

# MEIJI INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS

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**Kei Nakagawa**

Visiting Professor, Meiji Institute for Global Affairs, Meiji University

Short Curriculum Vitae) Kei Nakagawa

Hagoromo University of International Studies Faculty of Social Sciences Professor  
Ph.D.(Middle Eastern and North African Studies), University of Tokyo. Assumed her present post after working as a Visiting Researcher at the Mohammed V University (Rabat), a Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and Researcher and Cultural Attaché at the Embassy of Japan to Tunisia. Her specialty is Middle Eastern and North African Studies. She particularly specializes in North African political history and contemporary politics. She worked as an international electoral observer for the parliamentary election of the Kingdom of Morocco in November 2011.

### **The Current Situation of Trans-Mediterranean Cooperation and Challenges for the Future**

The ancient Romans, who controlled the entire Mediterranean region, called the present day Mediterranean “Our Sea (Mare Nostrum).” In the age of the Roman Empire, which achieved victory in the wars with Carthage, in present-day Tunisia, and ruled over the entire Mediterranean region, the Mediterranean Sea was the Roman inland sea. Since then, while the Mediterranean has been the setting of many battles, its coastal areas have also come to enjoy rich prosperity. This Mediterranean is now a sea of refugees risking their lives to cross over into Europe, and has become a region of frequently occurring terrorism, not only Syria and Libya, where civil wars have yet to be settled but Europe too, on the northern coast of the Mediterranean.

In order for a region to develop, multi-layered progress and vibrancy in many fields

such as the economy, politics, education and culture is necessary. Needless to say, stability of peace and order and ensuring food, clothing and shelter, the minimum necessary requirements for people to lead lives of dignity, are also basic conditions. However, at present there are many regions around the Mediterranean, including Syria and Libya, where these basic conditions are not being met.

### **Various Frameworks for Multilateral Cooperation in the Mediterranean**

The refugee crisis given rise to by the intensification of the Syrian crisis and the occurrence of terrorist attacks directed at the major European cities of Paris and Brussels indicate once again the pressing need for the strengthening of cooperative frameworks between the Mediterranean countries. In particular, cross-border measures are essential with regard to counterterrorism policy.

Several frameworks have thus far been established to encourage cooperation between the countries situated on the northern and southern coasts of the Mediterranean. The Western Mediterranean Forum (popularly referred to as the 5+5 Dialogue), the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (popularly referred to as the Barcelona Process), the Union for the Mediterranean, the Mediterranean Dialogue of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Mediterranean Dialogue of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) may be cited, to name but representative examples.

The 5+5 Dialogue was initiated in 1990 with the objective of strengthening ties between Europe and the Arab Maghreb Union, which was established the previous year in 1989. Since Mauritania, which does not have a Mediterranean coastline, is a member state of the Arab Maghreb Union, it is also a party to the 5+5 Dialogue<sup>(1)</sup>.

The 5+5 Dialogue deals with various fields such as economics, development, education, defense, and the movement of persons, as well as global issues such as food security, in addition to the particular traditional focus of economic cooperation. Following the series of governmental changes which took place in Arab nations during 2010 and 2011, the Malta Declaration was issued at a summit held in October 2012. Regarding the crisis in Syria, the Declaration criticizes the violent retaliations of both the Assad

regime and the anti-government organizations. The crisis in Mali, which shares a border with 5+5 Dialogue member countries Algeria and Mauritania, was also a subject of discussion. Following the appearance of IS (Islamic State) in 2014, a Minister's Meeting was held in Tangier, Morocco, in October 2015, and a strengthening of information sharing and judiciary cooperation among member countries with regard to counterterrorism measures was affirmed.

The Union for the Mediterranean is a regional alliance established in 2008, which was proposed by former French president Sarkozy during his election campaign. There was opposition from Turkey owing to the fact that it was also originally considered an alternative to Turkey's membership in the EU, but Turkey's membership was confirmed following assurances in 2008 that joining the Union was not an alternative to EU membership. There were also overlaps with the Barcelona Process and criticisms such as the expression of concern voiced by Chancellor Merkel of Germany, who feared a division of the EU due to the proposed participation of only a number of nations with Mediterranean coastlines from among the EU nations. Consequently, initial plans were scaled down, including the establishment of a Mediterranean Investment Bank, which was to be modeled on the European Investment Bank, and the Union began life not as the "Mediterranean Union" but as the "Union for the Mediterranean." Currently, all 28 member states of the EU and the Council of Europe, along with 15 Mediterranean countries(2) participate, and educational programs related to empowerment particularly for young people and women are being implemented, within the framework of the EU "Euro-Mediterranean Partnership."

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is a preexisting framework for strengthening ties between the EU and Mediterranean countries outside the EU, and is a part of EU diplomacy. Since it came into being as a result of a declaration concluded in Barcelona in 1995, it is referred to as the Barcelona Process. There are 10 participating nations which are not members of the EU(3). It comprises 3 political, economic, and cultural "baskets," and cooperation is advancing particularly in the fields of the economy, trade and energy. With respect to counterterrorism measures, a Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism was approved in 2005, which clearly defines the promotion of bilateral cooperation on a case-by-case basis, the rejection of any attempts to connect

terrorism with religion, culture or ethnic groups, the monitoring of terrorist organization funds and others.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), listed fourth, has 57 member states from Europe, North America, and Central Asia<sup>(4)</sup> and is the largest regional security organization in the world. Targets of activity include various issues which may threaten security, and not only security concerns in a military sense, but also issues in economic, environmental, human rights, and humanitarian fields. The OSCE maintains “Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation” relations with the 6 countries of Algeria, Israel, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan, and grants them observer status. The OSCE also initiated “Partners for Co-operation” relations with Japan in 1992, and Japan is invited to Leaders Summits, Councils of Foreign Ministers and so forth, and has the right to speak.

In addition, Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia have participated in NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue since its 1994 inception, as has Jordan since 1995, and Algeria since 2000. However, NATO determines which countries participate in this framework, and Syria, with its close ties to Russia, as well as Libya, which adopted anti-Europe and America policies under the Gaddafi regime, were of course not invited despite being Mediterranean countries. Moreover, NATO is first and foremost a military organization, and for both Libya and Syria, the most unstable among current Mediterranean countries, participating in NATO initiatives would be problematic owing to the fact that it was also the organization which took a lead in the 2011 bombing of Libya.

### **Towards Further Strengthening of Trans-Mediterranean Cooperation**

In this manner, many frameworks for cooperation have been established thus far. Among the frameworks described above, the 5+5 Dialogue, which has the fewest number of participating states, holds meetings comparatively frequently at not only the summit but also ministerial level, and is also discussing IS countermeasures. The other frameworks however, which have dozens of member states, have gone no further than basic principles in terms of counterterrorism measures.

With regard to preventive measures to expose terrorism in its planning stages, which

require information sharing and rapidity, bilateral cooperation is indispensable, as stated in the Code of Conduct on Countering terrorism of the Barcelona Process. In particular, information sharing between the countries on both sides of the Mediterranean is essential. For example, Morocco is strengthening bilateral cooperative systems with countries such as Spain, France, and Belgium. Indeed, following the November 2015 simultaneous terror attacks in Paris and the January 2016 Brussels terrorist incident, information provided by Morocco to the French and Belgian authorities has been useful in capturing criminals and exposing networks<sup>(5)</sup>.

Returning to the two challenges mentioned in the opening sentences of the stability of peace and order and ensuring food, clothing and shelter, the minimum necessary requirements for people to lead lives of dignity, it is necessary to establish systems to enable more multilateral sharing of information and cooperation, in addition to the bilateral cooperation currently being strengthened, in order to prevent terrorism which dramatically destabilizes peace and order. Additionally, it is necessary to improve the various circumstances by which young generations are surrounded to prevent the occurrence of "spiritual voids," which can lead to involvement in organizations with extremist ideology. For example, the long term perspective countermeasures toward extremists in the religious field that Morocco is undertaking, including the training and educational program of Imams, are already being conducted cooperatively based on bilateral agreements between Morocco and African countries such as Mali, Tunisia and so on<sup>(6)</sup>. An agreement was also concluded with France in September 2015, and similar undertakings are under way. Laying out a framework whereby environmental improvements that ensure educational and employment opportunities for second and third generation immigrants from the Muslim world, while also providing them with opportunities to encounter moderate thought in terms of religion and culture, are promoted under multilateral in addition to bilateral cooperation, will lead strengthening the foundations of regional development as a whole.

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<sup>(1)</sup> The participating nations in the 5+5 Dialogue are the 10 countries of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Portugal, Spain, France, Malta and Italy.

- (2) The breakdown of the 15 Mediterranean countries is Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey. The Palestinian National Authority also attends.
- (3) The breakdown of the 10 countries is Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and the Palestinian National Authority.
- (4) The breakdown of the 57 countries is Iceland, Ireland, Azerbaijan, the United States of America, Albania, Armenia, Andorra, Italy, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, the United Kingdom, Estonia, Austria, the Netherlands, Kazakhstan, Canada, Cyprus, Greece, Kyrgyz, Georgia, Croatia, San Marino, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, Tajikistan, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Norway, the Vatican, Hungary, Finland, France, Bulgaria, Belarus, Belgium, Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Portugal, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Monaco, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Romania, Luxembourg and Russia.
- (5) Kei Nakagawa et als.ed.s. (2015) *Le livre gris du terrorisme: Au au coeur de la coopération sécuritaire Maroc-Europe*, Jean-Cyrille Godefroy, Paris. Also, Abdelhak al-Khayam, director of the Moroccan Central Bureau of Judicial Investigation who served as a panelist, and the Counterterrorism Group Chief of the Spanish Ministry of Home Affairs mentioned at a symposium commemorating the publishing of the Spanish edition of the same book, held in Madrid, Spain, in May of 2016, that terrorism related information sharing and cooperation was advancing between the two countries (Presentación del Libro gris del terrorismo, Centro Internacional de Prensa de Madrid, 05/05/2016).
- (6) Kei Nakagawa (2014) “Long Term Efforts Towards the Eradication of Extremist Groups: The Case of Morocco” MIGA Global Diagnosis (<https://www.meiji.ac.jp/miga/6t5h7p00000ec1v4-att/20140901nakagawa.pdf>).