

From: Anne-Marie Slaughter [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2012 12:56 PM
To: H
Subject: RE: great, great speech today

B6

I'm frankly not sure there has ever been as much on anyone's plate in foreign policy as there is now. But you are helping shape world history. Here's what I wrote in the FT today. I know everyone thinks AL/Turkish mil intervention is a non-starter, but as I told Susan Rice last year, if I had told her a year ago that the Arab League would send a plan to the UNSC calling for one of their number to delegate authority to negotiate his path out of office, she would have thought I was smoking something (she agreed). So stranger things have happened. And as I sent you last week, there was an op-ed in a UAE paper laying out precisely how such an AL/Turkey intervention would be accomplished in military terms. We shd be asking them if they want safe zones on their territory or on Syrian territory. I don't want war, but this regime is not going to stop.

How to rescue the Syrian peace plan

By Anne-Marie Slaughter

On Saturday Russia and China put their cards on the table. They vetoed the Arab League's plan for resolving the Syrian crisis, a plan that asks president Bashar al-Assad to step down in favour of his vice-president, the formation of a unity government and free elections.

They are putting their money on Mr Assad, betting that he can crush the political opposition movement and growing rebel forces spreading across his country if he is just willing to be brutal enough. In 2005 both nations approved the 'responsibility to protect' doctrine, which allows the international community to intervene peacefully or militarily in cases in which a government commits genocide, crimes against humanity, grave and systematic war crimes, or ethnic cleansing against its own people.

A year later they voted for a Security Council resolution that affirmed the doctrine. But when it comes to the Syrian government's murder of thousands of its own people, sovereignty trumps humanity.

So what now? A little time remains for continued diplomatic efforts aimed at shifting the allegiances of the Sunni merchant class in Damascus and Aleppo. Syrians in London, Athens, Cairo, Canberra and several other countries demonstrated in front of their own embassies to protest the most recent atrocities in Homs. It is possible that diaspora communities will relay information to their families back in Syria that contradicts the government's account of a conspiracy by armed gangs and foreign forces to depose the Assad regime.

The Arab League could co-ordinate a mass withdrawal of ambassadors, following the US lead on Monday. They could also move to suspend Syria from the Organization of the Islamic Conference and other international bodies. However, they should not seek the indictment of Mr Assad and other top

Syrian officials by the International Criminal Court – an indictment at this point would significantly decrease the chances that he could be forced from office in a political solution.

Within Syria and among foreign policy mavens with ties to the opposition, the presumed and desired next step is for the Arab League nations, Turkey, and other Nato countries to arm the Free Syrian Army, the loose coalition of groups of soldiers who have defected from the military and those members of the opposition who can get and use weapons.

That path leads to certain civil war. Until now the FSA has operated mainly defensively, consistent with its original mandate to protect unarmed protesters from armed government forces. But the more the FSA goes on the offence in a drive to topple the government, the more the Mr Assad's supporters will pull together and the more the conflict will divide along sectarian lines, with Druze, Christians, Alawites and possibly Kurds fighting Sunnis. This is exactly the scenario the government is determined to depict. Add in Iranian, Russian and Hizbollah support for the regime and the war is likely to be long, brutal and hugely destabilising for neighbouring countries.

An alternative, which in my view is still possible notwithstanding Saturday's vote, is a military intervention by troops from various Arab League countries and Turkey to create safe zones for civilian protesters and all soldiers who wish to defect from the army. The sponsoring countries would have to make clear through every means possible within Syria itself that the goal of the intervention is to protect the population until a political settlement can be reached. That would not include arming the FSA. The point would be to stop the killing rather than to enable it on both sides.

The choice between these scenarios (assuming political will exists among Syria's neighbours for taking up arms rather than sending them to FSA) should depend on which strategy saves more lives and is least destabilising to the region. Yet we must also make no mistake about the costs of inaction. According to Wendell Steavenson, a reporter for the New Yorker, when Rifaat al-Assad, who oversaw the massacre of tens of thousands of Syrians in Hama in 1982 but now lives in exile, was asked whether he would condemn the Hama action today, he replied: "We couldn't have succeeded without doing it." His nephew is facing a similar choice today and has given every indication that he is equally determined to succeed.

Hillary Clinton, US secretary of state, said on Sunday that the friends and partners of the Arab League would continue to work with it to press for a political settlement and to provide as much direct humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people as possible. William Hague, the UK's foreign secretary, said that the League did not need the UN's endorsement to continue with its work. That is the right stance. The Arab League and Turkey must remain in the lead.

Even creating a contact group along the lines of the one created to co-ordinate assistance to Libya, as Ms Clinton suggested, would be likely to buttress Mr Assad's foreign conspiracy narrative. The proper lesson to draw from Saturday's vote is not the veto, but the remarkable degree of support for the Arab League's plan from the thirteen other members of the Security Council, including Morocco, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan (all Muslim nations), Colombia, South Africa and India.

The US and Europe should broadcast that support as directly as possible to the Syrian people, expand and tighten sanctions and exclusionary measures aimed at the Syrian elite, and provide all necessary assistance in a supporting role.

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Thanks for the approbation. So much to do.

From: Anne-Marie Slaughter [mailto:[redacted]]
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That was EXACTLY what was needed. You laid out a vision of how US/EU work together throughout the world. Brava.

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