions reached by Treverton and Miles in their article on the Yugoslavia NIE we can find striking similarities and some minor differences. In a first approximation, we can assume that similarities refer to the intrinsic characteristics of the intelligence warning function, while differences may be mostly related to the various cultures, possibilities and roles in the decision-making process of the analytical bodies that produced them.

In both cases we face documents produced at the initiative of the intelligence bodies’ management, not at the request of policy-makers. In 1990, it was Marten Van Heuven, the NIO for Europe in the National Intelligence Council, who commissioned the NIE on Yugoslavia. In 2007, William Shapcott, SITCEN’s Director, ordered the production of SIT-6577/07 outside the framework of the six-monthly working programme and without any explicit demand by future recipients. This probably was a sort of ‘original sin’ of both documents. As Joëlle Jenny⁶⁶ points out, a warning system ‘can only work if the top of the office takes ownership of the analysis, and sends unequivocal messages to the

organisation about the importance of preventive action'. And for policymakers it is more difficult to take ownership of an analysis that they have not requested.

A second problem was that both reports were issued at a time when policymakers were busy with a number of important problems and had no spare capacity to pay attention to new ones. In the US case, as Treverton and Miles remind us, 'preoccupied with two major imperatives — preparing for war in the Persian Gulf and keeping the Soviet Union together — policymakers could only devote attention to so many crises. For many, the Gulf War was utterly consuming'.⁶⁷ For its part, the very small EU foreign and security policy apparatus was in 2007 focused on the West Balkans, where discussions on Kosovo's final status were at their height, and on three high priority dossiers in the Middle East: nuclear negotiations with Iran, where Secretary General Solana had a prominent role, the MEPP, and Lebanon. Any call to divert attention and resources to new objectives was not likely to be welcome.

A third problem is related to the difficulty of reacting to warnings when the receiver has a fundamentally different view. This is particularly notorious when policymakers are themselves 'substantive experts', as was the case with the 1990 Yugoslavia NIE. With respect to SIT-6577/07, around half the small circle of officials included in the distribution list were among the leading EU experts on Middle East affairs.

A fourth and very important problem was the timing. Robert Jervis has written that 'for intelligence to be welcomed and to have an impact, it must arrive at the right time, which is after the leaders have become seized with the problem but before they have made up their minds'.⁶⁸ But that was not the case with any of the analyses we are considering. In the case of Yugoslavia, 'with other compelling events unfolding in the summer and fall of 1990, even a crisis viewed as certain to happen, but that was still a year away, was unlikely to be a top priority'.⁶⁹ In the SIT-6577/07 there was not even a tentative timeline. As Joëlle Jenny has written, 'it does not convey a sense of urgency, or even of timing: at no point does the analysis say if these scenarios could materialise in the next few months, years or decades'.⁷⁰

It can be accepted that 'the likelihood that policymakers will take action based on intelligence warnings increases when such analyses include opportunities'.⁷¹ The excellent NIE on Yugoslavia, however, 'did not include any opportunities for the United States to influence the outcome'⁷² and that made it more difficult for policymakers to make use of the knowledge conveyed to them. The same could be said about SITCEN's analysis. As Joëlle Jenny comments, 'it is not actionable (...). My experience is

that without a clear set of realistic, affordable (in time/money/political capital), time-bound recommendations, warnings get ignored'.⁷³ In both cases, US and EU intelligence analysts, following Sherman Kent's ideas, preferred to be relatively distant from what could be termed 'political advice' and refrained from offering any kind of recommendations. It was the right thing to do from the point of view of traditional intelligence theory, but they paid a price in terms of impact.

A last problem may be related to the catastrophic message conveyed by both analyses. In retrospect, Treverton and Miles admit that 'a NIE that offered something positive to take into the situation room could have been more useful'. The announcement of an impending catastrophe is a call to endurance, rather than to action. This is why Joëlle Jenny is 'intuitively convinced that (large) organisations have an ingrained bias toward ignoring worst-case scenarios'.⁷⁴

Until here, everything has been common. The US document did not have any impact, mostly for the same reasons that its EU counterpart failed to attract the attention of European policymakers. That suggests the existence of a common transatlantic intelligence analysis culture, based on similar principles and showing similar shortcomings. But there are also differences, particularly because of the very different size and means of the US and EU intelligence systems (communities), as well as of their respective roles in decision making.

Treverton and Miles have complained about the excessive distance between intelligence analysts and policymakers. 'If the NIE drafters had been better linked to policymakers, they might have crafted an analysis more closely tied to decisionmakers' interests, leading to more concrete action'.⁷⁵ In the EU case, however, this was not a serious problem. The EU external relations apparatus, composed mainly of the Council's General Secretariat with some parts of the Commission, was a small structure, where officials (including intelligence analysts) knew each other very well and met frequently. William Shapcott, SITCEN's Director, belonged to the inner circle of Solana's most trusted advisors and was perfectly aware of EU policymakers' interests and constraints. That's why, if the Yugoslavia NIE failed to explore the possible implications of Yugoslavia's implosion for US interests, SIT-6577/07 was explicitly Eurocentric and looked at all the possible situations from the point of view of their consequences for Europe.

Another difference lies in the different distribution of both documents. The NIE was disseminated in Washington to a wide circle of intelligence users and it 'was quickly leaked to the *New York Times*, whose coverage revealed divergent opinions among US officials'. The document had no real

impact on decision-making, but it was read and commented on. On the other hand, SIT-6577/07 was circulated on purpose to a very limited group of recipients. Its existence may have been unknown to most of the EU foreign policy community in Brussels and the scenarios it drew were not part of any official or unofficial political discussions. It was never leaked and no reference to it can be found in the media, even in those specializing in EU news. When the Arab Spring started, almost nobody seems to have remembered that such an analysis was ever produced. An important dilemma that intelligence practitioners frequently encounter, the trade-off between reaching enough decision-makers to be actioned, versus protecting the information and minimizing the risk of leaks, was resolved this time in favour of prudence, which was reflected negatively in the impact of the report.

Last, but not least, the lack of a EU intelligence and foreign policy culture, shared by most participants in the decision making process, may have also had a negative impact on the proper transmission and acceptance of the warning. As William Shapcott wrote a few years after SIT-6577/07 was issued, ‘having properly understood and shared concepts and doctrine is an important element in ensuring proper communication between warner and warned’. Unfortunately, in 2007 ‘the EU Council [had] no written early warning concept or doctrine’, which meant that ‘no one [was] in charge and therefore no one [was] solely responsible’. The fact that the report was only addressed to EU internal bodies, and not to Member States, did not help to make the warning effective either. As Shapcott comments:

It should be borne in mind that many Member States take the view that it is the responsibility of the Brussels structures simply to describe situations and for the Member States to judge whether the situation so described merits a reaction.⁷⁶

Conclusions: some lessons to learn

As we have seen, SIT-6577/07 was a good report, based on a solid understanding of the situation in the region, and provided strategic warning with enough time for the recipients to take preventive action. However, its impact was minimal and some years later, when the Arab Spring effectively started, the general impression in Europe’s political circles and among opinion makers was that the fall of some Middle East regimes had come as a complete surprise.

We can conclude from the post-mortem analysis that the assessment mostly predicted and provided forewarning on the events subsequently known as the Arab Spring, in spite of omitting Tunisia,

which has been widely considered as the spark triggering the wave of protest throughout the Arab world. However, this omission was mainly the product of conceptual geographical delimitations of the Middle East region based on the organic division of labour at SITCEN. The judgements and assumptions related to the probability of a local crisis spilling over the region proved to be right and supported by existing evidence at the time. The same applies to the obsolete character of the regimes in the Middle East. The assessment's narrative on the contingencies leading to worst-case scenarios was especially accurate for the cases of Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, but the assumptions on the centrality of the Peace Process were unmet. The assessment proved to be very precise on the worst-case implications for Europe: 'the region becoming a safe haven for international terrorist targeting Europe' and the refugee crisis. However, designating the assessment as 'worst-case scenarios' in the title might have attenuated its impact as strategic product for policy-makers: the worst is not the same as the most likely or probable.

Strategic intelligence is a service provided to top-level clients as a contribution to policy-making. It is very important to capture the attention of the client, and that is easier to do when the client herself has commissioned the product. Otherwise, the intelligence organization needs to make an extra effort to market its product. An excellent understanding of the client's necessities is of paramount importance, but does not guarantee success. In some cases, such as this one, good intelligence warning may go unnoticed because of inappropriate timing.

In some countries or organizations, the lack of an early warning doctrine may make it very difficult for policy-makers to recognise a warning and to then react accordingly. That was the case in the EU in 2007. This situation was further complicated by the fact that Member States, particularly the biggest ones, and the European institutions had a different understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities.

Finally, the comparison between the reception of the SIT-6577/07 non-assessment and that of the US NIE on Yugoslavia recently studied by Treverton and Miles shows that there seem to be many more similarities than differences. Decision-making systems, intelligence cultures, the role of intelligence in decision-making are very disparate on both sides of the Atlantic. There is, however, much in common in the way intelligence analysts approach their job, as well as in the relations between providers and users of intelligence. US experiences have been very useful to foster the improvement of intelligence analysis in Europe. In a more modest way, some EU experiences may also be useful for practitioners and scholars in America.

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Acknowledgments

The authors want to thank Jan Goldman, Joëlle Jenny, Enrique Mora-Figueroa, Tomás Duplá, Julian Richards and Gregory Treverton for their invaluable help in the preparation of this article. They also like to thank the Director of INTCEN, Gerhard Conrad, for having accorded the declassification of the SIAC report. Thanks finally to the anonymous reviewers for their suggestions to improve the manuscript.

1

See, for instance, Goodwind, ‘Why we were surprised (again) by the Arab Spring’; Henry, ‘The EU and the Arab Spring’; Dandashly, ‘The EU and the Southern Neighbors in the Wake of the Arab Spring. The Democracy-Security Dilemma’.

2

In September 2011 Alain Juppé, then the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, admitted at an event organised by the Council on Foreign Relations that ‘the Arab Spring took us by surprise’. See Council for Foreign Relations, ‘The Arab Springs’.

3

Council of the European Union, SIT-6577/07, dated 12 July 2007. Declassified version: Council of the European Union, 7636/17, dated 5 July 2017. The report was declassified at the request of the authors of this article and can be found in <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7636-2017-INIT/en/pdf>.

4

Only one SITCEN (INTCEN) intelligence report had been previously declassified. It was a short current intelligence product, the Flash Report EEAS 00179/11 dated 22 August 2011 on the situation in Libya. In this case, only the factual part, based on open sources, was declassified. The complicated declassification system used by the Council of the European Union, the EEAS and other European institutions requires the consent of all countries having contributed to the document, which makes it very difficult to successfully complete any declassification process.

5

Jervis, ‘Reports, politics, and intelligence failures: the case of Iraq’, 19. In an article on the US Intelligence Community 1973-1975 Post-mortem program, Richard Shryock has written that intelligence production offices have been preparing post-mortems for years but mainly in response to complaints by senior policymakers and military officers who wanted to know ‘what-had-gone-wrong’ within those production offices. See Shryock, ‘The Intelligence Community port-mortem program,’ 15.

6

Camilli, ‘The Paris attacks. A case of intelligence failure?’.

7

Heuer, *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, 166-167.

8

Jervis, *Why intelligence fails: lessons from the Iranian revolution and the Iraq war*, 35.

9 Holland, ‘The Politics of Intelligence Postmortems’, 438.

10 Lowenthal, ‘Towards a reasonable standard for analysis’, 304.

11 The accuracy of intelligence assessments and the reduction of surprise are attributes of good intelligence that have been pointed out in the relevant literature. See James Wirtz’s ‘The Art of the Intelligence Autopsy’ and William Odom’s ‘Intelligence Analysis’. On forecasting accuracy and communication of uncertainty, see: Dhami et al, *Improving intelligence analysis with decision science*.

12 See: Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, 213-216. See also: Lowenthal’s *Towards a reasonable standard for analysis*.

On the principles of intelligence analysis, we refer the reader to United States Intelligence Community Directive 203 for further reading.

13 The piece was first published by the Centre for the Study of Intelligence in 2015 and later it was published by Intelligence and National Security.

14

The NIE 15-90 was released on 18 October 1990 under the title ‘Yugoslavia transformed’. It has been declassified and, as of July 2017, it can be retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1990-10-01.pdf>.

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Treverton and Miles, ‘Unheeded warning of war: why policymakers ignored the 1990 Yugoslavia estimate’.

16 See: Dahl, ‘Why won’t they listen?’, 69. See also: Marrin, *Revisiting intelligence and policy*.

17 See Hooghe, Liesbet, and Gary Marks. *Multi-level governance and European integration*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.

18

See Stefan Lehne’s biography in Carnegie Europe’s site. Retrieved from <http://carnegieeurope.eu/experts/634> (10 September 2017).

19

Lehne, ‘Are Prime Ministers Taking Over EU Foreign Policy?’.

20 In 2007 the total number of SITCEN staff was 70. The majority of them were EU officials and temporary agents recruited by the EU. Furthermore there were 21 national experts seconded by security and intelligence services of EU Member States. According to the EEAS answer to the parliamentary question E-009092/2012, dated 13 December 2012

(<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-009092&language=CS>) and the EEAS answer to the parliamentary question E-8361/2010, dated 23 February 2011 (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-8361&language=EN>).

21

According to Sabina Lange, ‘an independent, neutral and objective analysis provided by the EEAS (INTCEN), and strongly advocated by the Slovenian MFA, would enable many member states which do not have the capacity to invest in reporting and analysis on all EU policies, to be objectively informed when joining in decision-making processes’. See Lange, ‘Slovenia and the European External Action Service’, 111.

22

Council of the European Union, *Annual report...* (2008), 98.

23

The annex has not been declassified. Some sensitive information may have been included in it. In any case, no reference to the annex is made in the report’s body, that seems to be self-sufficient.

24 As a matter of fact, the definition used by the report is not entirely correct. ‘A series of events negatively affecting’ may be “bad”, but worst is the last stage of a bad situation, when all bad things come together.

25 Clarke, *Worst cases*, Pos 888.

26 *Ibid.*, Pos 347.

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Kahn and Wiener, *The year 2000: a framework for speculation on the next thirty-three years*,

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Kahn, ‘The Alternative World Futures Approach’, 104.

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Glenn, ‘Scenarios’.

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Foresight Horizon Scanning Centre, *Scenario planning: a guidance note*, 11.

31 Oppenheimer, *Pivotal countries, alternate futures*, Pos. 1409.

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Handel, ‘Intelligence and the problem of strategic surprise’, 21.

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Booth, *Strategy and ethnocentrism*, 122-123.

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Lowenthal, *Intelligence: from secrets to policy*, 225.

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Fingar, *Reducing uncertainty: intelligence analysis and national security*, 72.

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George and Bruce 2008.

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Armstrong and Rubin, *Conference Summary: Policy Approaches to Regional Conflict Formations*, 1.

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Ibid., 5

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Ibid., 5-7

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Armstrong and Rubin, *Conference Summary: Policy Approaches to Regional Conflict Formations*, 4.

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Zogby International, 5 Nation Survey of the Middle East. December 2006, p. 2.

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Sladden et al., *Russian strategy in the Middle East*, 5

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It is instructive to compare the SITCEN document with a recently declassified JIC assessment. See, for instance, ‘International terrorism: impact of Iraq’, dated, 13 April 2005.

<http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/media/76539/2005-04-13-JIC-Assessment-International-terrorism-impact-of-Iraq.pdf>.

44 As we can see regarding recent reactions to the decision of US President Donald Trump to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. See: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/trump-jerusalem-decision-latest-updates-171212081649751.html>

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See SIT-6577/07 FINAL.

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See SIT-6577/07 FINAL.

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Ludovico Carlino, 'Jihadists Exploit Syrian Turmoil', 8.

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See: <https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/nusra-front-jabhat-fateh-al-sham>.

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Eric Pichon, Understanding the rise of ISIL/Da'esh (the 'Islamic State'), 2

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Avi Melamed, Inside the Middle East, Pos 2498.

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See: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/06/13/about-six-in-ten-syrians-are-now-displaced-from-their-homes/>

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UNHCR, Syria Assilum applications, 2017 <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>

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El –Katiri, Fattouh, and Mallinson, *The Arab Uprisings*, 1

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DNI, ICD 203 Analytic standards,

<https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICD/ICD%20203%20Analytic%20Standards.pdf>.

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Dhami et al., 2015.

57

Ibid., 754-756.

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CFR event.

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In 2003 Hamas had been designated as a terrorist organization by the European Union. The United States and some EU Member States had done so before. See Council Common Position 2003/651/CFSP of 12 September 2003 updating Common Position 2001/931/CFSP on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism and repealing Common Position 2003/482/CFSP, Official Journal of the European Communities L 229, 13/09/2007, pp. 0042-0045. Retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32003E0651:EN:HTML> (11 September 2017).

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Interviewed by the authors. Between 2011 and 2016 Joëlle Jenny was the main responsible of the early warning mechanism in the European External Action Service, initially as Head of the Conflict

Prevention, Peacebuilding and Mediation's Division and later as Director for Security Policy and Conflict Prevention.

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69 Treverton and Miles, 'Unheeded warning of war: why policymakers ignored the 1990 Yugoslavia estimate', 515-516.

70 Interview with the authors.

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Treverton and Miles, 'Unheeded warning of war: why policymakers ignored the 1990 Yugoslavia estimate', 507.

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