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Putting that aside for a moment, we will go to Bernardino, who had a lot to do with the Mediterranean. I seem to remember that the EU has been promising a Mediterranean strategy for at least three decades now, the idea being that the North would help the South develop, etc. To me, that does not really seem to have worked and you more recently have been involved in Libya and getting the UN settlement there, which I guess is holding for the moment. What is your perspective for the decade to 2030?

Bernardino León Gross

Thank you. Allow me first to thank Thierry de Montbrial and his staff at Ifri for this already highly successful conference. Do not worry, I will not speak in French, I just wanted to thank Thierry. I think that making predictions in this region is always difficult and normally they are not very accurate. However, if I think of three factors that will be important in the coming decade, I will focus on demography, power and technology. I think these are three elements, each of which has a correcting or influencing sub-factor.

Demography, let us think that one-third of the population in this region are between 15 and 30 years old and another third is below 15. This gives us an idea of where we are, and it means that this two-third of the population in the region in 10 years will be the core mainstream. You were asking us to reflect on where economy and politics meet, these are not people who are expecting big changes or who will have big expectations politically. The region is what it is, but these are people who will expect to have jobs, food and a life, and what happens when you cannot offer that? The region has been struggling and you may remember before when I was dealing with the Arab Spring and we always thought of that as a consequence of the 2008 crisis. Remember Algeria in the nineties, we had the bread revolt and then the elections. Demography is going to be a huge factor and I would say the main one in the coming decade, affecting and influencing at the same time economic and political issues. The subfactor here that is important to bear in mind is migration. This will produce huge migration waves, which first of all is a loss of talent for the region but also an element that will impact what others may do, for example the European Union. You were asking about Europe and unfortunately many people in Europe can only see the migration dimension when they look at the South. This will be an important factor that influences what others may do.

Number two is power, and it has been said before by people who know much more about this than I do, Ebtisam and Itamar described what the big powers will do. We will see two interesting factors, one of which is that local powers in the region will be more active, will have to be more active. We have the US leaving, the Russians will not have the same capacity as



the United States and the Chinese even less. In this region if you are not a power ready to send an army, forget about it. Drones and technology will not replace an army. Who is ready to send an army to the Middle East today? No one, except local powers. We will see the peripheral powers, non-Arab powers like Iran, which as you said before, has already been there, but we will see more of Turkey and Israel playing a role in the region, together with countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, etc. We will see more local engineering in the region, and I think they will all be more pragmatic in the future. Iran has a foreign policy that is about regime survival and the Shia communities in the region. Turkey or Israel are more pragmatic, and I do not think they are about regime survival, they have other concerns and I think that is interesting.

Number three technology and it has been said that in this decade we will see the paradigm of oil dominating energy around the world changing. Most of us will use electric cars in 10 years' time, even if we cannot imagine that. The region will have to change and what is interesting is that the region is already a technology producer and is no longer depending on others. It is not easy to predict what technology will do. I remember 10 years' ago people were saying that digital is going to transform the region because these young kids with their phones will organize revolutions. What we see today is that digital is the tool that authoritarian regimes are using to control their populations, so it is not easy to predict. However, I think that when we see countries in the region going into space and being very important actors in renewable energies, technology can provide solutions for many of the problems we are discussing today, food, jobs, economy going back to your earlier question. I think it is a factor that will increasingly play a positive role because they will have to replace oil.

Let me make a final point, which is not exactly technology but something where home ground can be very positive, and that is diplomacy. This region has always been an importer of diplomacy, the big designs, the big gain, the UN resolutions. Now and in fact for a while, this region has been producing excellent diplomacy. We go back to the Saudi Arabian plan for the Israeli-Arab, what the United Arab Emirates has been doing in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia, with the Qataris in Afghanistan, etc. We have more and more diplomacy and in the coming decade we will see more diplomatic initiatives from the region and less from outside, which I think will also be good news for the region.

John Andrews

That is a very interesting point and one I had not thought of.