



## ATLANTIC FACES

**Malou Innocent, CATO Institute**

Malou Innocent is a Foreign Policy Analyst at the [Cato Institute](#). She is a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and her primary research interests include Middle East and Persian Gulf security issues and US foreign policy toward Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China. She has appeared as a guest analyst on CNN, BBC News, Fox News Channel, Al Jazeera, Voice of America, CNBC Asia, and Reuters.

Here she talks to us about her current priorities, the situation in North Africa and Afghanistan, and she shares her advice to students interested in pursuing a career in research and analysis.

**1. What are the current priorities in your work the Cato Institute?**

My current priority, along with my colleague, Ted Galen Carpenter, is a long-term book project called *Dubious Partners: Washington's Authoritarian Allies in the Cold War and the War on Terror*. The book explores the moral dilemma American officials have repeatedly encountered when the US government engages in strategic partnerships with authoritarian allies. Some cooperation with questionable political and security partners is unavoidable. Yet many of the regimes with which US administrations have chosen to collaborate were—and in some cases still are—brutal and corrupt. The key question explored in our book is what standards should be used to determine when such a sacrifice of national integrity and moral capital is necessary, when it is unnecessary, and when the situation is a close call.

**2. What is your assessment of the current situation in North Africa? Do you see the Egyptian revolution spreading?**

I can only hope that by the time people read this Muammar Qaddafi's regime in Libya has fallen. The anti-government uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, and elsewhere have been nothing short of awe-inspiring, and these protests demonstrate that the forces erected to suppress individual freedoms eventually break down or unravel without, and often in spite of, the West.

Whether we will stand witness to true "revolution" in these countries, that is a fundamental shift in the major political and economic institutions as well as in the social order, is a separate question. Militaries typically have been antithetical to democracy, yet military institutions have assumed control both in Tunis and Cairo. Sadly, a series of procedural changes is not a revolution, and time will tell whether genuine democratic change takes root in the Arab world.

**3. What would you describe as the greatest challenges faced by women interested in working in the field of security studies these days?**

I have experienced very few challenges being a woman in the field of security studies; rather, age and seniority are significant determinants to gaining influence and power in Washington. This demographic stratification is apparent and intense particularly on Capitol Hill.

**4. What is the greatest challenge to the transatlantic relationship?**

Afghanistan, Afghanistan, Afghanistan. Since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, there have been growing fissures in the transatlantic alliance about how to deal with Afghanistan. Western European powers tend to favor withdrawal, while the Central and East European countries seem to enjoy the "real-world" training they are currently receiving in the field. The United States is caught in the middle of this squabble. These issues come on top of other on-going problems regarding European governments failing to bear their fair share of the collective defense burden.

**5. What advice would you give to students interested in pursuing a career in research and analysis?**

Don't be cowed by the conventional wisdom. Outside the box thinking has been decidedly ahead of the curve.

**Comments**