

The victory of Donald Trump in the presidential elections of 2016 in the US has surprised much of the European society, which is today uncertain - indeed without great interpretive skills - about the future of transatlantic relations, and more generally on the global consequences of what seems to be the less conventional US administration of the last century.

If Trump's foreign policy - and not only that - is an unknown and almost inextricable issue for the Europeans, it appears no less complex the evaluation and the interpretation in the Middle East region, where there are surprises, however.

What has caused the first and most profound misgivings in the Middle East, were undoubtedly the often inappropriate utterances of the presidential candidate Trump on Muslims, included in confusing array of immigrants that the elected president threatens to expel or refuse the entry into the US territory.

The mere populism - as unfortunately effective - of President-elect Trump, is then read in much of the Middle East region as a position of closure towards the Muslim community and the regional governments, reinforcing the idea of an isolationist America, iconoclastic and unscrupulously sectarian, with which it is not possible any form of interaction.

A certainly extreme vision, and also largely wrong, which is however difficult to counter through the weak appeal to the need to interpret the rhetoric of Trump exquisitely in a political and pre-election key.

If Obama has disappointed many Americans, largely disinterested of his foreign policy but very polarized on domestic and economic policy issues, on the contrary in the Middle East the outgoing president has managed to greatly diminish the negative image of a warmongering and Islamophobic America built in the eight years of the previous Bush administration and the two major conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

No wonder as the move from the Obama administration to Trump has aroused concerns and fears, by creating a widespread belief of a future characterized on the one hand by the desire to disengagement and on the other by a simultaneous willingness to negotiate a new and more successful participation of the US global interests in the arena.

To further complicate the interpretative framework of the future American foreign policy it also came a narrative based on the need for an agreement with Russia, that in the Middle East is read with amazement and perplexity.

It is not understandable in the region as you can at the same time want to define an agreement with the Russians, in fact redefining the boundaries of a more peaceful coexistence, but also take on a contextual new aggressive posture towards Iran and Syria, which are linked to Russia by intense and difficultly mutable relations of political and military nature.

It is also unclear how one can on the one hand expressing a firmer support for Israel - not the least through the appointment of an ambassador particularly marked in terms of regional policy positions, which intends as its first act to bring the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem - and on the other end to reconcile these positions with a redefinition of relations with Saudi Arabia, which had meanwhile entered a dangerous spiral of political and economic crisis.

What the pre-electoral narrative of Trump has produced in the Middle East, therefore, is a very confusing set of assumptions and assessments, all strongly influenced by the substantial inability to fully understand and interpret the real political thought of the elected president.

At the same time, however, it is increasingly widespread the perception of Trump in the region as a president ascended to the summit of the American institutional system almost by accident, against its own forecast, (and the difficulty of identifying and appointing staff members seems to prove it), feeding fears and expectations completely uprooted from a real and sensible analysis capabilities.

The election of Trump and the Iranian paradox

Very little Trump said on the Middle East during the electoral campaign, but on one point has repeatedly reiterated its clearest conviction: the agreement with Iran is the worst deal that could be defined and it is his intention to "made it into pieces".

In confirmation of this position, most of the appointments made by the President-elect for the composition of the next government indicate a clear desire to be surrounded by "hawks", with very clear ideas about Iran and the nuclear deal, as in the case the next Secretary of Defense James Mattis.

Trump also spoke of a general commitment to support regional allies in the fight against the Islamic State, proving however somewhat lukewarm against Saudi Arabia and causing some discontent both in Riyadh and in Abu Dhabi, which today represent the antagonistic poles to Iran.

All this arouses extensive questions in the region, favouring even a paradoxical positive interpretation of US policy by the Iranians, so that they see in Trump a return to power of that pragmatism with which they have always been used to confront.

Not even the Shah made it ever secret, before the revolution, as well as the leaders of the Islamic Republic, after the collapse of the monarchy, that with American Republicans Iran "communicates" better.

What the Iranians do not understand - or perhaps more simply do not accept – of the Democrats, is the ambiguity of language and strategy. Carter on the one hand supported the Shah and the other was sinking him with the issue of human rights, giving strength to the revolutionary sentiment that brought about the fall. Reagan on the contrary was the president who more than any other pointed an accusing finger against Iran, but at the same time was pragmatic enough to sign a secret agreement - the now famous Iran-Contra - through which assured spare parts to Iran needed to counter the Iraqi aggression (by the same United States strongly encouraged).

The Republicans, in essence, are the "enemy you know", with its rules, its values and its very clear positions. In contrast, the Democrats are ambiguous and unpredictable together, with which on the one hand you make the agreements and the other one you declare war, as the case of JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) has amply demonstrated to the Iranians.

It is therefore clear, even if almost paradoxical, that for Iran the election to the White House of Donald Trump is a by far preferable result in comparison with Hillary Clinton.

Trump is in this sense an unknown variable that could manifest itself in a completely unexpected way for Iran, which continues to be convinced of the pragmatism of the new chairman, giving ample credit to interpretation according to which the Agreement attacks would not instrumental to its cancellation but a redefining key, more favourable commercial trade with the United States.

A conception that does not find any of sharing space in Europe, however, where especially the appointments of the executive are on the contrary perceived as a confirmation of a hostile will to the agreement and to any form of interaction with the Islamic Republic of Iran from part of the new establishment in Washington.

A further element of complexity into the future relationship between the United States and Iran will then certainly be represented by the relationship between Washington and Baghdad, that the Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi would like to strengthen in relation to the fight against terrorism, but it is closely related to the relationship with the 'Iran and the Shiite militias that are the real focus of the Iraqi military capabilities on the ground.

The enthusiasm of Israel and the perplexity of Saudi Arabia

The government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel has predictably welcomed with great enthusiasm the appointment of Donald Trump at the White House, calling it "a great friend" and

adopting a language that seemed all but disappeared in the narrative of the relationship between the United States and Israel.

The great architect of the link between Washington and Tel Aviv (although the United States seem to want to accept the idea of the official change in capital in Jerusalem, has always disputed by the international community) is the son of the new president, Jared Kushner, orthodox Jew and husband the second daughter Ivanka Trump, an influential New York-based real estate developer. It is not clear what the new relationship will be, although certainly strengthening ties, it appears quite clearly that this relationship will be cultivated at the expense of the one with Iran, at least in the initial phase of the new presidential term.

Less enthusiastic reactions to the election of Trump in the Arabian Peninsula, where a confused and cautious sentiment characterizes the majority of local governments.

While on the one hand the Trump animosity against Iran is a factor of great interest and appreciation for the Gulf monarchies, the intention to establish an agreement with Russia and support the fight against the Islamic State opens up a range of highly possibilities contradictory for the countries of the region, at the same time cultivated as allies and threatened for their more or less overt support for jihadist formations raging in Syria, Iraq and Libya.

If the Obama administration came to an end without any major problems for the role of the Arab monarchies of the region, the arrival of Trump could instead coincide with a more vocal condemnation of support for terrorism and Islamic radicalism, of which a good part of the local kingdoms it is in some ways an expression, through the process of mutual recognition and legitimization of roles with the local clergy.

The crystallization of North Africa and the prospects for Trump

The election of Donald Trump arrives in what clearly seems to be the worst moment in the history of bilateral relations between Egypt and the United States, with an increasing tendency on the part of Cairo to seek in Moscow a new and more solid ally for the defense of the fragile balance of the country.

The Egyptian president Al Sisi congratulated Trump expressing his satisfaction with the result and hoped that his arrival could "inject a new spirit into the path of relations between the two countries." Comment interim, without particular enthusiasm, serving the Egyptian president to take time and understand what will be the actual Trump's foreign policy in the region, while seeking to maintain a low profile in new and more intense relationship with Moscow.

Libya's election Trump generates fears on both sides of the political struggle, instead strengthening the enthusiasm of the militia. Both Tripoli to Benghazi are in fact certain that the new president will adopt a sharply set back profile to the crisis, thus avoiding intervening politically and militarily in support any of the political elements on the ground.

Rejoice military leaders of disparate militias, who see thereby away the spectre of military intervention, thus facilitating the consolidation of their role and especially the many, disparate and often illegal economic interests cultivated in their own geographical domain areas.

Tunisia also welcomes the election of the new president-heartedly, fearing that the political experiment now underway in the country, and led by a lay-denominational association, can enter into crisis under the blows of a growing approach towards the support only to secular regimes.

Optimism and enthusiasm to moderate Morocco that with Trump believes it can consolidate the process of growth and national stability, contrasts rather the almost total silence of Algeria, crystallized into a political dynamic property now and wait.