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This talk critically analyzes the role and performance of the United Nations in the Arab region over the past decade, situating it within the larger geopolitical context from the “war on terror” and the 2003 Iraq war to the ongoing Arab uprisings. Despite the United Nations Security Council’s initial resistance to authorize the 2003 attack on Iraq, it ultimately cooperated with post-invasion occupation and thus exhibited its limited ability to offset strong geopolitical pressure. In its opposite role, the UN authorized a no-fly zone to protect the civilian population in Benghazi from feared crimes against humanity; but this was part of a larger regime change plan. This perceived deception in Libya rendered its role in Syria and other sites of uprisings, deeply ambivalent.