Summary

**South Eastern Europe**
Ten years after the Thessaloniki Declaration. For the Balkans the worst is not over yet.
Enza Roberta Petrillo 5

**Middle East and North Africa**
Hassan Rowhani elected as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Nicola Pedde 13

**Sahel – Sub-Saharan Africa**
The War of Mali
Marco Massoni 19

**Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia**
The air base at Manas (Kyrgyzstan): legal status and surroundings
Lorena Di Placido 25

**China**
Neo-traditionalists and neo-constitutionalists
Nunziante Mastrolia 31
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India – Indian Ocean</td>
<td>Indian SEZs and the Global Financial Crisis</td>
<td>Claudia Astarita</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific (Japan, Korea, ASEAN and Australia)</td>
<td>Nuclear Korea: the reasons behind the bomb and the difficult way ahead</td>
<td>Stefano Felician Beccari</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Pope Francis: vision and geo-political implications of an election</td>
<td>Alessandro Politi</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europeans Defence Initiatives</td>
<td>More Italy in Europe, more europe in the european Defence industry</td>
<td>Claudio Catalano</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO – Transatlantic Relations</td>
<td>Reasons for, and perspectives on, the cancellation of the Fourth Phase of the European Phased Adaptive Approach</td>
<td>Lucio Martino</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>War ends: new military Mission to afghanistan. Between negotiate and strategic interests</td>
<td>Claudio Bertolotti</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building competences in a real world context</td>
<td>V.Adm (res) Mario Rino Me</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In June 2003, the member states of the European Union together with the leaders of the Western Balkan countries reached an agreement on the Thessaloniki Declaration. In this joint statement, the EU established the “European Perspective” of the Western Balkan countries making a solid commitment to accept the countries ready for the EU membership, judging each on its own value. The Thessaloniki Summit also marked the shift of the EU’s approach from the “security-focused” post-conflict stabilization, to the “enlargement-focused” European integration. Ten years after, the Western Balkans remains the only area of Europe’s geographical core yet to be incorporated into the EU. For these countries, it is mostly a question of how rapidly they can achieve the Copenhagen Criteria. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Thessaloniki Declaration, looking at the accomplishments so far and the challenges encountered by EU and Balkans countries in facing the Thessaloniki Agenda, this analysis assesses the current state of play of the enlargement process, examining ways to revitalize it, and discussing the foreseeable scenarios resulting from the slowing down of the expansion process.

What point is the enlargement process at?
Till 2003 the EU experienced deep disagreement over its foreign policy in the Western Balkans-Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) (FYROM), Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo-. To secure a common path, at the end of 2003 it converged on the “European Security Strategy”, the first attempt at defining a common set of guidelines for foreign policy based on the combination of democracy and security. Its emphasis on supporting democratic change in the EU’s peripheries as the best means to guarantee Europe’s security, was influenced by the EU’s experience in the previous decade with enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe and in dealing with conflicts in the Balkans.

On these bases, the Thessaloniki Agenda sets in detail the EU approach in preparing the countries of the region for EU accession, confirming the Stabilization and Association Process launched at the EU-Western Balkans summit in 2000 as the framework for the “European course of the Western Balkan countries, all the way to their future accession”⁴. This statement cleared the way for a wide range of tangible initiatives aiming at integrating the Western Balkans in the EU.

A decade later, the EU is dealing with three different categories of countries in the region. Whereas Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are still considered as “potential” candidates for EU membership, the former Yugoslav Republic of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro and Serbia have made a step forward in the enlargement process and have been officially granted candidate status by the European Council. As an acceding country, Croatia is going to be the 28th member of the EU in July 2013, becoming the latest example of the EU’s transformative power in the region⁵.

Are -as observed- “these developments an additional confirmation of the continued attraction of EU accession, despite the current adverse economic climate in the EU”⁶?

Look at the facts. With Croatia joining the Union on July 1st, the membership perspective that was given to the states of the region, a decade earlier finally becomes effective for one of them.

On the other hand the pre-accession process with the other countries is struggling, also due to the unsatisfactory performances of Romania and Bulgaria, whose accession in 2007 is widely perceived as having been carried out too quickly and without an adequate preparation especially concerning the rule of law and anti-corruption reforms. With these premises not surprising that five years after their membership, both countries are still subject to the “Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM)”, an instrument expressly designed to ensure the progress with judicial reform, and the fight against corruption and organized crime. These structural problems, together with the sudden increase of the euro-zone’s economic crisis, have led to a significant review of the means and tools of EU policy in the Western Balkans⁷.

Even though it is quite obvious that with the future of the euro – and definitely of the Union – hanging in the balance, new enlargement rounds are not on the top of the EU members’ agenda, it is undeniable that the EU action towards the Balkans has never completely stopped. Rather, as wittily pointed out by the Central European Policy Institute⁸, the EU enlargement in 2013 might set aside some news: a good and a bad one. If the good news is that the euro crisis has not killed the enlargement process, the bad news is that the first EU enlargement since the euro crisis will be also the last in this decade.

Croatia, the first EU country with a recent inheritance of war and extensive ethnic violence, is an

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⁶ E. Fouèrè, 16 May 2013, Thessaloniki ten years on: Injecting momentum into the enlargement process for the Western Balkans, CEPS Commentary.

⁷ The increasing mistrust among member states is well described by the recent choice to link Bulgaria and Romania’s entry into the Schengen area to their progress on the CVM.

exceptional case. To gain the membership, Zagreb not only massively reformed its rule of law but also drastically subverted its political overture: it stopped perturbing Bosnian state building, allowed the return of Croatian Serb refugees, engaged the Serb minority party into the government coalition and completed the extradition of the war criminals indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). If it is true that these turns would not have been possible without the European perspective, it is also evident that only the acceleration for the membership negotiations is not enough to push the resting applicant countries on the path of the reforms needed.

Taking into account this, the question is how the EU’s transformative power can be used for the other Balkans countries, and how this unfinished task can be kept on the EU’s political and geopolitical agenda at a time when the economic crisis and the euro-skepticism among the member states hit daily the perspective of the enlarged Europe. What for now is sure, is that after the last enlargement round, the EU will not accept any states with a weak rule of law and problems on the side of judicial system, corruption and organized crime. The lessons learnt from Romanian and Bulgarian memberships have underlined the importance of placing the rule of law at the heart of the enlargement policy. On these bases a new approach to negotiations in the area of judiciary and fundamental rights and on justice, freedom and security was proposed in last year’s strategy paper and endorsed by the Council. This approach has been reflected in the negotiating framework adopted in June 2012 for negotiations with Montenegro, when the rule of law and the democratic governance was put at the centre of the accession process, setting also the basics for future negotiations.

Without any doubt, requirements like these represent a huge challenge, especially for countries that according to Freedom House are still in the grips of fragile institutional transitions. Whereas Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro are doing their best to develop the democratic governance, Kosovo, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina emerge as extremely problematic cases. Though in principle, all these governments are aware of the importance of the political criteria for accession and are committed to the goal of joining the EU, in practice, however, what frequently gets in the way of effective commitment to the EU agenda, is the persistence of national attitude, which tends to collide with high political topics, like that of full cooperation with the ICTY (see, for example, Croatia’s and Serbia’s difficulties in delivering key fugitive indicted war criminals), or that of interethnic reconciliation in the region. Again, the high degree of political polarization, shown, for instance by the paralyzing antagonism between the two main political parties in Albania, as well as ethnic tensions, particularly salient in the case of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), are further factors that damage the ability of Balkan governments to meet the political conditionality for accession, and thus to consolidate and complete their democratic transition.


10 According to Freedom House, Croatia, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Montenegro are “semi-consolidated democracies”; Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina are “transitional governments” or “hybrid regimes”; and Kosovo is a “semi-consolidated authoritarian regime".
Unresolved status and border issues, most notably in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Serbia-Kosovo, represent a further major challenge in carrying out the necessary acts for initiating the reform process, increasing the level of political dialogue and consensus building. This is for example the case of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) whose enlargement process, contrary to what recommended for four times by the Commission is still undermined by the name bilateral dispute with Greece, while the political criteria continue to be sufficiently met.

As FYROM’s case mainly depends on Greek hostility, Serbia’s will be determined by the ability to implement and respect the EU-facilitated agreement of 19 April 2013 signed with Kosovo: a crucial milestone to stabilize their relations and define the conditions for large-scale devolution of northern Kosovo and its Serb population, clearing the way for both parties to move ahead with their applications to join the EU. Taking into account the great efforts made by Serbia since it obtained the candidate country status in March 2012, the Commission in April 2013, has recommended the opening of negotiations for accession to the EU\(^{11}\). However, despite the fact that Serbia has constructively engaged in the dialogue with Pristina, accepting also in February 2013 the admission of Kosovo as a fully-fledged member of the Regional Cooperation Council\(^{12}\), and reformed the key areas of the rule of law, the prospects for its full membership are not optimistic at least till the end of this decade. As Montenegro, whose accession negotiation started in June 2012, Belgrade, while having a good chance of entry, is still at the start of a long accession process that will officially start only in January 2014\(^{13}\), thanks to the endorsement of the last EU Council of June.

This state of play gets more complicated when one analyzes how the European perspective is affecting Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo: three potential candidates addressed by the EU with different goals and methods. It’s not a secret that the priority focus of the EU on Kosovo in these years, does not coincide with the level of attention dedicated to other potential members. This “double conduct” is particularly evident in the case of Bosnia Herzegovina. A country, that differently from Kosovo, will be remembered as the black hole of EU external action due to the absence of a shared political strategy and improvements obtained in the last decade. Left alone in the marshes of the interethnic tensions, Bosnia has made inconsistent progress towards meeting the EU political criteria and achieving more functional, coordinated and sustainable institutional structures. Also The High level Dialogue on the Accession Process launched in June 2012 as the key forum for engagement on requirements for EU integration, remains far below expectations\(^{14}\). After 16 months spent in the swamp followed by the 2010 elections, the only achievement has


\(^{12}\) Kosovo and Serbia have signed also agreements on “Integrated Border Management”, on “Protection of religious and cultural heritage sites”, on “Customs stamps” and on “Acceptance of university diplomas”.


been the formation of the state-level government in Sarajevo. A success too tiny to obtain the status of candidate country.

**Who undermines the enlargement?**

If the efforts of Balkan countries and European Commission show a good degree of commitment and understanding toward the perspective of the enlargement, the hostility of the member states to new members has depleted the latter’s strength and authoritativeness on enlargement. This is not surprising: the financial débacle of the euro-zone, the so-called “enlargement fatigue”, and the difficulties coming from the 2004-2007 rounds of enlargement together have led to a review of the means and methods of EU policy toward the expansion. The potential negative consequences of enlargement and the complex problems still facing the Balkans – from statehood issues, war legacies, political polarization to ethnic tensions – have pushed the member states to go for a “go slow” approach to enlargement. Not unexpectedly, the past few years have seen the raise of “creeping nationalization”\(^\text{15}\) of enlargement. A trend that has shown that Member States have no scruples in exploiting openings and closures to the enlargement for domestic political gains. Especially after the economic crisis started in 2008, EU Member State enlargement policy is increasingly dominated, if not taken over, by national agendas. The result of this has been that the Council, rather than the Commission, is increasingly hindering the conditions for accession. The procedure crowded by legal and political obstacles raise new questions about the credibility of the EU commitments towards aspirant states, and consequently the effectiveness of the enlargement policy’s acclaimed transformative power.

Some episodes are exemplary: “In 2009, when Albania submitted its application to the EU, Germany waited for the approval of the Bundestag before asking the Commission to formulate an opinion. In December 2011, when the Council needed to respond to Serbia’s application for membership, to which the Commission had already given a positive – if conditional – avis, the Council delayed the answer to March, requesting Serbia to further demonstrate its fulfillment of the conditions set. These incursions often amount to delaying tactics: before reaching clear decisions, the Council requests additional reports from the Commission or other agencies, such as the Europol for Montenegro”\(^\text{16}\).

Existing bilateral issues between EU and aspiring members have also made the process difficult. Negotiating chapters with Croatia have been obstructed by Slovenia for the whole of 2008 before a national referendum decided that its maritime border should be agreed upon through international arbitration. Analogously, bilateral disputes such as the aforementioned case between Greece and FYROM, also negatively impacts the enlargement process. The Greek ostracism hidden in the Commission’s recommendations to start accession negotiations with Skopje, has fuelled in Macedonia a strong public resentment, against what is perceived as the double standard and the lack of fairness of the EU and some of its member states.

\(^{15}\) Hillion C., The creeping nationalization of the EU enlargement policy, [http://www.sieps.se/sites/default/files/Summary%202010_6.pdf](http://www.sieps.se/sites/default/files/Summary%202010_6.pdf)

The cases described above, illustrate how security considerations and individual interests of the member states can have opposite effects on the enlargement process as a whole. Far from having created a virtuous circle between stabilization and democratization the EU is facing a conflict among its different priorities. A point well addressed by Balfour and Stratulat: “strategic/security interests can take priority over the democratic promotion agenda and call for a rapid integration of the region. Conversely, the quest for the democratic transformation of the Balkan countries demands a strict application of conditions so as to prevent a premature accession”.

The risks of disengagement

While the European perspective of the Western Balkans trudges under the blows of the “enlargement fatigue” and the euro-skepticism, economic stagnation within the region is eroding the EU’s influence and encouraging extra-EU geopolitical competitors. Here, where Europe has made the difference in terms of stability and, at least until 2008, growth, EU is exporting its economic crisis. An analysis from the Economist Intelligence Unit points out that the Balkans economies suffered the most from the global recession in 2008-09 and are more vulnerable to a new recession in the euro-zone because the crisis in the EU – a key trading partner for all Balkan countries – has also hit local economies hard by discouraging demand for exports and reducing Foreign Direct Investments. Surely, if an element could be indicated as the underlying reason for this trend, it is the euro-zone crisis started in 2008. Balkan countries are closely economically linked to the EU, so what happens in their economic and financial sector is highly correlated to what is happening in the EU’s core.

In this context the EU supremacy in the region has been openly challenged by competitive economic actors like Turkey, Russia and China. Turkey, a country with intense human, cultural and commercial links to former Yugoslavia and Albania is exploiting the commercial and diplomatic opportunities followed by the EU recession. As of today its investment in the region is tiny but increasing. Some in Western Balkans begin to perceive Ankara as a successful and powerful model whose success is due to the independence from the EU.

Russia has also tried to present itself as a credible economic and political counterpart for the Balkan countries. In the last four years Moscow has encouraged Russian companies to gain business assets all over Southeastern Europe, trying to convert the region into a strategic hub and a preferential entry point to the Western economic area. As showed by the Serbian case, Russian interests in the Balkans are not simply economic but also geopolitical. EU FDIs have declined due to the economic crisis, leaving some room for new economic players. In this context Russia

19 Real GDP in the Balkans contracted by 5.2% in 2009 and the recession lasted into 2010, with average GDP falling by 0.4%, because the largest economy in the region, Romania, experienced an output decline. Elsewhere, the recovery in 2010 was tepid and the region’s performance in 2011 was modest. This means that average output in the region is still well below pre-crisis levels.
and Serbia have signed a number of bilateral agreements aimed at improving economic relations between the two countries. As of today, outside the CIS, Serbia is the only country with a Free Trade Agreement with Russia that stipulates that Russian goods produced in Serbia are considered to be of Serbian origin and exported to Russia customs free. The possibility of exporting goods from Serbia to the Russian market without paying customs has already been recognized by leading multinational Russian companies which established their production facilities in Serbia in order to export to the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Although the core of the Russian-Serbian relationship is economic, political factors also contribute to the enforcement of bilateral political relations. «Russia— for example— has in recent months reaffirmed its support for Serbia over the Kosovo issue, including making symbolic donations for the reconstruction of damaged Serbian Orthodox churches in Kosovo». Russian influence will not be limited to Serbia only. In the last years Moscow has looked with interest at Montenegro, a country in which Russian FDI penetration is significant, especially in the extractive sector and in the tourism industry.

China is also becoming progressively more present across southeastern Europe. In 2012 Beijing’s Export-Import Bank made a €345 million loan to upgrade Serbia’s Kostolac thermal power plant. Despite the harshness of the euro-zone crisis and the slowing down of the EU’s enlargement\(^{21}\), there is no doubt that for the region, the EU is the only option. Turkey, Russia and China can offer diplomatic and economic support but not the size of markets, aid or political influence that the EU can still offer. Economic figures confirm that EU is still the most prominent economic actor in the region. Russia’s attempt to take advantage of Brussels’ difficulties in managing its ongoing crisis, as of now has not been followed by strong evidence of economic hegemony in the region. Of course this scenario will get worse on the geopolitical and political side if the EU continues to accept the limbo of “go slow approach to further enlargement”\(^{22}\).

The Thessaloniki Declaration was supposed to be the first perspective step on the road to enlargement: a declaration of principles and intents that succeeding presidencies should have developed and improved. A decade later, regrettably, that has never happened. In these years, a huge part of the EU member states became reluctant to agree to the steps towards further enlargement, while reform efforts in the region stalled, making it harder for the countries to meet the conditions for membership. Today the state of play is that, even under the most positive scenario, full EU membership even for the most credible applicants, will not be realistic before 2020. After Croatia’s membership, there will be a long break before new accessions.

Montenegro and Serbia have the greatest chances of admission, but are still at the beginning of the accession process, a path completed by Zagreb after more than eight years. The recent developments of Albanian parliamentary elections confirm that this country too, is far from meeting the conditions on the rule of law and democratic governance. Just like Bosnia and Herzegovina, that will hold up the start of the process, due to the severe fall down of its institutional assets. As


FYROM is concerned, until the name issue is solved, sweeping away the Greek veto, no optimism will be possible on the side of membership. Finally, Kosovo, that is still at the stage of starting talks on a Stabilization and Association Agreement, and also hopes to gain visa liberalization. In order to avoid that the Balkans become an arena for the economic and geopolitical ambitions of external actors like Russia, Turkey or China, further steps on the economic side are needed to reinvigorate enlargement. If enlargement is postponed, as some in Europe would like to do, the problems of the Western Balkans will be multiplied and the EU’s foreign policy ambitions will be damaged. From this viewpoint, looking at the economic stagnation that weighs on the region, the question is what the EU can do to utilize this challenging geopolitical scenario to its advantage, enforcing its role as a global actor. This also implies that it would be a serious political error by the EU to wait to resolve the economic crisis before defining itself as a credible international player.

As argued by the leading think tank ECFR\textsuperscript{23}, in short, the next European Councils dedicated to the region should offer the Western Balkans a deal: improved support for overcoming economic and institutional problems in return for stricter adherence to democratic norms and practices. This is a tricky road map, but it is the only one that could revitalize the Thessaloniki agenda to encourage economic growth, to enhance its power of attraction, to promote reformist political actors and to avoid wasting the political and economic capital already spent in the region. Taking this into account, the best way for the European leaders to mark the tenth anniversary of the Thessaloniki Agenda would be to make courageous decisions that could infuse new energy into the enlargement process. In doing this EU governments have to take into account that the efforts of the European Commission alone are not enough to keep the European perspective alive. ECFR is right\textsuperscript{24}: the Commission needs the support of a pro-enlargement coalition of EU governments able to coordinate the lobbying efforts to ensure that the Western Balkans do not disappear from the EU agenda. The hope is that the Italian government will be able to gain the momentum needed to revitalize its commitment to the region, promoting the idea that disengagement from the Balkans would be too dangerous because of its potential to hinder the EU’s security.

\textsuperscript{24} D. Becher, 2012, ibidem.
The eleventh Presidential elections have been held in Iran on June 14th, ending with the victory of Hassan Rowhani in the first round of voting with the 50.71 % of preferences. The result have clearly upset the forecasts made by most of the analysts and the international and local journalists, almost unanimously sure of a first round victory of Baqer Qalibaf or, alternatively, a runoff between him and the former chief-negotiator Saeed Jalili. Rowhani has gained 18,613,329 preferences, sharply ranking at the top of the list of the candidates, and thus obtaining in the first round the majority of the necessary votes. Preventing the ballot and marking a decisive victory.

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf positioned himself at the second place, with 6,077,292 preferences, equal to 16.56 % of the votes, followed by Saeed Jalili, with 4,168,946 votes, equal to 11.36 %, Mohsen Rezaie with 3,884,412, equal to 10.58 %, Ali Akbar Velayati with 2,268,753, equal to 6.18 %, and eventually Mohammad Gharazi with 446,015, equal to 1.22 %. Two other candidates, Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel and Mohammad Reza Aref, were originally included in the list of the eight approved by the Council of Guardians, but they voluntarily withdrawn shortly before the date of the vote, bringing to six the final number of the challengers. 36,704,156 Iranians eventually went to vote, out of a total of 50,483,192 entitled, with a total turnout of 72.02 %. A success under every point of view, and a enormous satisfaction for the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who had feared until the last the risk of low turnout.

Hassan Rowhani, a moderate conservative. Not a reformist.

Rowhani (Semnan province, 1948), born under the family name of Feridoon in a traditional baza’ari family with a strong antimonarchical tradition, attended the local seminar until the age of 18, thus moving in Qom for advanced theological studies under the guidance of prestigious erudite. Which eventually favoured his acceptance at the faculty of Law of Tehran’s University.

Qom’s experience, however, proved to be significant for the young Rowhani, especially after the meeting with Ayatollah Khomeini, whom he will became a strong supporter and a militant. Rowhani will be openly acting in support of his marja, facing the risk of Savak and being forced to leave the country in 1977 in order to escape jail and tortures. And in his exile, he will reach
Khomeini in Paris in 1978, eventually returning with him in Iran after the triumph of the Islamic Revolution.

After the revolution and the birth of the Islamic Republic, Rowhani was tasked with the reorganization of the Iranian armed forces and the overall national security apparatus, which he lead until the first half of the last decade.

Rowhani had personally managed a considerable part of the operations in the Iran-Iraq war, emerging for that as a very popular figure within the national military system, and being esteemed for his organizational capacity and strategic view. That’s the reason why he became the political referee of the armed forces for more than two decades.

He was elected in the Parliament in 1980, and had been permanently re-elected until 2000, when he decided not to run for a new mandate. In 1999 he was appointed as member of the Expediency Council, and from 1989 to 2005 he presided the Supreme National Security Council, acting as well as chief negotiator for the nuclear program with the countries of the then EU3.

Hassan Rowhani has always focused on military and defence issues, thanks to its valuable experience gained during the years of conflict with Iraq. He has been also the strategic counsellor for both presidents Rafsanjani and Khatami, managing the delicate post war transition and the subsequent demobilization phase.

He eventually decided to retreat from politics on 2005, following the victory of Ahmadinejad, and focusing on his research and academic activities at the Center for Strategic Research, that he directed since 1992. Under this role he helped and protected, since the beginning of post reformist repression, several intellectuals which had been persecuted by the new radical governmental authorities.

He decided to come back to politics, running for the presidential elections, in the second half of 2012, publicly announcing his decision at the beginning of 2013.

He had been labelled by the western press as a reformist, especially because of his link with Khatami and Rafsanjani, under whom he served in relevant political roles. This interpretation, however, appears to be extremely weak and superficial, following the tradition of a constant incapacity of the press to interpret in the right way the domestic equilibriums of the Iranian politics.

On the contrary, Rowhani could be definitely positioned within the ranks of the first Iranian generation of power, within a conservative position, although under a more moderate approach, and with selective sympathies – or point of contact – for the reformist wing.

Rowhani is then a synthesis of traditional and pragmatic conservatorism, sharing common traits with reformism, above all with respect to foreign policy and civil society’s rights respect. Thus, he’s not certainly a weak or malleable political figure, but a talented and very wise political leader, with a deep knowledge of the Iranian political and administrative system.

**Reaction of the Leader, the establishment and the military to Rowhani’s election**

Rowhani’s election was a complete surprise not only for the foreign observers, but also and in particular for the Iranians.

Within the wide spectrum of political, ideological and religious positions of the eight presidential candidates, Rowhani’s is definitely unique and particular, representing a sort of hinge not only among the most different ideologies, but also among the three generations of Iran’s society.
He’s not certainly a reformist, and at least not in the form it had been presented by most of the foreign press, but nor also a traditional conservative, given his authentic political realism and capacity of understanding the needs of a changing society. These are the reasons why his election have been perceived as a partial defeat by most of the traditional political groups in the country, not being able to ideologically insert Rowhani within their narrow political schemes.

Hassan Rowhani, thus, is not the victorious candidate of the traditional conservatives, who would have preferred by far names like Qalibaf, Jalili or Velayati, and that are now actively trying to demonstrate on the national media that the victory of the new President is not that of their reformist enemies. Reformists are well aware that Rowhani is not certainly their candidate, but tended however to gain some advantage from his victory, by publicly announcing that he is the more near to them within those who have been voted on June 14th.

Pragmatists of the old guard, like Rafsanjani, are as well trying to benefit from this result, by presenting it as a result of their own personal support and direct involvement, in the vane attempt to conquer a spot in the new political dimension that will start on next August.

The radical conservatives have openly admitted their defeat, even if not on the ground of the votes. They are lamenting the disqualification of their candidate, Mashaei, denouncing the decision of the Guardian’s Council as non constitutional and oriented at preventing a very popular candidates from gaining political power.

Within the military and intelligence apparatus, there are eventually mixed feelings with respect to Rowhanis’ victory. Quite cold reactions had been manifested within the leadership of the IRGC, while a much different approach had been that of the Basij.

Within the leadership of the IRGC, a general feeling of dissatisfaction and fear is dominating, essentially because of three factors. The first is that the Leader didn’t make any pressure on them for the elections, sending a clear signal to the military apparatus, showing that there wasn’t a preferred candidate, and silently ordering not to intervene in any way on the elections. The second element of dissatisfaction is the considerable support for Rowhani which seems it had been granted by middle and lower ranks of the military and civilian apparatus of the IRGC, showing how homogeneous and rooted is the nature of this result within the country. The third element is represented by the remarkable result achieved by Mohsen Rezaie, the former commander of the IRGC, who is still representing a centre of power within the Sepah Pasdaran, as an icon of the anti-radical component. The vast majority of the IRGC commanders used a similar language in congratulating with Rowhani, stressing however some precise issues. First, the Armed Forces and Defence apparatus are loyal and subordinate to the Leader, and only to him. Second, no division should be promoted by politics. Third, the enemies are always the same for Iran, and they will not change in future. And fourth, most important of any other issue, the appointment of Rowhani is not a victory of reformism, as among the others had stressed Yadollah Javani, Senior Political Adviser to the Rahbar’s Representative to the IRGC.

A different language have been adopted by the Basij, and especially by its commander, Mohamad Reza Naghdi, who commented on the media that the previous government have not properly used the forces under his command, that the Basij are the most important defence structure of the country, with almost 20 millions active members, and that they are ready and willing to support the new government, hoping that Rowhani will use their huge capacities.
What will change with Rowhani?

To think about immediate and radical changes in the relation with the Islamic Republic of Iran is utopic, and it represent the product of a wrong interpretation of the political position of the new President, as well as of the context where Iran is inserted today in the global arena.

Rowhani will not change position on the national nuclear program, but will manage the dialogue with international community through a new language, more friendly and diplomatic. He will try to expand the negotiation context, opening to possible solutions inserted within a wider basket of strategic issues, above all within the framework of the regional security context. Where Iran is inserted and where it pretend to be recognised as vital and un-substitutable element.

Also on the Syrian crisis Rowhani will almost certainly confirm the official position of Iran, essentially based on the need to defend Bashar al-Asad’s regime, as a strategic pillar of Iranian security strategy. And to defend Syria, Iran is ready to use not only its own military structure – already active even if officially with training purposes – but also that of the Lebanese allies of Hezbollah, which have already been strategically instrumental in the battle of Qusayr, considerably modifying the position of the competing forces on the ground.

Rowhani’s most important priorities, however, will be mostly domestic, and above all in order to mitigate the negative effects of the sanction on the economy and to boost employment.

The new President will have to identify urgent solutions to contain inflation and to re-animate an economy in crisis, within a system only partially manoeuvrable form inside. International sanctions had severely impacted on the country and on its capacity to interact with foreign markets, penalizing every sector of national economy and provoking a major economic crisis, which is reflected on every single element of the Iranian society.

It will not be easy to solve such a rooted crisis, especially because the international community don’t seem to be willing in any way to make openings to Iran. And this combination of factors will have a negative impact on the capacity of the new President, forcing to identify pragmatic and probably hard decisions.

It also part of the problem the traditional incapacity of the West to understand and interpret the meanings of Iranian politics. Rowhani had been in fact largely presented by the western media as a reformist, with all that this represent in the American and European interpretation of the Iranian political context. What many are expecting in the West, thus, is the malleability of a President willing to produce historical changes within the society of his country, while on the contrary they will have to face and extremely determined and skilled politicians, with a clear vision of Iranian national interests and of its strategic defensive priorities.

Hassan’s Rowhani’s victory represent an highly significant element in the evolutionary process of the Iranian society. The electoral result once again demonstrated Iranian local politic unpredictability, confirming a popular will oriented toward change and firmly sustaining a political line based on pragmatism, and without the heavy burden of Ahmadinejad’s conflictuality.

The final result of this election is as well a victory for the Leader, Ali Khamenei, thanks to the massive number of voters, but because of the possibility to dismantle the stereotype of the elections managed and pre-organized by the establishment in order to select a pre-determined candidate.

The elections of June 14th had confirmed on the contrary the will of the Leader to guarantee not only an heterogeneous parterre of candidates, but also a free, transparent and smooth voting
The problem is now that of understanding how to interact with the new Iranian administration, which will be officially inaugurating its mandate in early August. The heavy burden of the sanctions imposed on Iran are making the job of the new President extremely difficult, especially in terms of domestic and economic politics, with risk of severe consequences also within the framework of the relationship with the international actors.

The ideological position of the new President, in addition, had been largely misinterpreted by the international community, with the result of huge and revolutionary expectations in terms of domestic changes and international openings. It highly improbable, on the contrary, that this could happen in the short term, and especially without a parallel opening from Europe and the US.

The Western international community, in addition, seem to be totally incapable of focusing on the right and more urgent elements of the critical relations with Iran, wasting time in a long and not certainly useful discussion related on the opportunity to send official congratulations to the new President and, even more delicate, a representative to his inauguration in August.

Thus, the concrete risk of assisting to a progressive impasse in the near future is behind the corner, especially in the case of a relationship still dominated by the nuclear file only, and without a capacity of those involved to modify their positions. On the contrary, a new increased flexibility at the negotiating level, considering the possibility of expanding its contents to regional security, could result in a revolutionary and beneficial process for all the counterparts. Stimulating further impulse for a new and more profitable relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran.
The 27\textsuperscript{th} and the 28\textsuperscript{th} of January the Twentieth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) took place in Addis Ababa. Although formally focused on the theme of Pan-Africanism and the Rebirth of Africa, it had to converge in essence into the Malian crisis. The Ethiopian Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, was elected President for the current year Chairperson of the Body, replacing Thomas Boni Yayi of Benin. The AU however once again failed to get through to the Framework Agreement for Peace and Security in Eastern Congo. The Ghanaian Ibn Chambas, former President of the ECOWAS Commission and former Secretary General of the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific countries (ACP), has been appointed Joint Special Representative of the African Union and the United Nations for Darfur.

Among the most critical geopolitical outlooks in the twenty-first Century is now ascertained a new front of conflict of Islamist matrix across the Sahel, or between North and West Africa, with repercussions up to the Horn of Africa. Because of this new polarization along the 16\textsuperscript{th} Parallel North a distortion of the regional geopolitics, to prevent it from consolidating a terrorist free zone between Mediterranean Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa is currently under way. We are seeing a readjustment of the zone with France that it intends to exercise her hegemony throughout the Maghreb the Sahel and the Saharan and Qatar, from another point of view, trying to do the same. This geopolitical restructuring takes place along the African Belt, the ineffable dividing line between Sunnism and Sufism, between Sahara and Savannah, which has always been a buffer between the two sides, scoring in ethnic division between the Arabic North and the African South, in other words between White Africa and Black Africa. Well, Tuareg irredentism just tried to take advantage of this invisible hiatus, but ended up paying the highest price, being in the midst of this conflict now at its peak. The fragility of the fault along the African Belt groundwater has contributed to clarify the need to fight, thus defeating the idea of colonial boundaries in Africa, as they have been designed and maintained so far. Actually, relations between Arab Muslims and Black African – whether Muslim, Christian or belonging to African Traditional Religions – were fueled by ancient prejudices, xenophobia, mutual misunderstandings and fears. Yet, the main cause of the conflict between Northerners and Southerners in Mali last year was the lack of compliance, which would allow the development of the northern regions. The consequences of the fall of the
Libyan regime of Gaddafi in 2011 and the acquisition of part of its arsenal by Non-State Actors, linked to global jihadism, has led to an acceleration of the criticalities first only latent in the countries of the Sahara and the Sahel, which both suddenly turned into a new sanctuary for the Al Qaeda Associated Movements (AQAM), whose purpose is to destabilize the delicate process of the consolidation of the institutions and the rule of law to all those nations that are defined institutionally fragile or in transition. Europe evidently fears the insecurity coming from the South, which can only be contained by a wide range of instruments of peace and stability, supporting the consolidation of democratic institutions. The secessionists in Mali consist of the secularist Tuareg National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) on the one hand and on the other hand by the radical Ansar Dine (Defenders of the Faith), which are allied with the fundamentalists, such as the Monotheistic Movement for Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Besides, since January the 24th a new formation is active, the Islamic Movement of Azawad (MIA), led by Alghabasse ag Intalla, who is willing to negotiate and proclaims himself opposed to any form of extremism. Beyond any possible justification for Tuareg irredentism, in general we observe an irradiance of ideologies from the Persian Gulf through the recruitment that occurs without any particular difficulty with those who, having nothing to lose, are looking for alternatives to the impoverishment and to the state of abandonment in which they have been left, because of the inaction of appropriate development policies by central governments. Upon explicit request for help to France and the UN by the transitional Malian authorities, the 11th of January Opération Serval was launched, in order to recover the northern territories of Mali. It should be noted that military intervention was preceded by December 20 Resolution n°2085, authorizing the deployment of an African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), funded by a Trust Fund and for the European Union through the African Peace Facility (APF). Resolution n° 2085 – following the n°2056 and n°2071 – underlined that it would have been necessary to devote more attention to the planning of the military force. The rush of events has obviously radically changed the tactical and operational framework. Once operations began, the UN Security Council granted the full support of France, despite some reserves from China and Russia, a dissociation of Egypt and some Algerian hesitations. However, Algeria and Morocco, allowing the over flight of its air space, have shown to want to align to international action. Military operations have made it possible to confine the rebel forces in the Adrar des Iforas, on the border with Algeria. If the French military intervention of January it was necessary, due to the unexpected advance of the rebels to the south, doubts about the legitimacy of the transaction arise as to the origin of the request: the what extent any transitional authorities may request the help and the interference of a foreign power in such a strong way? The UN Security Council is about to approve the creation of a peace-keeping force for Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Integrated Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), so that it can be operational by the beginning of July, i.e. before vote for the general election. Yet, official humanitarian figures of the crisis are dramatic humanitarian: 380,000 refugees, of which 230,000 internally displaced persons. The risks arising from the crisis in the Sahel in Mali in particular and in general are many and complex, such as the extension of the conflict to other Tuareg communities or, even worst perhaps, the grafting of alliances with the various fundamentalisms present in the countries surrounding the region. In addition, the threat of further marginalization of the Tuareg, along with the subsequent containment of their expectations is also pernicious; in fact, the gray area formed by the union of
Tuareg and AQAM could result in a harmful automatism, namely to erroneously identify the Tuareg with the Islamists. In the background we still fear the fragmentation of African States, which are in many cases ‘weak by nature or weakened by choice’, since their constitution and their boundaries are the result of colonial divisions, which are notoriously disrespectful of internal ethnic and cultural heterogeneity. It would be risky indeed, if Tuareg came out sacrificed out of this affair, as the alliance that they had formed with the fundamentalists in 2012 was short-term and tactical in nature and ultimately exclusively aimed at obtaining independence of Azawad, whereas for qaedists it was long-term and strategic, so as to acquire a territory to be placed under their full control, with the help of Tuareg liberation movements. To avoid the collapse of major portions of the territories of these countries, sustainable development becomes a priority, to be put in place by means of initiatives aimed at the promotion of income-generating activities, which promote the use of the local workforce, so as not to leave them on the edge of exercise of sovereignty. To prevent future occurrences of similar scenarios in other countries of the Sahel at risk – such as Chad, Mauritania, Niger – it would be important to ensure that to all Tuareg having distanced themselves from the Islamists the right to take part in the national inter-Malian dialogue Malian as well as in the inter-regional negotiations that will follow the war with the support of the international community as a whole. Serious risks are growing regarding the migration and their encystment in neighboring, such as Libya or in Niger determining a highly volatile political environment. Another variable at the gates of instability consists of two factors particularly alarming in Algeria: the syndrome of encirclement felt by the Algerian authorities about what is happening in the Sahel and the increasingly likely spill of Bouteflika, and his successor for the presidential elections that are approaching. This conjunction of factors makes weak Algiers today more than ever in an increasingly less dependent on its foreign policy strategy.

**Northern Africa: Mauritania and Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).**

In Mauritania, President Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz, returned home after a period of convalescence in France, due to some gunshot wounds by mistake reported in an accident last year. According to rumors, unconfirmed by the authorities though, it must have been a warning. Mauritania is increasingly seen as a ‘great void’, around which the regional geopolitical balance is being reshaped.

**Western Africa: Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.**

In Burkina Faso, the legislative and local elections of December the 2nd of 2012 have confirmed in power the ruling party headed by the President of the Republic, Blaise Compaoré. In Chad, Djimrangar Dadnadji, formerly Head of the Office of the Presidency, has become the new Prime Minister, replacing Emmanuel Nadingar. In Ivory Coast, the President of the Republic, Ouattara, appointed a new executive, headed by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Daniel Kablan Duncan, who is a prominent member of the Democratic Party of Cote d’Ivoire (PDCI). Concerning Guinea-Bissau, the former President of East Timor and Peace Nobel Prize, José Ramos-Horta, is the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and
Head of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to replace the Rwandan Joseph Mutaboba. The Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) is having a growing role in the country, asking that an effective roadmap to break the deadlock of the Bissau-Guinean institutional crisis be ready as soon as possible.

In Guinea, meanwhile the legislative elections should be held on May 12, a too slow attempt to reform the Armed Forces is however going on.

On the subject of Mali, December the 11th, Diango Cissoko replaced the interim Prime Minister, Cheikh Modibo Diarra. On 20 December, the UN Security Council authorized by Resolution No. 2085 the deployment of an African-led international mission in Mali, the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). At Christmas, the French President, Hollande, went on an official visit to Algiers. January the 11th 2013 as a countermeasure Paris initiates Serval Operation, while Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQPA) in Yemen called for holy war against the French crusaders. January 17 was convened an Extraordinary Council of Foreign Affairs of the European Union (EU), while on January 29 a special donors conference took place in Addis Ababa on the sidelines of the African Union Summit. Among the secessionists, that the French advance without resistance forces to retreat to the north, on January 24 there was the birth of a new formation, the Islamic Movement of Azawad (MIA), which, openly dissociating from terrorism, condemned and rejected all forms of extremism. On February 2, Mr. Hollande paid a visit to Mali, where he was welcomed by the people and visited the cultural centre Ahmed Baba, partially damaged by the fury of Islamists in Timbuktu. On February 6, France asked the Security Council for the deployment of a peacekeeping mission in Mali, as to accelerate the timing of her withdrawal. On February 13, Captain Sanogo was placed to the presidency of the Military Committee for the Reform of the Defense and Security Forces. On 16 February, Premier Cissoko, announced a major restructuring of the 33rd Parachute Regiment – the Red Berets – known for their loyalty to former President Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT). In March, became operational the mission of assistance and training to the Armed Forces of Mali – the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) – whose command is entrusted to the French General François Lecointre. On March 6, the National Council for Dialogue and Reconciliation has been established, with the explicit aim of facilitating inter-malian talks. In March, the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union appointed French Reveyrand Michel-de Menthon as EU Special Representative for the Sahel (EUSR). According to a Roadmap and an Action Plan presidential elections should take place on July 31, despite the many doubts on the part of observers as to the appropriateness to hold them so early. Besides, some regions of the North, such as the city of Kidal, do not recognize the central Malian transitional authorities, therefore remaining problematic in terms of both legitimacy and security. In Nigeria, Boko Haram tried to assassinate the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bavero. Moreover, the unilateral cease-fire advanced by Sheikh Mohammed Abdulaziz – number two of the Islamist sect – did not work. Nevertheless, the President Goodluck Jonathan, after the first initial resistance, seemed to be moving towards the idea to provide amnesty, which had been proposed by the Sultan of Sokoto, the highest Islamic authority in the country. If it were so, there should be the release of about four hundred militants of Boko Haram currently held in Nigerian prisons to take into account, provided they renounce the armed struggle and generally speaking violence as such. It might not be the right time, as the French military campaign in Mali is making many fighters back of Boko Haram in Nigeria.
Sahel – Sub-Saharan Africa

As per Senegal, an important Turkish official visit of the Prime Minister, Recep Tayeep Erdogan, in Dakar in an African tour that also took him to Gabon and Niger has to be mentioned. The aim of Ankara is to achieve by 2015 a trade exchange with Africa of around $50 billion compared to the $17 billion recorded in 2011, so to be able to triple the business turnover. Actually, 19 new Turkish embassies have been recently opened in Africa out of 26.

In Sierra Leone, within the new Government, appointed by the President, Ernest Bai Koroma, the new Foreign Ministry is Samura Kamara, former Minister of Finance.


As far as Eritrea is concerned, on January 21 a handful of dissidents had taken for a few hours the building of the Ministry of Information in Asmara and generically asked for the release of some political prisoners; it was a false alarm with no specific consequences.

Regarding Ethiopia, an explicit détente proposal from Addis Ababa in favor of Asmara has been put into play. The Ethiopian Prime Minister, Desalegn, said he was willing to open negotiations with Eritrea about the age-old border dispute that, after the war of 1999-2000 and the subsequent Algiers peace agreement, however, remained pending, causing a state of tension throughout the Horn of Africa. Meanwhile Tedros Adhanom has been appointed as the new Foreign Minister.

In Djibouti, work have begun on the construction of the third port of the country near the town of Tadjourah, which, connected with a corridor to Makallé, is destined to become a strategic end to the sea of the greatest importance for Ethiopia.

In Kenya, the elections of March the 4th have led to the Presidency Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta – son of the first president of the country, Jomo Kenyatta from 1965 to 1978 – with over fifty percent of preferences, having defeated his opponent, the former Prime Minister, Raila Odinga.

Concerning Somalia, Washington has formally recognized the Somali government for the very first time since 1992. Ankara signed an agreement with Mogadishu on defense issues, such as the training and logistical support to the Armed Forces of Somalia. That relations with Turkey are primary is also demonstrated by the fact that the Turkish capital was the destination of the very first official trip abroad of the Somali President, Sheikh Hassan Mohamoud.

In regards of Sudan, President al-Bashir paid a visit to his Egyptian homologous, Morsi, with the goal to get closer mutual relations particularly concerning the strategic uses of the waters of the Nile. Both internationally and domestically it can be noted the necessity for al-Bashir political survival to stiffen his radical positions, in order to satisfy those Islamist fringe, which otherwise could soon replace him in power.

In Tanzania, March 25, the Chinese President, Xi Jinping, during his visit to Dar es Salaam announced the creation of a new commercial port, with the option for the Chinese Navy to use it militarily too. Beijing has today the strongest trade exchange with Sub-Saharan Africa – roughly $200 billion, or €155 billion – having become de facto the largest trading partner of all Africa.

In addition, the mediation about the long-running dispute with Malawi on the sovereignty of a part of Lake Malawi, also known as Lake Nyasa, has been entrusted to the former President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissana, in his capacity of President of the Forum of Former Heads of State and Government of Southern Africa.
Sahel – Sub-Saharan Africa

Central Africa: Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and São Tomé and Príncipe.

In Burundi, in view of the upcoming general elections scheduled in 2015, the Parliament has approved a bill, renewing the composition of the Independent National Electoral Commission.

In the Central African Republic (CAR), March 24 the President, François Bozizé, was forced to flee abroad for a coup led by the coalition of rebel movements Séléka.

Regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, has been appointed as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Great Lakes region.

As per São Tomé and Príncipe, a new Government is in place, at the head of which there is the Prime Minister, Arcane Gabriel Ferreira da Costa, whereas the new Foreign Minister is Natália Umbelina.

Southern Africa: Botswana, Madagascar and South Africa.

In Botswana, a new political opposition party has been created – the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) – led by Duma Boko, against the ruling party, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) of President Ian Khama, which may recur at the 2014 elections.

In Madagascar, thanks to several pressures of the international community none of the recent former presidents, Ravalomanana and Rajoelina, would be allowed for standing in the presidential elections of 24 July.

In South Africa, current President, Jacob Zuma, was re-elected at the head of the African National Congress (ANC). This will let him run for a second term in the presidential elections of 2014.

From March 26 to 27 was held in Durban on the Fifth Summit of the annual informal group of BRICS, which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The risk of fragmentation of the unity of the African States is becoming more and more possible. There is the danger that, rather than promoting the idea of a greater mutual cultural integration, it will be given room to independences based on ethnicity, thus legitimizing the birth of Nation-States progressively more ethnically or functionally homogeneous with respect to the picture corresponding to the times of the African independences. In Mali only the inclusiveness and political dialogue between all the national forces may represent a long-term solution actually feasible.

The Sahara and the Sahel have become the epicenter of African problems with relapse not confined into the regions concerned, but of much wider margin. If one wants to put an end to the risk of replicating the conflict, it has to be done through a thorough review of regional balances, so that all stakeholders can benefit from a development perspective. To the crisis in Mali and in the Sahel it should be provided an effective and multi-sectoral response, able to integrate all the following levels: national, regional, continental, international and transnational.
On 19 June 2013, the Kyrgyz parliament voted to denounce the 2009 agreements with the United States on the deployment of the US Transit Center at Manas airport, near the capital Bishkek. The law states that the withdrawal of men and means deployed in the base must be completed by 11 July 2014. Although the law enjoys broad political support, the American exit from Kyrgyzstan raises a general concern because of a major economic loss (for one of the poorest country in the region), valued at 60 million dollars, in addition to being the working place for nearly one thousand Kyrgyz and many local businesses employed in various activities in the base. According to the Deputy Prime Minister Goomart Otorbaev, the parliamentary decision does not preclude, however, the American operation on Kyrgyz soil in other forms other than staying in a base. The present paper intends to provide a brief discussion of the events and interests that have revolved around the Manas air base since its first renting in 2001 until the decision to close.

The ups and downs of the Manas base
The Manas air base, located near Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, is a transport and logistics hub established to support international military efforts in Afghanistan. The center was opened December 16, 2001 and since then has hosted forces from Australia, Denmark, France, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Spain, the Netherlands, Romania and the United States. It was then renamed “Transit Center at Manas” after an agreement between the Governments of the United States and Kyrgyzstan, signed in June 2009. The ups and downs of the transit center to the International Airport started with the first lease agreement. Since then, Manas, more than an outpost of the GWOT (the Global War on Terror) has been conceived as a source of money from which one of the most disadvantaged countries of

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25 The poem tells the story of Manas, his descendants and his followers. It’s divided into three parts, each consisting of a collection of many heroic events. The first book is titled “Manas” and describes the exploits of the hero, the second describes the exploits of his son Semetei and the third of his nephew Seitek. The poem begins with the destruction and the difficulties caused by the invasion of Oirati, then continues with the story of the battles against the Uighurs and the Afghans, stories about warlike marriages with the daughters of defeated kings. The “manaschi” (the narrators of the story of Manas) changed and customized stories.

26 Data are based on or taken from the official website, available at:
the Central Asian region could derive maximum benefit. In fact, for a poor and underdeveloped economy as is that of Kyrgyzstan, which cannot rely on natural resources, nor on a consolidated industrial plan, or even less, on the agricultural sector, in 2001 the only national income appeared to be migrants remittances (about 27% of GDP) and the rent of the Manas base. From the beginning, the events of the base are closely tied to those of the elite in power: in a socio-political context in which the management of public affairs is conducted in accordance with clan traditions, the rent of the base and the related annuities became directly connected with the interests of the family of Kyrgyz President, Askar Akayev. He concluded agreements with the U.S. government under which the annual cost of the rent of the base would have been $2 million, plus $7,000 for each landing or take-off. In addition to these payments, in the period between 2001 and 2005, the president’s family felt in an indirect substantial additional sums for the supply of fuel and other ancillary services rendered by companies Manas International Services Ltd. and Aalam Services Ltd., both directly linked to Akaev son, Aydar, or other family members (this would be a larger sum of 100 million U.S. dollars).

In March 2005, the “tulip revolution” happened, but little changed. The new president Kurmanbek Bakiev wanted the U.S. to increase the rent fee: as much as a hundred times the original figure, to $200 million.

After a year of negotiations, in July 2006 the parties reached a compromise: the U.S. would give $150 million a year. Once again, the revenues of the base blend with the revenue of the presidential family service companies at the airport, and the son of outgoing President is replaced by the son of the incoming, Maksim Bakiev.

After the signing of that agreement, a series of accidents caused by the Americans induce the Kyrgyz to seek a further increase of the price. In the most serious, in December 2006, a U.S. military killed a Kyrgyz truck driver at the main entrance of the airport, mistaking him for an armed terrorist. Finally, during a meeting in Moscow between Bakiev and Medvedev, in 2009, Moscow offers to Bishkek $2 billion in loans and $150 million in grants. At that point, the U.S. were torn between giving in to blackmail by continuing the run-up or abandon Manas, leaving Kyrgyzstan to his fate. The first hypothesis prevailed.

A new agreement between the U.S. government and the government of Kyrgyzstan (which allowed the use Manas International Airport as a transit center) was concluded in May 2009 and entered into force on 14 July, following the ratification by the kyrgyz parliament (June 25). As established by the parties, the United States and Kyrgyzstan would be consulted on all matters affecting the transit center, including environmental protection, health, human security and local procurement.

The United States, assisting Kyrgyzstan with the upkeep of the international airport, agreed to provide $60 million per year in quarterly installments for the use of the airport and its facilities and as reimbursement for the logistic support. Under the agreement, all payments were made directly to the government of Kyrgyzstan. The U.S. Embassy in Bishkek and the U.S. Army have continued to work closely with the local government to ensure that operations at the transit center would be consistent with the terms of the agreement. U.S. military personnel employed at Manas has lent itself also to meet certain needs of the local community, while also providing humanitarian aid throughout the country.
Manas: forced passage of the entry strategy in Afghanistan.

The Manas airbase has been an important hub for overland supplies to troops in Afghanistan, as the most secure of the other possible in the region. The logistics supplies by sea take a long time to the ports of Pakistan, then one have to rely on precarious and extremely vulnerable land routes: as soon as Obama took office, in early February, 2009 the Taliban blew up the bridge at the Khyber Pass between Pakistan and Afghanistan, cutting off supplies to NATO. Sometimes it happened that the same Pakistani authorities shut the Khyber Pass and all the routes on Pakistani territory as a reaction to particular actions by NATO (as happened Nov. 24, 2011 when an Atlantic alliance raid caused 25 casualties soldiers manning an outpost near the Islamabad border).

The refueling axes crossing Central Asia, were therefore safer although much slower. Their use, however, was subject to a multitude of possible political blackmail by Russia, for example claiming the waiver by the U.S. or NATO to include Ukraine and Georgia into the Alliance, to deploy troops in the Baltic countries, to install missile defenses in Central Europe, to formulate influence projects on Central Asia, without considering what has already happened in recent years, with respect to the block of gas supplies to Western Europe. In this context, the fate of Manas plays a particular role for geopolitical sensitivity and uncertainty of the legal status. On the day of his election as president of Kyrgyzstan (November 8, 2011) President Almazbek Atambayev (pro-Russian, pro customs union with Moscow and closer economic ties with Russia) said that he wanted to claim the final American withdrawal at the end lease, in 2014, a date which coincides with the announced withdrawal of international forces operating in Afghanistan. At that point, the responsibility for the security of Central Asia would be assumed by different actors, neighboring countries, regional organizations or powers.

In this context, Turkey could also play a role. On 12 January 2012, the Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambaev has traveled to Turkey for the first state visit after his election. During the talks with Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, kyrgyz President has also extended an invitation to Turkey to take charge of the restructuring and the use of the Manas air base. Although there have been no official reaction on the part of the Turkish authorities, the consideration that the country can play a role in the future of the base has turned on new speculation about potential weight of Turkey for Kyrgyzstan and Central Asian region. If relations with Moscow and Washington have been characterized by alternating phases, relations between Ankara and Bishkek have always been positive, despite the abrupt changes of leadership that took place in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and 2010. In addition, after the election of Atambaev, it would seem that there are even better conditions for relations between the two countries, given the good personal relationship between the leaders and the interests that the kyrgyz president feeds to Turkey, for both personal and institutional reasons. The possibility that Kyrgyzstan will receive massive Turkish investments represents a sincere hope for Atambaev, struggling with a difficult economic situation and public finances in serious trouble. In the absence of aid from Russia (at that time promised but not yet handed out), the search for new partners and investors become of paramount importance. The possibility to enter Turkey without a visa has facilitated the arrival of kyrgyz students in the country, two Turkish universities are active in Kyrgyzstan, along with other higher educational facilities. The invitation to participate in the restructuring and the use of Manas, associated with the hoped-for intensification of economic presence, could increase the rank of Turkey in the Central Asian scenario and offer a reliable partner to Kyrgyzstan.
The interests of Russia: some considerations

Even though the rent for the Manas base should be related only to bilateral relations between the United States and Kyrgyzstan, the ups and downs it has undergone depend in a large extend to the influence that Russia has on Kyrgyzstan. A time of particular tension was after February 20 2009, when the Kyrgyz President Bakiyev signed a law which decreed the closure of the Manas air base, for the monthly transit of 15,000 men and about 500 tons of goods to and from Afghanistan. At the beginning of the global war on terrorism, another base had been destined for the supply of U.S. troops, the Uzbek Karshi-Kanhabad (K2). The use of K2 ceased in 2005, following a disagreement arose between local authorities and the USA for heavy criticisms on the conduct of the regime during the Andijan events. In that case, the intrusiveness policy of American guests was punished by depriving them of a secure foothold close to the Afghan border. In the case of Manas, however, the story had as protagonists Russia, with the geopolitical interests of a regional power, and Kyrgyzstan, eager not to miss important and necessary opportunities.

In addition to the decline of American image in Kyrgyzstan (due to pollution from the air traffic of the base and, above all, dismay at the killing of a civilian at the hands of an American soldier) the decision to close Manas arrive in the same period of two extraordinary summits of EurAsEC and CSTO, celebrated in Moscow on 4 and 5 February 2009. In fact, just in the margin of these occasions, President Bakiev had announced its decision regarding the fate of the base, explaining in a press conference that, beyond the deep sharing of the fight against terrorism and the normalization of Afghanistan, there were two black holes in the prolonged U.S. presence in Kyrgyzstan. The first was given by what he called a lack of “compensation”, which is the very low economic return produced by the U.S. stay in the country. From a few million dollars in the early years, following the renegotiation of rent in 2005 (just speculating on the loss of K2 on the American side), Kyrgyzstan, in addition to the annually perceived sum for the use of the base, would receive also 150 million in aid of various kinds. The eventual loss of the annuity would have seemed insignificant before the economic aids promised by Moscow and the possibility to negotiate a further rent increase. The substantial russian aid were summarized in a credit of two billion dollars divided into a non-repayable grant of 150 million, 300 million loan repayable in 40 years and a number of other loans, plus the cancellation of a part of the debt in exchange for aids in the local industry and $ 1.7 billion that Russia would invest in the construction of the kyrgyz power plant of Kambarata-1.

The other reason for the rupture with the United States was given by the aforementioned killing of a Kyrgyz civilian, in Manas, for which he had been assured by a relentless American justice that, more than two years after the event, there was not yet.

In sum, Kyrgyz leadership interpreted any American operational capacity impediment in the region as a useful tool to make money on further rent and aid to Moscow. On the other hand both Russia and Kyrgyzstan (actually, all the Central Asian Republics) have become available for the transit of supplies to support the effort in Afghanistan, because of the awareness that the presence of NATO and the Americans was necessary for regional security. The difficulties inherent to the use of the base would seem, therefore, dictated by a subtle interplay of the parties, rather than open hostility toward U.S. The announced withdrawal of ISAF in 2014 will open new scenarios for Central Asian security, as well as new possible roles for Afghanistan’s neighbors and, poten-
tially, a different use of the bases formerly available for rent, including Manas. It should, finally, also be stressed that at Moscow Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) summit on December 20, 2011, the members stated that each of them can host on their territory a foreign military base only with the consent of all the other members. In essence, this allows Russia to exercise the right to veto decisions that governments of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan (Uzbekistan later suspended its participation in the CSTO in June 2012) could take on, ensuring the exercise of Russian influence on part of the former Soviet space. Although this commitment is not directly linked towards Manas, whose status is established by an agreement prior to 2011 CSTO summit, it clarify the desire of Russia to play the best card of cooperation in military and security fields, in which it maintains a certain dominance over other players much more aggressive and capable in the economic and financial fields, in which Russia is less assertive. Therefore, the veto on the presence of foreign bases is an important step that can paly a role for a major Russian commitment in Central Asia after 2014.
The need of a political reform in China is becoming more and more urgent lately. Why this reform is so urgent, necessity appears understandable if we observe, in a comparative perspective, previous modernization experiments conducted in other developing countries. Recent history has shown that if economic and technological modernization is not also followed by the political and institutional one, the achievements in terms of economic and social development are likely to vanish.

Economists have named this phenomenon the middle-income trap; a trap that has lamed the hopes of development and progress in many countries of Latin America. Yet, this phenomenon is not just an economic issue. With a closer look, indeed, it is possible to observe that the countries that have not fallen into this trap, like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, were those that have embraced the Western institutional and political model. Therefore, it could be argued that if a country decides to open its doors to the Western market and its technology has no other choice but to keep on this way, adopting the political and institutional structures that are typical of the Western tradition.

Arnold Toynbee’s law of “one thing led to another” can be seen at work: “every historic culture-pattern is an organic whole in which all the parts are interdependent (…) If a splinter is flaked off from one culture and is introduced into a foreign body social, this isolated splinter will tend to draw after it, into the foreign body in which it has lodged, the other component elements of the social system in which this splinter is at home and from which it has been forcibly and unnaturally detached. The broken pattern tends to reconstitute itself in a foreign environment into which one of its components has once found its way”\(^\text{27}\). This is a real transfusion that will stop “only when all the essential elements of radioactive society have been implanted into the body attacked society, as only in this way Western society can function perfectly”\(^\text{28}\). Therefore, the solution to avoid the middle-income trap is to make political reforms.

\(^{27}\) A.J. Toynbee, The World and the West, cit., p. 78

\(^{28}\) Ibidem
Currently the process of political reform is the most debated issue in China even within the Party’s press, and it is taking surprising features – especially given the large plurality of voices, frankness, boldness and sense of urgency. Take for example the Global Times statement: “The biggest reason is that society’s diversification is accelerating, while the country’s political environment finds it hard to adapt to this manifestation”\(^{29}\). This statement means two things: 1. the institutional structure of the country is late in comparison to the civil society development; 2. the lack of institutional reforms risks to curb country’s economic growth.

Reforms, then, seem inevitable. But which ones? Simplifying the current scenario, the reformists can be divided into two groups. On one hand, the neo-constitutionalists are those asking for a return to the Chinese Constitution, including even those who, although never explicitly, look to Western models. On the other hand, there are those who (even if they recognize that the current political model needs to be reformed) aim at developing a “democracy with Chinese characteristics”. Their intention is to develop new and original institutions and processes (having a total opposition against Western models and experience) able to innovate the existing political and institutional system, but without distorting it\(^{30}\). This group can be described as neo-traditionalists.

**The neo-constitutionalists**

If we consider what Xi Jinping said in December and February, the new president can be included in the group of neo-constitutionalists\(^{31}\). Xi has, indeed, clearly expressed the necessity of returning to the Constitution and guaranteeing, through it, the rule of law\(^{32}\), enforced by a truly independent judiciary system\(^{33}\).

The reference to the primacy of the Constitution, as fundamental law, is very interesting because it contains several principles and institutions comparable to the Western models, such as “liberal rights” (articles 35-41). Moreover, in the Constitution the National People’s Congress (what could be considered the Chinese Parliament) is the highest institution of the Chinese state (article 57) and the heart of the constitutional system of the country.

The Congress, democratically elected (article 3), is in charge of electing the highest offices of the State (article 62). As for the jurisdictional power, article 126 states that the Supreme People’s Court carries out its functions independently, without interference by administrative institutions, public organizations or individuals. According to the principle of the state powers unity, the Court is responsible for its acts exclusively in front of the National People’s Congress. In this way the Congress directly exercises its legislative function (at least on paper) and indirectly influences the executive and judicial functions.

Hence, it seems evident that the punctual observance of the Constitution would produce a huge leap forward not only in protecting and improving human rights, but also, through the autonomy

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30 Zhao Yinan, “Reform will be within «socialist system»”, China Daily, March 5, 2013.  
31 To increase reformist credentials of Xi there would be, according to Reuters, another element that is Li Yuanchao’s Republic’s Vice President appointment. Unwelcome to Jiang Zeming, the new Vice President has expressed in several occasions the need for broader and deeper political reforms. For further reading “China’s Xi flexes muscle, chooses reformist VP: sources”, Reuters, March 11, 2013.  
32 “Xi stresses promoting rule of law”, February 24, 2013.  
33 “Xi Jinping stresses judicial independence”, Xinhua, February 24, 2013.
and independence of constitutional bodies (such a democratically elected Congress should be), in creating implicitly the conditions for a political pluralism, primarily between the CCP and the Congress itself. In fact, within this reformist group may be included those who consider the Congress, now a mere rubber stamp, the pivot of political reform. The China Daily affirms the necessary to create a real representative democracy in the country\textsuperscript{34}. The Global Times, besides, writes that it is necessary to strengthen the role and functions of the Congress in order to “limit the power”. In January, Xi was even clearer: it is necessary to lock the “power within cage of regulations”, in order to prevent abuses by public officials and members of the Party\textsuperscript{35}.

There is another interesting point that should be emphasized. The Global Times asserts that it is necessary to limit the CCP power in order to avoid what happened to Soviet Union and thus, avoiding the decline\textsuperscript{36}. To this end, the article concludes, “China should have the courage, the wisdom and the ability to breakthrough its governance model”\textsuperscript{37}. It is worth noting that these words, which in some ways recall the Western liberal tradition, are definitely new (at least for the writer) compared to Hu Jintao’s era.

\textbf{The neo-traditionalist}

To the neo-traditionalists belong those who tend to explore new ways to develop an original Chinese model. It is important to note that neo-traditionalists recognize there is a need for political reform in order to make the system closer to the citizens and to increase its capability in responding to their needs. Actually, this group puts the emphasis on the concept of consultative democracy (which it appears to be in contraposition to the representative democracy).

What is a consultative democracy? Jia Qinglin, chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, answered on an essay published in the Qiushi\textsuperscript{38} journal, where he explains that the essential element of consultative democracy consists in involving citizens, urging them to express their opinion on bills, laws and policies, regardless of their nature or contents. Supposedly, instead of making full and effective the role of people’s representatives within the National People’s Congress – as the neo-constitutionalists suggest – neo-traditionalists propose to conduct surveys to measure the people’s satisfaction and to take suggestions from them in order to, continues Jia, listen their “true voice”. Jia underlines that this solution would protect the role of absolute primacy that the Party has gained within the unwritten Constitution that governs the country and, at the same time, would avoid reliance on Western models, towards which there is a total denial\textsuperscript{39}. Indeed, the full implementation of such a process would allow China to develop a superior model, writes Jia Qinglin. The text however does not explain how to conduct these “referendums”. Further clarification is provided by the news agency \textit{Xinhua}. It reports on the 28th of February that China will build its

\textsuperscript{34} “Role of representatives”, China Daily, March 5, 2013.
\textsuperscript{35} “Xi Jinping vows «power within cage of regulations»”, Xinhua, January 22, 2013.
\textsuperscript{36} Apparently, during a closed-door meeting with the Armed Forces’ representatives, Xi Jinping as well recalled the collapse of the Soviet Union as a warning that the Party has to keep in mind. For further reading “Xi Issues Warning Over Soviet Collapse”, RFA, March 12, 2013.
\textsuperscript{37} “NPC can play bigger role in reform”, Global Times, February 24, 2013.
\textsuperscript{38} Jia Qinglin, “The Development of Socialist Consultative Democracy in China”, Qiushi Journal, 1 January 2013.
\textsuperscript{39} Liu Dong, “China «won’t copy Western political models»”, Global Times, March 9, 2013.
largest-ever platform for conducting online public surveys. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) will gather 600,000 volunteers to take part in the surveys over the next three years, with their opinions to be sent to policymakers in central government branches and local governments. Thus, we can assume that the consultative democracy the neo-traditionalists have in mind is nothing more than a form of online direct democracy, although weakened. Within this category another interesting initiative can be added - and this time is the People’s Daily to give the news: the “tie-building campaign”, which will start in the second half of the year, will be conducted “to urge its members to boost ties with the people and fight corruption”\(^{40}\). Essentially, Party members will live one year among common people in order to “maintain their «flesh and blood ties» with the people to guarantee sound economic development and support the drive to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society”. An initiative more necessary than ever since, as the Global Times candidly admits, “Chinese officials at all levels lack experience in dealing with public demands”\(^{41}\). In addition, it should be noted that this “tie-building campaign” has been applied to the military world as well: the General Political Department of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has issued a circular ordering high-level officials within the army and the armed police to go to grassroots units, especially those in far-off and impoverished regions, to work as ordinary soldiers. According to the circular, during their work in grassroots units, which should last no less than 15 days, “officials should prepare their own daily necessities and pay board fees as others do, and they are forbidden to travel for sight-seeing, receive gifts, attend banquets or meddle in sensitive army affairs”\(^{42}\).

The ultimate purpose is clear: to bring back on earth an elite, which now seems to live on another planet, in order to try to calm people’s resentment.

The conservatives tout court

Beyond these two reformist factions, the conservatives tout court continue to be strongly adverse to the openings carried out by Xi Jinping and by Li Keqiang on issues such as the constitutionalism revival and the attempts to delegate power to lower levels and to deregulate economy and society. An essential factor is that conservatives oppose constitutionalism as it would shrink the power and the role of the Party\(^{43}\). Some presume that this “return to the Constitution” campaign could have been orchestrated by hostile forces in order to destabilize the country. Basically, it is recognized (without any embarrassment) that within the same Chinese Constitution there are elements incompatible with the political and institutional structure that holds de facto the country. Yang Xiaqing of the Red Flag journal writes, “Constitutionalism belongs to the capitalist systems, not to socialism”\(^{44}\). He further argues that encouraging greater popular participation under the steady control of the Communist Party, which makes itself hierarchically superior to the Constitution,

40 “CPC to launch tie-building campaign”, People’s Daily, April 19, 2013.
42 “Chinese army officials to go to grassroots”, China Daily, April 24, 2013
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is more coherent with the Chinese tradition. Yang then continues by predicting instability and chaos if a constitutional regime would take place. For the Global Times, constitutionalism is “an empty slogan”, manufactured by a group of “deviated intellectuals”; or even worse, “a trick to deny the Chinese development model” in order to “force China to adopt a Western political system”. On the contrary, the People’s Daily says that Chinese citizens have to believe in the Communist Party “as Christians believe in God”.

However the government is now launching a campaign to reform the Chinese administrative system. On one hand, the delegation of various functions to regional governments (that could represent a first step towards federalism); on the other hand, Li Keqiang called for less political power in the market economy in order to motivate creativity of market players and achieve transformation of the government.

In addition, we must take into account the establishment (still embryonic) of independent trade unions and of an independent confederation of Chinese entrepreneurs totally autonomous from the Party. All signals meaning one thing: the progressive decrease of the Party’s power and, at the same time, the establishment of intermediate powers, able to influence and limit the absolutism of Communist Party’s power.

To counterbalance this evolution stood up those who fear that without the absolute power of the Party the country will disrupt under the poisonous effects of the western world. The South China Morning Post reports of a circular that warns officials of the Party against “dangerous Western values” and asks them to increase their efforts to influence public opinion and to “purify” the internet from the critical voices against the CCP. However, it was Xi Jinping to declare publicly: that everyone should be free to criticize the Party.

Furthermore, in May a circular was issued to all Chinese universities, in which teachers were declared forbidden to address topics that concern the universal rights of man and of the citizen, press freedom, the autonomy of civil society, the faults and errors made in the past by the CCP, “the privileged class of capitalists” and the independence of the judiciary system.

One point should be emphasized. Often are the same people to express contrasting thoughts and perspectives. Take the case of Xi Jinping: the return to the Constitution has been mentioned, and it is now quite clear what it means. However, in several circumstances the President stated the need to keep strong, united and pure the Party in order to avoid what happened to the USSR.

Willy Lam thinks that Xi Jinping’s new administration is imposing a Maoist “straitjacket” to the

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46 Quoted in Patrick Boehler, Conservatives counter demands for constitutional rule in China, Scmp, May 22, 2013.
48 Ibidem
50 “Premier calls for less political power in market economy”, Xinhua, May 14, 2013.
51 “Chinese to streamline gov’t by strengthening industry associations”, Xinhua, April 2, 2013.
country. Every measure must be taken to prevent the possibility that the country, following the West, could change its path.

Why these contradictions then? Simple tactical moves that aim not to alarm the neo-traditionalists and the conservatives tout court? Maybe. But another assumption can be made as well.

Speaking of the Self-Strengthening Movement (i.e. the attempt to introduce Western techniques made by the empire in the 1860s, trying at the same time to preserve Chinese traditions in philosophy, politics and religion) Piero Corradini writes that the imperial authorities did not realize that they began an impossible mission, because – as it is now clear – economic and technological innovation are followed, like a shadow, by political and institutional modernization. In other words, Western technologies come with democracy; the prosperity produced by the market cannot be separated by Western judicial system. Trying to bring together pieces of an open society into a closed society has only one consequence: it “makes the entire country schizophrenic”.

The Self-Strengthening Movement experiment failed: China was able to get sails and cannons, but along with those technologies came the death of the ancient Chinese Empire and the birth of the Republic.

The New Course of Deng Xiaoping followed the same path of the Self-Strengthening Movement, introducing Western capital and technology without moving an inch towards political and institutional reforms. The attempts to start political and institutional modernization after the economic and technological modernization were stopped in 1989 by tanks.

Currently, the need for political reform is clear to the majority, yet authorities insist to continue with an experiment that has already failed in the past: to force Ulysses and Confucius live together. This could be the source of this new increasing schizophrenia.

Both the neo-constitutionalists and neo-traditionalists groups can be defined as reformist, although they aim at two completely different goals. Neo-traditionalists, as analyzed above, want to innovate, without upsetting the Chinese political tradition. However, the political tradition of China is the Oriental despotism. It can be argued then that the ultimate goal of this movement is to bring the Oriental despotism in the twenty-first century. However, such an operation requires the elimination of all intermediate bodies, which, on one hand, can obstacle the will of the absolute power.

On the contrary, the implementation of neo-constitutionalists’ reforms assumes the withdrawal of CCP’s absolute power from the society, the economy and the state and the establishment of intermediate powers.

It’s hard to say which of these two reformist movements will win. However, the expectations that something will change are mounting day by day. Betraying these expectations would produce politically flammable materials, such as frustration and resentment.

56 Willy Lam, “China’s reform hands fail to clap”, Asia Times, May 24, 2013.
57 P. Corradini, Cina, Giunti, Florence, 2005, p. 344
In a country where Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have been originally implemented to boost economic growth, it is interesting to evaluate whether SEZs might become a useful tool to help India pass its current political and economic impasse and how they should be reformed to more effectively contribute to national economic development.

SEZs implementation has been usually associated to the need to increase foreign direct investment (FDI) and to boost exports. While India has been one of the first countries in Asia to recognize the effectiveness of this model in promoting exports, after setting up Asia’s first EPZ in Kandla, in Gujarat, in 1965, and a second one in 1979, close to the Mumbai airport, New Delhi did not seriously pursue this policy until the 2000s, that is after China consolidated its two-digit growth rate, partially thanks to the stimulus provided by the SEZs strategy implemented in the late 1970s. It was only at that time that New Delhi started discussing the opportunity of re-launching its SEZs with the aim of keeping up with the rise of Beijing. Since then, SEZs have rapidly proliferated and will probably keep on multiplying during the next few years. However, it is worth highlighting that while the original intent was to replicate the Chinese success story, India ended up with a policy very different from the one implemented by Beijing.

SEZs can be defined as geographical enclaves ruled by economic rules and regulations that are usually more liberal than the ones adopted for the rest of the country. The category ‘SEZ’ covers a broad range of more specific zone types, such as Free Trade Zones, Export Processing Zones, and Urban Enterprise Zones. It is important to remember that since 1990s, that is as soon as Indian EPZs started to be converted into SEZs and to be set up and managed by private developers rather than by the government, there has been an ongoing, fiery debate on SEZ efficiency among Indian politicians, academics and activists. This debate is continuing today, with some scholars arguing that SEZs will inevitably worsen the economic stability of the country, and others believing that they are the only tool the government has to re-launch national growth.

The Indian SEZs policy was officially announced in April 2000, and although it partially contributed to India’s growth by promoting exports and infrastructures building, it never achieved the same results Chinese SEZs accomplished in the last few decades. The weaknesses of the Indian SEZ model are usually listed as follows: zones are too small and too numerous; targeted by local
investors only and not flexible enough in terms of labor laws. India has hundreds of SEZs, whose dimensions vary from sector-specific ones, covering just ten hectares of land, to multiproduct ones, covering a maximum of one thousand hectares of land. They are all structured like closed industrial parks, sometimes managed by the government, some other times run by private developers. Accordingly, it is consistent to argue that the lack of huge sizes, geographical concentration and developing funds availability could not represent a promising starting point for re-launching a solid expansion.

In India, SEZ were originally identified as instruments useful to promote national economic growth and the rationalization at a state level the system of cluster and industrial districts aggregation. The rationale behind the SEZs development model was the one of providing national and foreign investors industrial platforms equipped with social and economic infrastructures, offering fiscal benefits as well as raw materials and skilled labor force. Indeed, the Indian government has often stressed that SEZ implementation would have facilitated and accelerated a development trend that would have emerged in any case, although much slowly. Some analysts argue that even though in India no “pre-existing facilities” could orient SEZs localization, other factors could have been chosen to rationalise their geographic distribution, such as raw materials and labor skills availability. However, even though these aspects continue to be broadly considered, they are not the only priority developers need to contemplate in their decision-making process. Another pitfall in Indian SEZs strategy is linked to developers’ land acquisition plan and the necessity of regulating which fields could be transformed in SEZs, an issue immediately raising the delicate problem of agricultural land acquisition. Another recurrent source of criticism is SEZs lack of flexibility in labor laws and its implication in terms of foreign investment attraction.

The Indian government is used to introduce SEZs as tax-free enclaves with strictly defined borders and formally considered as parts of external territories as far as commercial activities, fiscal and customs regimes are concerned. As of today, almost 600 SEZs have been formally approved and fifty more have received ‘in principle’ approval. Three different aspects that uniquely characterize the Indian experience can be identified. They are the SEZs partition into ‘integrated/multiproduct’ and ‘sectorial’ SEZs. The fact that the overlap through time of new SEZs policies oriented at building SEZs with different characteristics has gradually consolidated a huge contrast between old and new SEZs. Finally, the role played by ‘developers’ in managing these areas. To better understand the rationale behind Indian SEZ contemporary strategy, it useful to remember that several analysts believe that India is following an alternative path for economic development, mainly focusing on business services. Believing that the economic future of India depends on the successful development of the IT sector, these scholars argue that SEZs are not the right instrument to boost national growth. On the contrary, other economists suggest that India will not be able to become a world economic power until the problems created by its “four bottlenecks” will be solved. These are strict labor laws; limited investment in soft (financial structures) and hard infrastructures; the difficulties in closing firms as well as in shifting from one production to another; and the persistence of the small scale scheme. Finally, they argue that investing in IT only cannot guarantee a balanced growth for the whole nation. As a consequence, the assumption that labor intensive sectors (food processing, light engineering, consumer goods, textile, and garments) are the ones in which India can better exploit its competi-
tive advantage inevitably transforms the SEZs scheme in a useful tool to boost economic growth. To be successful SEZs should limit their negative impact (calculated in terms of displaced people) and focus on production that can improve the employment rate of the urban and rural areas in which they are located. Moreover, it is expected that as soon as Indian SEZs will be able to ‘offer’ productive environments in which labor and bankruptcy laws have been reformed and efficient infrastructures as well as cheap but skilled labor force is available, New Delhi will start attracting huge amounts of FDIs able to further stimulate national economic growth.

Considering how critic is Indian equilibrium today, and aware that national economy is much better prepared to face the current global uncertainty than it was during 1990s balance of payments crisis, it is argued that to clear this hurdle New Delhi needs to define a list of priorities, putting within the top three the necessity of having a strong government, reforming the economy, and convincing foreign investors that the new reform path is credible and sustainable.

The idea that a meltdown similar to the 1991 one, the one which sent India scurrying to the International Monetary Fund for a bailout, is ‘out of question’ is not shared by all analysts, whose opinions are summed up by catching newspaper headlines such as ‘prepare for worse’ or ‘good-bye 2020, hello 1991!’.

In 1991 India experienced what appeared at the time as a chronic economic and fiscal crisis: the government was close to default, the central bank was refusing new credit and foreign exchange reserves were terribly low. Large fiscal deficits, at both the Center and state levels, had spillover effects on the trade deficit that culminated in an external payment crisis. High inflation further deteriorated the economic stability of the country, pushing P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Indian Prime Minister that took over in June 1991, to appoint the current Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as Finance Minister and elaborate with him a broad reform package that while progressively liberalizing Indian economy also considered using the China-inspired SEZ model to boost national economic growth.

Indian economy has deteriorated over the last couple of years. It is not on the brink of another 1991 crisis, but it is true that the International Monetary Fund has estimated a slowdown from the projected 8% to a much lower 6.9% for 2012, and 5.3% for 2013. People have the feeling that this is happening because there hasn’t been enough conviction or definitive action on the part of the government. They believe that India is missing today a bipartisan, mature political consensus on the direction that the economy must take, pushing more pessimist economists to ask whether India needs political reforms first, and before it if it can even dream about moving on significant economic reforms. At a time in which growth rates are progressively slowing down, the amount of national and foreign direct investment is falling, unemployment and poverty rates are raising, the government needs to find a new strategy to boost national industrial development.

Attempting to answer these questions, this paper argues that the idea of re-launching SEZs is more consistent and sustainable than it might appear. Betting on SEZs means widening the number of sector in which SEZs can be specialized, creating further advantages for private developers interested in setting up multiproduct SEZs, welcoming FDIs at least in certain infrastructures projects, and facilitating foreign transfer of capital, know how, management and expertise. A task highlighted as difficult but not unfeasible.

It is assumed that India currently has two priorities. The first one is re-launching national economic growth approving a package of reforms able to transform India in a more efficient and
reliable industrial cluster. The second one is strengthening foreign countries trust regarding Indian market sustainability, in order to keep on attracting foreign direct investments and consolidating economic partnership with Eastern and Western countries.

With general elections scheduled for 2014, it is evident that the coalition that will be able to offer a consistent and solid strategy aimed at reaching these two objectives may be favored during election. This paper is not intended at discussing any electoral strategy or the impact of the implementation of recent reforms in terms of people’s vote orientation. On the contrary, the aim of this research is limited at highlighting a few reasons why the idea of re-launching SEZ is consistent and sustainable.

It is assumed that it is compulsory for India today to re-launch its national economic development unless it wants to risk going back to the time of the ‘Hindu rate of growth’. Beyond that, it is argued that New Delhi still lacks the know-how and the economic and financial resources to plan and implement a successful development strategy.

Aware that these two premises do not unequivocally justify the reasons why the re-launch of Indian industrial development should be based on SEZs, it is argued that considering the amount of investments that have already been destined to these areas and the results the latter have already achieved, it would be short-sighted not to consider them the ideal starting point for a new national development strategy.

Further, considering Indian geographical dimensions, it seems consistent to believe that any new development plan would never be able to focus on the whole nation at the same time. Accordingly, if a starting point needs to be identified, the best one would be the enhancement of the already existing SEZs.

To make a new SEZ-based development plan working, it is argued that the government should first of all allow foreign investors to enter the country. The creation of a new figure, the one of ‘foreign developers’, could be an acceptable compromise to internalize the advantages of receiving foreign capitals and know how. To better monitor their access to the country, ‘foreign developers’ could even be bound to open their first SEZ in collaboration with Indian private developers, and only a few years later be allowed to manage new SEZs autonomously.

It is argued that a foreign-national developers cooperation could benefit India in two ways. First, it might strengthen national developers management capabilities and help them to better understand how they should structure their SEZs if they want to attract FDIs. Second, it should guarantee a higher flux of FDIs. Assuming that SEZs managed by foreign developers might better serve foreign investors industrial needs or supervise their plants, if necessary, thanks to these conditions they may become more interested in moving their plants to India.

Indian SEZs strategy could be further strengthened by increasing the number of SEZ and widening their production sectors. The opening of new SEZs will be possible only if foreign capitals are allowed to enter the country. As far as the widening of production sectors is concerned, it is argued that if this might be too complicated as it would be difficult to plan in advance which sectors may be appealing for foreign investors and developers, it will be convenient to focus on multi-product SEZ, assuming that the new internal-foreign developers cooperation might made their opening less burdensome and risky. To make investments within SEZs even more attractive, it is suggested that the policy regulating the distribution of SEZ production in the Indian market should be revised.
India – Indian Ocean

Finally, to make a new SEZ-based development strategy stable it is recommended not to neglect facilities and infrastructures upgrade outside SEZs, and India should be aware that in order to reach this aim external help would be needed and more economic sectors should be opened to foreign investors.

In conclusion, aware that it would be difficult for Indian people to accept such a radical transformation, New Delhi’s government should find a way to bind foreign investors interested in strengthening their position in the Indian market to commit to the upgrade of ‘popular facilities’, such as schools, hospitals, recreational centers and contribute to squares and monuments renovation. All these initiatives will help the government to introduce foreign businessman as people interested in contributing to the development of the country, and not just focused on exploiting the opportunities it is able to offer. However, in order to do this the government needs to understand and to help its people recognize that it will be possible to re-launch today Indian economic growth without the contribution of foreign investors.
NUCLEAR KOREA: THE REASONS BEHIND THE BOMB AND THE DIFFICULT WAY AHEAD

Stefano Felician Beccari

On 12 February 2013 North Korea (also Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, DPRK) tested an atomic bomb in Punggye-ri, its underground nuclear test facility. This act, that seems arrogant to many states, is the third nuclear test of Pyongyang, and it was a confirmation of DPRK atomic capability: “right or wrong, we have the bomb”. Many commentators are analysing this test from a military point of view. How many warheads are available in DPRK? How many kilotons do they have? Does DPRK have enough missiles or airplanes to delivery these devices? Questions like these abound in many reports and analyses. Obviously the threat of a nuclear war is a scaring scenario, but are we sure that this is the real aim of Kim Jong Un? In other words, what are the reasons behind the last nuclear test? Maybe a military explanation is not enough: other reasons seem to back DPRK nuclear strategy. Beyond the arsenal, what are the possible solutions to solve this issue? It is hard to identify a clear exit strategy from this nuclear stalemate. Many options are possible – unilateral disarmament, multilateral talks, international pressure – but the most likely scenario is continuation of the status quo, combined with more developments in long-range missiles. It is hard to foresee a denuclearized future for the Korean peninsula, even if the crisis of the first months is going to decrease in intensity.

The atomic North Korea: an assessment

In order to have a clear picture about North Korea’s nuclear threat it is necessary to briefly identify the effective nuclear capability of North Korea’s arsenal. Despite the size, the nuclear programme of DPRK is one of the most dynamic in the world. Every nuclear state is quite reluctant in revealing details about its nuclear activities, but in North Korea the absolute secrecy on this issue rises a flurry of speculations and hypotheses that makes really hard to have a definitive and reliable assessment on this topic. The difficulties originate from the opacity of the programme, the lack of official data or assessments and the fragmentation of factories, laboratories and research centres in the country. The famous Yongbyon reactor is only the tip of the iceberg: the whole nuclear complex in DPRK is a wide net of facilities usually camouflaged under neutral names, which serve both civilian and military purposes (“dual use”). Such fragmentation clearly shows why so many denuclearization attempts made by the international community were useless. The history of DPRK denuclearization is discouraging, it is a stop-and-go process that has never been decisive.
in stopping Pyongyang’s nuclear ambitions. Therefore, the atomic programme was paused and suddenly restarted many times. The large net of facilities was crucial to boost both research and production of weapon-grade uranium, providing enough combustible for the last nuclear tests. DPRK holds a sad record in this field. During the Cold War it was common for many states to test nuclear weapons, especially during the 1960s and the 1970s. After the end of the confrontation and the discussion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty the rate of tests plummeted and the last two tests of the twentieth century were in 1998 (India and Pakistan). As the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) remembers, «in the five decades between that fateful day in 1945 and the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996, over 2,000 nuclear tests were carried out all over the world». The only state which re-opened this competition in twenty-first century was DPRK with its tests of 2006, 2009 and, lately, 2013. The three devices were atomic bombs, with a power of few kilotons, less than the yields of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: the last test, hold the 12 February 2013, was supposed to have a yield between 6 and 9 kilotons. There is a lack of official data, therefore is very hard to have a precise estimate of the yield of this and the previous tests. There are also many doubts about the number of devices present in DPRK arsenal. According to the Military Balance 2012 estimates, DPRK has «a plutonium stockpile sufficient for four to twelve nuclear weapons», but other analysts evaluate the double. DPRK today has the capability to master a little but deadly efficient nuclear program: now the following step is to analyse if this has only a military purpose or there are wider options to be considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>2006, 2009 and 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devices</td>
<td>Between 1 to 30 (estimates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Atomic bombs (nuclear fission)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yield</td>
<td>Between 1 to 10 kilotons (estimates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means of transportation</td>
<td>Airplanes and missiles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nuclear weapons in DPRK: strategy, diplomacy but especially politics**

After the assessment about DPRK arsenal, it is worth to ask what are the reasons behind this choice. There are three main reasons about the development of nuclear weapons in DPRK, related to the military, the diplomatic and the political sphere. The first reason concerns national security and defence. During the Cold War years to avoid foreign aggressions the best “security insurance” for North Korea was the friendship with USSR and China. These relations had ups and downs, but eventually “the comrades’ aid” helped the North to survive until 1991. The collapse of the Soviet Union and China opening to the free market weakened the ties with DPRK, and changed Pyongyang perspectives. The country further isolated itself, fostering the role of the Armed Forces in the whole Korean life (adoption of Songun or “military first” doctrine). Therefore, there were only two ways to prevent a possible invasion from a foreign aggressor (notably South Korea or...
the US): the creation of a state-of-the-art army or the use of asymmetrical capabilities. The first option was simply unfeasible. The cost of a modern defence was too high, and also the Soviet Union collapsed while facing the increasing costs of military modernization. The other way was to create a nuclear deterrent. Small, deadly efficient, low-tech and without many costs of maintenance, DPRK atomic bomb presents all the features that the country needed, but with a limited cost compared to the first solution. Despite having the fourth military in the world, with nearly 1,2 million soldiers on active duty, today Pyongyang main deterrence against military invasions relies more on its little arsenal of nuclear weapons. This is the ace in the pack of Kim Jong Un: until he will have the power to unleash even a few kilotons nuclear attack, the other countries will pay attention to his behaviour, and, probably, will try to please the leader providing assistance to his country. The third experiment seems to confirm this trend. DPRK is more interested in the possession of a nuclear capability despite the power or the yield of the devices. In other words, instead of investing money in more powerful weapons, such as thermonuclear (or “hydrogen”) bombs, now Kim Jong Un needs to find an efficient way to deliver his warheads: the answer is a reliable ballistic missile programme.

Secondly, atomic bombs are very useful also in diplomacy. Despite the traditional ties with China, which provides money and energy to keep the little neighbour afloat, in the last years Pyongyang has played an increasingly lonely strategy to gain the humanitarian aid it desperately needs. The best way to obtain such aids is to exploit the nuclear bogeyman as a bargain chip in the discussion with the partners, especially raising the issue every time there is a need for more aid. In the difficult talks among regional stakeholders (the famous “Six Party Talks” with Russia, China, US, Japan, DPRK and South Korea) denuclearization of the peninsula is one of the main priorities. Pyongyang exploits this common aspiration promising a slow down or a stop in its nuclear activities, but usually after the delivery of some aids it refuses to carry on the negotiations and tests some missiles or, sometimes, nuclear devices.

Third, and more relevant, is the political importance of nuclear weapons. This is a peculiarity of North Korea, and the strong relation between the weapons and the political power (or “the Kims”) is crucial for the existence of the whole country. Kim Jong Il was the first to understand that the nuclear weapon was an essential asset to keep the grip over the country, providing him a powerful tool to be spent also in domestic politics. Despite nearly twenty years of apprenticeship behind his great father Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong II’s political legitimacy was weak and shaken by economic difficulties and an internal famine. Thus during his era in order to “reign” safely Kim Jong Il had to rely more and more on the military. Knowing the weakness of DPRK defence system, Kim had only an ace to play: the nuclear bomb.

The two explosions of 2006 and 2009 boosted the idea of a “hard DPRK”, united around his leader and ready to resist against any foreign pressure. The sudden death of Kim Jong Il (2011) opened the problem of the succession, and especially the problem of legitimacy of Kim Jong Un, his son and successor. “Baby Kim”, “fatty Kim” and other strange nicknames underline the weak political charisma of the new young leader. His loose grip on the military class, which consider him a person without neither military nor political background, required some tough actions to show publicly who was in power. This is one of the main reasons for the missile test in December 2012, the nuclear explosion in February 2013 and the following escalation which took place in March. Keeping the country in a state of permanent mobilization and threatening to declare a war
is a well-known tactic to divert attention from other internal issues, such human rights, repression, weakness of economy and the lack of food. At the same time, this prolonged “state of emergency” allows Kim a better control over the DPRK complex bureaucracy, while reducing the power of the factions within the Party and the Armed Forces. Nuclear weapons are an essential asset in this strategy. Kim Jong Un’s political role in the country and DPRK’s security are safe until their defence is backed by this little nuclear arsenal. Using this asset Kim Jong Un can bark, threaten wars and even plan symbolic attacks just to rise up the issue and then ask for money, food or international aid. In other words, DPRK bomb is now strategic for the survival of the state and of the Kim’s dynasty. Therefore the atomic bomb today has not anymore an exclusive military role, but it has become one of the political pillars of North Korea.

Managing atomic bombs: the difficult denuclearization and some possible solutions
Since the beginning of North Korea’s nuclear programme, a political framework was created to discuss this issue and, if possible, achieve a complete denuclearization of the peninsula: this process, established in 2003, was called “Six Party Talks” (SPT). After nearly ten years and despite the initial commitment and high expectations, the results are low. On the other side, it should be considered that in South Korea the last US atomic bombs were retired at the beginning of the 1990s, many years before the SPT. There are many ways or approaches to achieve nuclear disarmament, starting from the national level to the international one. But there is one key element in the whole process that should not be forgotten: political will. Without a serious will to denuclearize, it is simply impossible to “force” someone to scrap its nuclear programme. The first approach is the unilateral solution: a state with nuclear capabilities spontaneously decides to give up its devices and assets, dismantling facilities, depots and production sites. This was the case of South Africa and Libya, or the case of Ukraine and Kazakhstan when Soviet Union collapsed. The first two states were looking for military nuclear capabilities, but then decided to give up the plans due to the pressure of international community, the costs and some reflections about national security. The case of Ukraine and Kazakhstan was different. The collapse of the Soviet Union left a huge nuclear arsenal in both countries, but they soon returned the weapons to Russia while subscribing the Non Proliferation Treaty.

The four cases have an element in common: a genuine commitment to denuclearization, which opened a unilateral and successful process of nuclear disarmament. But the case of DPRK is quite the opposite. One of the first acts of Kim Jong Un was the test of ballistic missiles and a nuclear explosion: it is quite clear that the North does not want to renounce nuclear weapons unilaterally, therefore this option today is an unattainable hope. Several multilateral actions have been taken to denuclearize or at least to freeze DPRK nuclear developments.

The Six Party Talks were established in 2003 as a multilateral framework to find a peaceful way to DPRK denuclearization. Ten years of activity and many rounds of consultation have passed, but today it is possible to say that despite the relevant stakeholders involved, so far nothing substantial has happened. Many divisions among the members’ strategies have weakened the talks, while DPRK has exploited the split to gain aids despite its continuous pursue of nuclear weapons. Since 2012 there have been voices about a possible restart of the Talks, but, on the contrary, the first
months of 2013 are going to be remembered as one of the hottest moments for the peninsula. In other words, multilateral talks now seems useless, because the last events have left stakeholders little room to manoeuvre. In place of a revival of the Six Party Talks a mediation made by China (as a first step) or Russia might be more successful, especially because China has the economic leverage to put pressure on Pyongyang. Bilateral (China-DPRK, Russia-DPRK) or maybe trilateral talks have already been carried out, but without any concrete result: in the future it will be possible to resume, again, some kind of multilateral talks, or even the SPT, but the stakeholders’ expectations are very low.

The international community is also trying to manage the DPRK issue. In the last years the UN Security Council (UNSC) voted several resolutions against both DPRK missile launches and nuclear tests, while nearly all the states of the world, including China, have openly criticized the behaviour of the North. Despite global condemnation DPRK seems to follow quietly its nuclear path. The sanctions voted by UNSC had little effect on the self-reliant and isolated North Korean economy, also because China is still providing a vital support to its little ally. The prohibition of luxury goods and expensive cars, usually approved in the past resolutions, can hit Pyongyang high executives and the top brass, a little élite of the Korean population. To be more effective, the next round of sanctions should focus on DPRK international trade, financial assets and banking system. But touching these issues is very sensitive, due to China-DPRK economic ties. Further restrictions on North Korean weak economy can increase the underground discontent in the country, forcing many citizens to leave.

This possible reaction will add further pressure on China’s border, even if in the last years the crossing of the Yalu and Tumen rivers (the DPRK-China borders) had become nearly impossible. Fences with barbed wire and armed patrols on the Chinese side have decisively limited the flow of migrants from North Korea, but a worse economic situation in the country can provoke a new trend of migration. This is a scenario that China wants to avoid at all costs, and this explains the concerns of Beijing about tougher economic pressures on the North. It is not surprising if all the resolutions had little impact over the country: without an implementation of the sanctions, especially on the economic level, it will be hard to achieve some concrete results. After several years of UNSC resolutions it is clear that if international rhetoric is strong, actions are weak and unable to denuclearize the country.

The most likely scenario is that DPRK will remain a nuclear state for several years, until the leadership decide to step down from the nuclear programme. Kim Jong Un is not interested in pursuing further nuclear developments, but he will probably reinforce its strategic capabilities, developing long-range ballistic missiles (i.e. Taepodong 2 or Unha-3) and miniaturizing the nuclear devices in order to load the missiles. This seems to be the future priority of DPRK’s nuclear programme.

The third experiment has shown that DPRK has a limited but real nuclear capability; now international community or the SPT should try to freeze any upgrade about nuclear weapons and missiles. As Margaret Thatcher clearly said «you cannot disinvent the nuclear weapon», but maybe it is possible to slow down further developments in this field. A stop in the North’s nuclear program will be a powerful message of détente in the region, and maybe could lay the foundations for some other diplomatic initiatives towards regional stability and maybe, in the future, a process of denuclearization.
Pacific (Japan, Korea, ASEAN and Australia)

It is hard to forecast the future of DPRK nuclear arsenal. Despite its little size and power, Kim’s atomic arsenal should not be underestimated by regional actors. A nuclear strike would be suicidal for DPRK, but this is not the real aim of Kim Jong Un. Nuclear weapons are more useful as a means of pressure in talks and consultation, or as an element for domestic politics than as a real military option. Recalling a famous British sentence «no bishops, no king» today it is possible to sum up this situation saying «no nukes, no Kim», while DPRK denuclearization seems a distant goal.
POPE FRANCIS:
VISION AND GEO-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF AN ELECTION

Alessandro Politi

The outcome of the conclave has been the election of a pope who continues the “de-Romanisation” trend of the Catholic Church, a critical choice confirmed by the cardinals in order to ensure the relevance of this institution in a global world undergoing a severe crisis. Despite evident differences of personality and style, continuity is the hallmark of the conservative doctrinal approach of Francis, although it has been modified regarding some important aspects. The first is the attention and care devoted to the peripheries of the world and society, including the feminine condition while respecting the Catholic tradition. The second is the renewal of the preferential option for the poor and for justice, characteristic of the liberation theology, but without Marxist and political hues. The third is the opposition against the absolute hegemony of the market economy (especially its financial side) on a practical and ideological level. A fourth aspect, more limited but potentially of great impact on the America, is the support to the Patria Grande (Great Fatherland) idea, which is a vision of Latin America with solid common roots and heading towards a deeper integration. This means a lofty idea able to include and to further qualify concrete projects like Mercosul and UNASUR.

A peripheral pope
The 13th of March 2013 cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio (archbishop of Buenos Aires) has been elected pope with the name of Francis. Bergoglio joined the Society of Jesus in 1958, was made cardinal in 2011, was member of important pontifical congregations, councils and committees, but was never resident in the Curia. As he himself underlined in his investiture speech, a peripheral pope coming from the end of Earth was chosen, but marginality was just on the surface.

Looking at the election under a geopolitical angle, the conclave had theoretically two possibilities:
• Following a strategic line similar to the one that was embodied by cardinal Woytila, i.e. choosing the archbishop of Hong Kong, John Tong Hon, and striving at sharpening the internal contradictions of an ideologically impermeable power;
• Or choosing, like it did by electing this pope, to redefine in an effective way the doctrinal structuring inaugurated by John Paul II. A move that makes sense because Bergoglio comes from...
Latin America

the continent with the biggest number of believers, but also the most affected by the spectacular growth of Evangelical and Pentecostal sects and churches, initially funded by generous North American donors who hoped to expel the “papists” from the continent and now increasingly funded by Latin Americans.

At a global level this choice signals a clear cut away from the so popular and so simplistic clash of civilizations view, expounded by Samuel P. Huntington.

**The great civilizations according to Huntington**

![Image of a map showing various civilizations around the world]

A rhetoric implication of this vision was Christianity under attack from a new Islamic onslaught. Actually Christians are the most important religion in the world (31.5% of the global population) and Catholics are the most important confession: 50.1% vis-à-vis the fragmentation and the smaller numbers of other Christian confessions, even with a very long tradition.

The second religion in the world is the Muslim one (23.2%), whereas the third most important group is made up of populations without a religious affiliation (16.3%), mainly concentrated in China. At the fourth place comes Hinduism whose believers are clustered in India (15%). These four categories make up 86% of the world population and create a dynamic landscape that is very different from the static trenches imagined by Huntington.

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60 The Western world includes also Australia. The Christian world is different from the Christian Orthodox one, located in Russia. America itself is distinguished between North America, properly Western, and Latin America.

61 Just as an example, Russia is undergoing a steep demographic decline, while China is still ahead the aging curve: this has evident migratory implications in the Russian Far East. But Russia has kept a national religious identity and China not: this is food for thought for the Chinese leaders and for many believers. It is not by chance that the Chinese Communist Party tried twice to revitalise
If one looks at the religions with a growing trend, i.e. a growth at least matching the estimated world demographic growth (+1.19%), one sees that just few are important:

- Independent Christians (2.04% growth; 5.4% of world population),
- Muslims (1.79% growth regarding the mentioned 23.2%),
- Protestants (1.48% with a share of 6.1% of world inhabitants).

This situation can be represented in two manners. The first is typical of the North American protestant currents that see the opportunities to spread the Gospel and have since long time highlighted the so called “10/40 window”, that is a part of the world between 10° and 40° parallels North of the Equator. This area includes 2/3 of the global population, 55 of the least evangelised countries, 90% of the non-Christian population with just 10% of the total of missionaries available. This is an active vision, clearly aimed at proselytism with all the entailed cultural, religious and political problems.

**The 10/40 window**

![Map showing the 10/40 window](SOURCE: HTTP://HOME.SNU.EDU/~HCULBERT/1040.HTM)

This vision is directly linked with the US one behind the monitoring of religious freedom that takes into account also possible legal actions against specific sects.62

62 The inclusion of France and BENELUX among the monitored countries goes back precisely at the anti-sects legislation, affecting the famous Scientology sects, and at recent limitations regarding the use of the Islamic veil. Turkey instead is monitored for old and new legal limitations against other cults. Possible restrictions against some religions in the USA are not accounted for.
US religious freedom monitoring

Differently conceived and structured is the organization of Jesuit assistancies, the territorial subdivisions that control the provinces, which generally have a national dimension. It is global but not all-embracing; mindful of the European heritage, but not Eurocentric and it is sensibly realistic in the relationship with other great religions, as one can see in the following two maps.

Jesuit assistancies

63 The Jesuit assistancies are 10: Western Europe (including Canada, Morocco without the former Spanish Sahara, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, South Africa); Southern Europe together with Angola and Mozambique; Central Europe, comprising the Scandinavia Peninsula and the Baltic republics; Africa; South Asia excluding Pakistan; East Asia, with China, South East Asia, Australasia, Japan and the two Koreas; USA; Northern Latin America and Southern Latin America. There is no assistance responsible for the wide belt of countries that includes Libya and that begins from the Middle East extending until Central Asia, Pakistan and Mongolia. The same happens for Greenland and the Arctic territories.
Jesuit presence

SOURCE: HTTP://GESUITI.IT/OGGI/NEL-MONDO/
Finally, if one observes the distribution of Catholics across the world, one understands that the “pope coming almost from the end of the world”, comes instead from an area that can be called a “majority stakeholder”, despite declining percentages in the last decade.\textsuperscript{64}

\textbf{World Distribution of Catholics: 2000}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{catholics_world_distribution_2000.png}
\caption{World Distribution of Catholics: 2000}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
\item North America 7%
\item Europe 27%
\item Asia 10%
\item Africa 12%
\item Latin America 42%
\item Oceania 1%
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Vision and trends}

Despite still being in first stage, still remembering a very rare \textit{motu proprio} papal resignation, followed by the unprecedented figure of a pope emeritus, this papacy can be profiled in a general way and it is possible to draw some geopolitical implications. The first relevant aspects regard the Latin American character of Francis I. Putting aside the canonisation of the Martyrs of Otranto (1480), other canonisations regard mother Laura Montoya (1877-1949) and mother Guadalupe García Zabala (1878-1963). Moreover the pope chose to break the deadlock regarding the beatification of archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero (1917-1980), killed by death squads in Salvador during the great Cold War dictatorial repression. The signs are clear: attention turned to women, the Latin American dimension, the proximity to...

\textsuperscript{64} The Pontifical Yearbook 2013 talks about the following proportions; 16,0% in Africa, 48,8% in America (-0,2%), 10,9% in Asia, 23,5% in Europe e 0,8% in Oceania.
the poor and the indios and to the dimension of a poor church. In this sense Francis I wants to redraw the debate on the liberation theology.\textsuperscript{65}

It is not important that a pope embraces a theology, on the contrary it is very important that he avoids being a theologian and that his teaching happens through the direct testimony of a clear and preferential choice in favour of the poor, life, justice and against the degrading condition of poverty.

Being archbishop of Buenos Aires, Bergoglio had experienced the social degradation of Argentina with a percentage of poor population jumping from a 4\% in 1990 to a 30\% in the Twentieth-first century due to neo-liberal policies. Seeing that philanthropy cannot change this situation and that only adequate public policies can achieve a result, one can understand the clash between Bergoglio and two Kirchner presidents, a rift that was diplomatically papered over only after the papal election.

Even more significant is the mention by the new pope of the “Patria Grande” concept, derived from the homonymous book edited in 1922. This concept was created by the Argentinian intellectual Manuel Baldomero Ugarte and states the belonging of Latin American people to a common culture and destiny, referring also to the great anti-colonial liberators of the Nineteenth century. It will be further developed in 1923 through a critical analysis of the British colonial role in South America.

This idea is particularly dear to the Argentinian president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and to reformist leaders like Rafael Correa, Evo Morales, José Mujica, the actual Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro and the now defunct Hugo Chávez Frías.\textsuperscript{66} Of course, while proceeding from a common ground, the pope has not the least intention of allowing that populist drives condition the essence of a great Latin American (re)unification project that can easily reverberate on the idea of a great heavenly home.

Some critics have written that Francis, even if not necessarily elected under the impulse of Washington, could be functional to US plans of countering the so called pink wave in South America, especially after the death of Chavez. In reality they miss the composite nature of this pontiff who has an essentially conservative structure, an alterocentrist attitude and a complex sensibility that are bound to have a de-stabilising effects on the established order.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{65} Catholic intellectual current, developed in 1968 by the CELAM (Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano – Latin American Episcopal Conference), that was drastically repressed since the papacy of John Paul II. At political and geopolitical level the agreement outlined by the secretary of State Alexander Haig and the cardinal secretary of State Agostino Casaroli provided assistance to the Catholic movements in Poland and East Europe in exchange for the fight against Marxistoid tendencies in Latin America with evident effects on the stability of the existing dictatorial regimes. Only after the Cold War Rome very prudently recognised some contributions made by the liberation theology or started being more attentive to the figure of the archbishop Romero himself.

\textsuperscript{66} Interestingly not only Maduro took quickly note of the papal mention of the Patria Grande, but also credited the late Mr. Chavez to have interceded by God in support for a Latin American pope. See PAPA FRANCISCO RECIBE A PRESIDENTE MADURO EL LUNES 17 DE JUNIO, Terra, 1076/2013, http://noticias.terra.com.ar/internacionales/papa-francisco-recibe-a-presidente-maduro-el-lunes-17-de-junio,199e27b2ffa2f310VgnCLD2000000dc6eb0aRCRD.html (17/6/2013).

\textsuperscript{67} It is a pope who appreciates an ensemble of symbols and activities like: the film “Babette’s Feast”, Ludwig van Beethoven’s ouverture Leonore, the painting “The White Crucifixion” by Marc Chagall, the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin, tango, the Argentine writer Jorge Francisco Isidoro Luis Borges, reading newspapers and collecting postage stamps (http://www.welt.de/kultur/article115395113/Das-sind-die-besonderen-Vorlieben-des-neuen-Papsts.html). It is a psychological composite fibre where are meshed: a structured and dreaming soul; a strong drive towards a humanistic change; the sympathy for marginal and even rebel people, redeemed by a rigorous
The conservative side of Francis I is clearly discernible not only in his past declarations on women’s rights and gender issues, but particularly in managing the LCWR (Leadership Conference of Women Religious) case. This combative religious women’s and feminist association has been censured by the approval of a doctrinal evaluation document sanctioning a number of doctrinal errors; it has been de facto put under receivership under the leadership of a delegate for five years. It is foreseeable that this pope will tackle with renewed vigour the issue of the financialisation of economy and of the Vatican state itself under three slogans: “More human person and less market”, “Economic and political decision makers must be the protectors of the (divine) creation” “A wide top-down re-distribution (of riches)”. It is a clear cut opposition to the one-sided idea of the absolute supremacy of markets, especially financial one. How strong it will be shall be visible with the next ecclesial reforms in October 2013 and the concrete changes introduced in the functioning of the Istituto Opere Religiose (Institute for the Works of Religion), one of non negligible causes that induced Benedict XVI to resign. By mid-June he has appointed a new interim prelate to lead the IOR, Monsignor Battista Mario Salvatore Ricca, re-confirming the choice of his predecessor. If one takes a historical perspective, Francis I is called to continue under better auspices a strategic battle that has already kept in check two popes. John Paul II, after the triumph of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, had quickly seen the globalisation as the crucial obstacle to evangelisation, but in the end he renounced to face the issue. Benedict XVI in a much less visible, but more systematic and strong-willed way, had tried to solve the problem: in the end he chose the costly sacrifice of his own piece in order to open up a new strategic situation.

This pope has the possibility to redefine pieces and opening moves in the geo-religious chess-board, but he cannot underestimate the strength of his adversaries in the geo-strategic match.

but not grave spirituality; passion and system subordinated to a design that is both creative and articulate. Altercentrism is a human and psychological attitude that identifies the needs of the other person and puts them in a central position in the mutual relationship.

68 Pope Francis appoints prelate to oversee Vatican bank, in BBC News, 15/6/2013; http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22924397 (17/6/2013). Benedict XVI had also chosen the new bank chairman Ernst von Freyberg. Until now the Council of Europe’s anti-money laundering committee, Moneyval, has declared that the IOR had made important steps but it not yet fully compliant.
In view of the European Council in December 2013, which for the first time since 2008 will have a whole section dedicated to the PCSD, individual Member States’ initiatives multiply.

The Council of December 2012 required to undertake preparatory work on three themes: increase the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP; strengthen the development of military capabilities; strengthen the European defense industry.

In September 2013, the High Representative, Lady Ashton, will have to submit the proposals to increase the PCSD and military capabilities. As for the defense industry, the European Defence Agency (EDA) will present proposals to launch a number of pioneers projects of dual-use technologies, UAS and cyber defense, plus an initiative to reduce the technological dependence and an action plan for the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

Italy has promoted important initiatives both at the national level or within the European framework, focusing in particular on industry and often in cooperation with France.

For the Commission, Commissioner Tajani has launched the Task Force on Defence Industry and Markets and the communication on industrial policy.

A series of meetings were held, which involved Italy, at minilateral, bilateral and national levels, such as the meeting of five European countries foreign and defence ministers in November 2012; the XXXth France-Italy summit of 3 December 2012 and the conference “Europe More on Defence” on 14 March 2013.

The Task Force Defence Industry and Markets
The Task Force on Defence Industry and Markets was formed in summer 2011 by the European Commission in order to strengthen the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB). The Task Force has been promoted by the commissioners: Antonio Tajani, Vice-President of the Commission and Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry, and Michel Barnier, Commissioner for Internal Market and Services. The Task Force also receives support from the EDA and the European External Action Service (EEAS), while for many industrial aspects, the Task Force will interface directly with the Member States and in some cases with companies in the sector.

The objective is not only to strengthen the EDTIB and the internal market, but to improve com-
petition in Europe. Three priority areas have been identified: internal market; industrial policy; research and innovation. For this reason, the Task Force has published on 6 June 2012, a discussion paper termed “non-paper”, which will serve as a basis for discussion with Member States and for further initiatives. The results should contribute to a Commission Communication specifically on EDTIB which is expected in the late summer 2013. In any case, the discussions of the Task Force will be used to provide data on the industrial aspects to the Council in December. The non-paper shows that the European defence industry is focusing on emerging markets and high growth potential, to try to address the decline in national defence budgets. The defence industry is also diversifying by strengthening its presence in adjacent segments such as electronics, security, space and civil aviation, again to address the decline in orders in the military core business. The diversification of markets and segments is positive because it indicates that the European defence industry is still highly competitive, even from the point of view of technology and it is still able to conquer new markets. However, the current competitiveness is residual, because it is based on investments made several years ago and the lack of new investments and new programs represent a danger for the future. In this case, the Task Force stated that “if spending more is difficult, spending better becomes even more important”. With regard to the internal market, the Task Force focuses on the monitoring of national transposition of the two Directives 2009/43/EC and 2009/81/EC, especially regarding the use of general licenses, while it addressed the issue of offsets practice of the Member States. The Commission will establish a mechanism for monitoring the efficiency of the internal market to ensure the correct application of Directive 2009/43/EC and to collect data to be submitted to the European Parliament in 2017 to assess the impacts of the Directive. Another aspect mentioned is the security of supply for the Member States. On industrial policy, the speech focused on the restructuring of the sector through the principle of interdependence and the promotion of centers of excellence in three key sectors (shipbuilding, aircraft and ground vehicles). Cooperation and specialization are the key words and the Commission will act in cooperation with the EDA and all relevant actors, because the restructuring cannot be left to the “invisible hand” of the market. SMEs are another issue addressed by the Task Force, as a source of employment, especially with regard to their fragmentation and the impact of defense cuts. The Commission should improve access to information about potential business opportunities, identify best practices and develop networks of clusters at European level and try to support SMEs in their projection abroad. Regarding the research and innovation, the Task Force is seeking to maximize synergies in Research and Development (R&D) in the civil, defence and space, or in dual-use technologies, especially to meet the reductions in defence budgets. The non-paper states that “A major casualty in defence budgets has been spending on Research & Technology which is crucial for the development of the next generation of equipment. Cuts in current military programmes and the apparent lack of new ones are also contributing to the erosion of the EDTIB which was already suffering from structural underinvestment”. About technology sectors, there is definitely cyber security, in addition to UAS, advanced materials, the future and emerging technologies, and advanced space technologies.
Europeans Defence Initiatives

Are also of some interest, the development of energy efficiency initiatives in the field, because the military of the Member States spend each year about one billion euro for energy. Energy efficiency can become a catalyst for innovation, such as the EDA project “go green” in collaboration with other European initiatives of the green economy (as the goal 20/20/20).

The new industrial policy
On 10 October 2012, under Commissioner Tajani’s leadership, the Commission published the Communication “A Stronger European Industry for Growth and Economic Recovery” COM (2012) 582 final. The industry is an important reality in Europe, it represents four fifths of European exports, while and manufacturing industry accounts for 80% of investments in R&D in the private sector.

For this reason, the communication aims to bring the industry’s contribution to 16-20% of the European GDP by 2020. To stimulate economic recovery, innovation and new technologies will require new investments for the adoption and diffusion of technologies.

To this purpose, structural funds, the framework of Horizon 2020 – the programme replacing the 7th Framework Programme - COSME and other community programs for the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework are fundamental.

The communication identifies the aeronautics, being it a high technology manufacturing sector, as one of the strategic areas in which Europe has a leadership that it wants to keep. The Commission proposes to focus investment and innovation on six priority action lines: 1) advanced manufacturing technologies; 2) key enabling technologies; 3) bio-based products; 4) sustainable industrial and construction policy and raw materials; 5) clean vehicles; 6) smart grids.

These are cutting-edge technologies, which can change the industrial paradigms and these will complement those areas already identified in the previous industrial policy in 2010: for example, the LeaderSHIP 2015 strategy for the shipbuilding and shipping industry. The approach will be extended to other key sectors, including the aerospace industry.

Core technologies include a number of technologies which have significant military applications such as micro- and nanoelectronics, advanced materials, industrial biotechnology, photonics, nanotechnology and advanced manufacturing systems.

The Communication deals with the European defence market, by focusing on the degree of openness of the internal market. The security and defense sector is one of the less efficient with regard to the internal market, due to the interpretation of Article 346 of the Lisbon Treaty (formerly art.296 of the Treaty on the European Union), which has allowed Member States to raise the exception to the Community rules as regard to security and defence-related issues. Despite the implementation of Directive 2009/43/EC on intra-Community transfers of defence equipment, national exceptions persist. The European defence market cannot benefit from the economies of scale and openness to achieve greater competitiveness of the sector. The work of the Task Force defence should address this issue. The Communication states that: “products and services based upon satellite data have a high potential for economic growth, and their market development should be encouraged and sustained”.

On June 6, the “European Industrial Policy: A Partnership for Growth” conference took place in Brussels to assess the first reactions to the Commission’s communication on the European Industrial Policy.
The ministers of foreign affairs and defence of France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain met in Paris on 15 November 2012 to reaffirm their commitment to the PCSD. In addition to reiterating the need to support the missions of crisis management, the EU battlegroup and the Pooling & Sharing (P&S) initiatives, the ministers suggested that to improve investment in research and military technology, it is necessary to include at least dual use technologies in the Horizon 2020 program.

Ministers recalled that reductions in defence budgets and the lack of new procurement programs may have consequences on the industry by reducing the workforce and military capabilities. The ministers concluded by saying “We need more Europe, also on defence matters.”

Moreover, the XXXth Franco-Italian summit was held in Lyon on 3 December 2012 in the presence of the Italian Prime Minister, Mario Monti and French President, François Hollande.

In the joint statement, France and Italy have reiterated their support for the Commission’s proposal to make European industry to reach 20% of GDP in 2020 and to develop common policies in various areas, including defence and space.

In space, they welcomed the decisions of the ESA Council of Ministers in Naples, especially those supported by France and Italy as the commitment relating to the new European launcher Ariane 6 in the framework of ESA.

On defence, France and Italy have reaffirmed the intention to exploit the possibilities offered by the Horizon 2020 program for dual-use technologies, to increase the R&D intensity in the defence sector of the two countries.

The two defence ministers signed a “road map” to strengthen bilateral military cooperation and the CSDP. The “road map” remains open to other partners who share the same objectives. The “road map” provides for new bilateral projects, both in military operations and in the field of armaments, especially to enhance cooperation and interoperability between the armed forces.

As a matter of fact, Italy and France are already key partners in the aerospace and defence, having undertaken over time a number of industrial cooperation and joint programs, especially in the field of space technologies and air defence.

The two Ministers of Defence mandated the respective National Armaments Directors (DGA and Segredifesa/DNA) to submit proposals to facilitate the interaction of national defense industries and to streamline the processes of acquisition and maintenance in order to reduce costs for the defence administration.

The two defense ministers met in February 2013 to take stock of the situation and in the summer 2013, will meet in Rome on the Italian-French Council of Defence and Security, with the foreign and defence ministers to make the point on the “road map” and to take the necessary steps for its implementation.

More Europe on Defence

The international seminar “More Europe on Defence” was held on 14 March 2013 in Rome, being it organized by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, and attended by national officials, NATO and the EEAS staff, civilian and military experts from the Member States and industry representatives. The purpose of the initiative was to provide inputs to the preparation of the Council in December and the Italian Presidency of the EU.
Europeans Defence Initiatives

The working paper, which includes the Italian proposals, is subtitled “spending and arranging better on defence to shoulder increased responsibilities for international peace and security” is an indirect reference to the new institutional framework created by the Lisbon Treaty, trying to reconcile the 28 different positions that may arise within the EU.

“More Europe” should result in a renewed transatlantic security link, in which “more Europe” means “more from Europe in terms of capabilities and more to Europe in terms of political commitment, not to replace NATO but to bolster Euro-Atlantic cooperation and solidarity in XXIth Century terms”.

In 2012 for the first time, defence spending in Europe will be less than that of Asia. This is reflected in the change in the strategic center of gravity from the Euro-Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific. The reversal of this trend is still possible, but it takes an effort of leadership in Europe, by identifying possible solutions, given that the financial resources available will be increasingly scarce. A greater integration and interdependence especially between the armed forces of the Member States is needed. In this case the solution of a new European military planning process, common requirements and initiatives of P&S are key. The interdependence will have to overcome national resistance and will be even more positive for the Member States that have gaps in some key military capabilities.

The only national reforms of the military are likely to worsen the situation by creating duplications and strategic weaknesses in view of operational use in complex out-of-area missions. In fact, every Member State tends to duplicate the basic military skills, and are lacking at the European level strategic the force projection capabilities for high-risk scenarios, where forces are projected at long distance and for a long period, for which the necessary enabling capabilities and force multipliers are needed.

For the development of military capabilities it is important to maintain an efficient EDTIB, while the economic austerity indicates how urgent the creation of a single European defence market is. For the EDTIB it is necessary to apply the measures contained in the Strategy published by the EDA in May 2007, which is now under review. For the defence market, the European Directives of 2009 shall be applied. The nascent European defence market shall take advantage of the principle of interdependence, and of the areas of excellence developed at national level. Industrial cooperation should add a new dimension involving SMEs and promote collaboration among Member States so as to fill the technological and industrial gaps and to obtain new military capabilities. To counter the financial limitations and “do more with less” it will be needed to take advantage of the existing national resources, to maximize synergies and to strengthen cooperation.

To develop the European defence market, the realities of the European defence should be taken into account, such as: the deep diversity of the Defence-related suppliers’ base, the present level of competition and the peculiarity of this market for reasons rooted in the security concerns of every single Member State. The balance between cost-effectiveness and national security are key elements for the success of this process of market integration, for which it is key to identify ways and means to reconcile the needs of national security with those that are the economies of scale and industrial and technological opportunities in terms of the single market. The Commission’s initiatives, as well as the discussions within the Task Force should be mentioned in a context in which the European defence market is an element of the single market. The new common requirements should take account of mature technologies and exploit the com-
monality resulting from new cooperative projects of R&D, that will be also financed by the funds of the Commission for research. The Horizon 2020 program will include dual use technologies, so the defense sector will be a key factor for the growth of the European economy through the development of new technologies.

The dual use model is part of the EU principle of “comprehensive approach” in security and allows multiple players to tap into these technologies, no longer limited to the space or naval sectors only. In the future, we must also take into account the civilians requirements, as well as the military ones.

The situation is extremely severe, for R&D programs that are likely to be canceled, delayed or diluted to a level of ineffectiveness, so it is necessary to place additional funding schemes, recognizing that for political, strategic, economic and industrial reasons the investment in infrastructure and high technology in European defence deserve the same consideration given to other areas already covered by EU funding.

It is difficult to overcome the principle of national sovereignty of the Member States in particular in defence, as history teaches us, but at the same time a European collective action in a specific area, such as defence, has an impact greater than the sum of the initiatives of the Member States.

For this reason a “D-Drive for Europe” is needed as a “concrete project, aimed at reaching a higher degree of cooperation, spanning from strategic planning to procurement, from education to technology, while paying special attention to the issue of financial arrangements.”

Italy has become the “leader from behind” in a series of initiatives in the framework of CSDP and in particular on defence industry. Italy often acted in collaboration with France, but unfortunately the European defence cannot be achieved with bilateral initiatives, which, however, represent a step forward, as the St Malo agreement of 1998 between France and the United Kingdom that led to the Helsinki Council and Cologne and the creation of the first stepping stones of European defence.

The Council of December 2013 is unlikely to replicate the successes of Helsinki and Cologne. At that time the war in Kosovo, the new role of NATO and European defence, but especially the leadership of Blair and Chirac, influenced the results of the Helsinki and Cologne Councils. Today, the European defence is “a tired horse” and it is unlikely that the Council will have effective results. However, this does not prevent Member States from achieving improvements in military capabilities and industrial promotion, thanks to the Italian initiatives.
This spring, the Department of Defense, in cancelling the fourth and last phase of the anti-missile defense system, removed one of the main obstacles to the launch of a new round of negotiations for the reduction in the number of nuclear weapon. NATO had announced the completion of the first phase last year at the Chicago summit. The fourth phase would have been characterized by the deployment of a quota of SM-3 Block IIB interceptor missiles in Poland, officially to protect the entire territory of the Atlantic Alliance from any future long range missile attack launched by Iran.

Hagel, the new Secretary of Defense, explained the decision to cancel the fourth phase of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) at a recent press conference simply as being necessary as part of a continuing re-assessment of a complete overhaul of the United States anti-missile defense system. The Obama Administration had decided to allocate part of the funds originally destined for the financing of the EPAA towards, instead, the acquisition of another fourteen Boeing Ground Based Interceptor (GBI) missiles. According to Secretary of Defense Hagel, the decision was driven by the need to respond as quickly as possible to a series of provocations from North Korea during the previous few months. Among these were the launch of a new satellite, the latest in a series of nuclear tests, and the start of what could be a new mobile intercontinental missile. The Obama Administration therefore intends to increase by fifty per cent the number of GBI deployed in Alaska, to confirm the construction of a second x-band radar station on the American continental platform, and to commence a multi-sectoral investigation into the impact, including environmental, of a third GBI launch base on the continental United States. The necessity of a third base has been suggested, for some time, by Congress.

Latest developments in the debate regarding missile defense
The Obama Administration plans to deploy two main strategic missile defense systems during the first few months of its second mandate. The first system is based on a relatively wide and fast ballistic carrier, the GBI, the second version of the smaller and slower naval-borne interceptor known as the Raytheon Standard Missile 3 (SM-3). While the first is deployed in Alaska and California to respond to a hypothetical North Korean missile attack, the second is planned to protect the interests and of the United States and their Allies in Europe from the, again hypothetical, threat from
the, yet again hypothetical, Iranian long and medium range missile capacity. The EPAA is based on a network of naval and land radar installations and a quota of missile interceptors currently on board the U.S. Navy vessels Ticonderoga and Arleigh Burke. As much as the United States and NATO have repeatedly stated that the EPAA would never compromise the effectiveness of the Russian strategic deterrent, the preoccupations expressed by the authorities in Moscow do not seem to be without foundation, in that they are shared by several American experts in strategic questions.

Republicans in Congress have been in general supportive of the position taken by the Department of Defense, often overcoming the criticism of the manner in which the Obama Administration has transformed the strategic anti-missile program planned by the previous, Republican, Administration. Although they do not deny a certain preoccupation regarding the cancellation of the fourth phase of the EPAA, the Republicans have demonstrated just how interested they are in the installation of less costly missile defense installation along the Eastern seaboard, and how weak they perceive the threat from new proliferators’ States to be. A factor negatively affecting the future of the EFAA was the conviction that a possible third launch station on national territory could more effectively protect the United States from any attack than a similar installation located in Poland, apart from making obsolete any up-grading of the effectiveness of the devices already stationed in Alaska and California. Verifying this point of view is the document recently signed by nineteen Republican Members of Congress which requests the current Administration to cancel two hundred and fifty million dollars allocated in the 2014 Defense budget for the planning of a new launch station on United States continental soil, capable of hosting at least another twenty missile interceptor devices.

The Russian position

The Russian Federation has always viewed the deployment of the SM-3 Block IIB interceptors on Polish soil, as foreseen by the fourth phase of the EPAA, as a direct threat. The Russian authorities are preoccupied by the possibility that this particular version of the SM-3 Block IIB could theoretically be fitted such that the interception of their own Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) would be possible. A further confirmation of the burden the entire EPAA has on the bilateral relationship was seen last February, after President Obama expressed the desire to intensify efforts to reach a new accord with the Russians regarding the reduction of arsenal of strategic weapons. The Russian authorities replied by re-asserting the need to confront existing differences in anti-missile defense systems before discussing any other weapon-related question. It cannot be a coincidence that, only a few days after the cancellation of the EPAA, the Department of State publically revealed that the United States was attempting to come to an agreement with their Russian counter-parts as to what the framework of a new strategic disarmament accord might consist of. At least for the moment, the Russian authorities seem to have chosen an approach inspired by a wait-and-see policy. The Russian position is characterized by the request, rejected by the Obama Administration, of a formal obligation on the part of the United States to exclude the interception of the Federation’s intercontinental strategic carriers. Despite this, the prospect of a constructive dialogue does not seem to be precluded. Secretary of Defense Hagel was expected in Moscow at the end of May, in order to discuss the line of development for strategic interaction between the two greatest nuclear powers. Given this state of the situation, it is
more than obvious that the fourth phase of the EPAA would have resulted in creating a false sense of security, complicated the relations with the States of the Russian Federation and with China, and unnecessarily wasted a significant amount of money. On the other hand, the cancellation of the fourth phase of the EPAA did not annul every other related Russian preoccupation. As far as has been revealed, there are five main objections that the Russian authorities continue to raise regarding their ally’s anti-missile defense program. The first is exquisitely geopolitical. The Russian Federation has never been in favor of NATO’s eastward expansion. There are many inside the Russian political system who considers any allied military installation on the soil of States such as Poland or Rumania, as foreseen in the remaining three phases of the EPAA, to be equivalent to a provocation. The second is connected to the possibility of a relatively quick repositioning of the missile interceptors to deployment positions on board U.S. Navy vessels, so as to also be able to intercept the trajectory paths of re-entry vehicles produced by an increasingly more improbable attack by Russian missiles. This move is seen as a violation, if not of the agreements, at least of the spirit on which the entire system of strategic arms reduction is based. The third reason is rooted in the conviction that, even in the event that credible ICBM capacities were attained, the Russian Federation would not really constitute a priority target for Iran. The fourth lies in the possibility that, as time passes, the EPAA will be capable of effectively reducing the Russian ICBM capacities, perhaps through the substitution of the current collision vehicles with new interception vehicles armed with nuclear charges, as was proposed around ten years ago by the then Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld. The fifth reason can be traced to the SM-3 interceptors of the proposed, new, hypersonic attack system Arc-Light using the same launch tubes. This would permit the transformation of the entire EPAA defense architecture to one of attack within a very short period, at a very low cost. Whatever the reasons, sources close to the current Administration have not been slow in confirming that the decision to cancel the fourth EPAA phase was not taken in a move to comply with the Russian request, but due to a desire to confront the North Korean threat with the highest number of missiles in the shortest possible period.

The decreasing perception of the Iranian threat
Parallel to the intensifying preoccupation regarding the ambitions of North Korea, the concerns relating to the presumed intercontinental capacity of Iran seem, at least in the United States, to have diminished. While it is not proven that Iran still does not possess any ICBMs, according to the latest slant from the United States Intelligence Community, there is very little probability that Iran could produce even a low number during the next few years. In addition, the opinion of the majority lately seems to exclude the theory that Iran really does intend equipping itself with medium and long range ballistic missiles with a load capacity which would allow the transport of a warhead. Iran has for many years now been involved in an ambitious space technology development program, and it seems very improbable that they could reach ICBM capacity in the short or medium term. The reasons are numerous; important among them is the difficulty in attaining a series of materials and components under embargo, and in obtaining significant aid from States possessing more developed technological capacities, such as the Russian Federation and China. In addition, there are many who believe that the profile chosen until now for the trials of the carriers so far produced by the Iranian industrial sectors is not that absolutely required for
the development of intercontinental ballistic carriers. Of particular relevance is the load capacity of the launch carriers tested to date by the Iranians. It is much lower than that necessary for the transport of a nuclear warhead, and therefore not even sufficient for a conventional warhead. The weight of an Iranian nuclear warhead is believed to be approximately one thousand kilos, approximately sixty times the weight of the latest Iranian satellite. In addition, it is often forgotten that any ICBM Iran launches towards Europe or the United States must necessarily travel against the direction of the Earth’s rotation. This would require thrust and autonomy values much greater than those generally required to travel the eleven thousand kilometers which normally classify a carrier either ballistic or intercontinental. If one also takes into account historical factors, it would not seem likely the Iran could succeed in deploying even a very small number of combustible solid fuel ICBMs within the next forty years.

**New arms control negotiations?**

Within this framework, the interest in a weapons system which would have enormous political and economic costs cannot avoid being seriously re-assessed. The strong doubts expressed in two official documents regarding the SM-3 and compiled by the National Academy and the Defense Sciences Board, the Department of Defense, have rendered the SM-3 Block IIB development program almost indefensible in the eyes of the public and, therefore, Congress. The first was released in September, 2012, and it recommends the cancellation of the program because of its inability to defend the United States from a future Iranian missile threat. The second, issued only a few weeks before the decision to annul the last phase of the EPAA, forces a re-assessment of the entire program, one inevitably destined to lead to a considerable increase in costs and program period. Other questions regard the architecture of the EPAA, a system which, due to its nature, is anything but immune from the environmental conditions affecting the transporting naval vessel, and to which a large part of the structure is fixed. Launching an interceptor missile from a pitching and rolling vessel can prove not only useless, for any purposes, but even dangerous.

At the same press conference, in recognizing that the GBI is a weapons system not without defects, Secretary of Defense Hagel announced that the Administration did not intend going ahead with the planned increase in GBI numbers before proving both its usefulness as well as its real effectiveness. It appears that the Obama Administration is one hand disposed to re-open the old debate, now silent for many years, regarding the relevance of any anti-missile defense system, as well as intending to begin a new cycle of testing, the results of which are anything but certain, accepting the risks of each option.

One particular point of concern is the second generation collision carrier designed in 2008 to be fitted to the entire range of GBI devices. The absolute ineffectiveness of the guidance system for the carriers, adequately demonstrated throughout 2010, resulted in the decision two years ago to withdraw it from any operability scenario. In consequence, a good third of the missile devices deployed for the protection of continental United States are, in fact, not reliable. It should therefore not come as a surprise that the Department of Defense is resolved to subject the first generation collision carrier to a new cycle of tests as soon as possible. This will in every probability lead to the testing of a radically modified version of the second generation by the end of the year, in the hope of finally re-equipping the entire GBI fleet.

In any case, there is a strong consensus for the fact that where the experimental programs are even
in part successful, it will be very difficult to repeat those results operatively against a full payload of intercontinental carriers protected by a system which, apart from having a quite different flight envelope, are also protected by countermeasures which are at the same time more effective and more economical. It is particularly interesting, according to this point of view, that the interception of a target launched by an intercontinental missile has never been attempted. A first test of this nature is not planned for until 2015.

Much will depend on the results of the new cycle of testing, but it seems in any case very probable that even the third phase of the EPAA will be questioned, in particular if the contact between the Russians and the Americans aiming to solidify the foundations of a new strategic accord is revealed to be fruitful.
As US considers how quickly to withdraw the combat troops in Afghanistan and turn over the war to Afghan national security forces, a bleak new Pentagon report has found that only one of the Afghan National Army’s 23 brigades is able to operate independently without support from the Nato partners. According to the report, violence in Afghanistan is higher than it was before the surge of American forces into the country two years ago, although it is down from a high in the summer of 2010. The aforementioned “Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan” is required twice a year by US Congress.

Furthermore, it is assessed that the Taliban remain resilient, that widespread corruption continues to weaken the central Afghan government and that Pakistan persists in providing critical support to the armed opposition groups operating in Afghanistan. Consequently to the security situation and to the strategic opportunities, all Nato member nations on 4-5 of June 2013 endorsed the new Nato «Resolute Support» mission in Afghanistan to train, advise and assist Afghan national security forces. The alliance is getting prepared for the new mission after the new concept of operations was endorsed.

The new mission will have a limited regional scope in Afghanistan including capital Kabul (under Turkey responsibility – to be confirmed), North (Germany), West (Italy), South and East (United States) parts of the country; the main focus of the mission will be the Afghan institutions and core level of Afghan army and national police. Even if the exact number of troops to remain in the country post 2014 has not been finalized yet the Nato will be responsible for the security of the future trainers, advisers and forces. US remains committed to support Afghanistan in the long term by remaining the largest contributor and lead nation in the new NATO mission.

Talks and compromises
Doha (Qatar). On 19th of June the main Afghan armed opposition group, – the Taliban – more used to conducting suicide attacks and guerrilla actions, declared the willingness to support a negotiated peace agreement. The declaration came from their official “political office” recently opened in Qatar: a political office and «not a diplomatic embassy», as underlined by the Afghan President Hamid Karzai. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan could be ready to take part to peace talks, but conducting – at the same time – complex operations on the battlefield, as the twice commando-
suicide attacks in Kabul, the bombing assault to the Supreme Court, etc., citing the last events. Observing the last 12 years of war and escalation of violence, it is hard to be optimistic: the war (as classical concept) is lost because it cannot be won by a military solution. Thus – considering that the Taliban are still intent on creating chaos – there is not a different solution: the Afghan war could end only in a negotiated agreement, not a military victory.

The US-Nato led mission has more than 100,000 troops in Afghanistan, but they are scheduled to leave the battlefield by the end of 2014 and it is not credible that the Afghan national Security forces will be able to defend the country against a resilient insurgency.

Despite of a “diplomatic friction” between the US administration and President Karzai followed to the president Obama declaration to start independently the talks with the Taliban, the consultation involving US, Kabul government and the Taliban is ready to take place. What the price? What the compromise?

Firstly, as sign of trust, the Taliban of the Islamic Emirate want the release of a group of mujahidin detained in Guantanamo prison; the Americans ask for the US sergeant Bowe Bergdahl held by the Taliban since June 2009.

Secondly, the Taliban are stressing the US on a specific topic: no one should be authorized to threaten other countries from Afghanistan; the US administration (and the Afghan government) ask to the Taliban to accept the commitments to political and human rights (including women rights), to respect the Afghan Constitution and to formally breaking with Al-Qa’ida.

It is not a simple game; essentially because of the radicals, engaged in an extreme-fighting aimed to establish an Islamic Emirate. Furthermore should be considered the heterogeneity of the insurgency, where internal divisions and competitions between the groups could boost the struggles for power.

What to say about Pakistan? Islamabad, formally or not, has long given the Taliban safe areas and support; at the moment appears to be supporting the peace negotiations even if Pakistan, seen as critical to efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, is finding it difficult to work with President Hamid Karzai due to suspect and is reaching out to others to advance the talks process. Pakistan is uniquely positioned to promote reconciliation in neighboring Afghanistan because of its long history of ties to militant groups fighting to topple Karzai. But Afghanistan has accused Pakistan of backing the Taliban to further its aims, fearful it will try to impose a pro-Islamabad government in Kabul, an accuse Pakistan denies.

What’s the plan of the President Karzai? The Afghan President is firmly determined to be involved in the negotiation process at the cost of halt American initiatives unilaterally even if it means struck directly at two of the most critical parts of the US administration’s long term vision for Afghanistan:

• Establish negotiating talks with the Taliban in order to reduce the insurgency as Isaf mission will end (December 2014);
• Conclude an agreement to allow a Nato and US military presence from January 2015.

Furthermore, in December 2012 Taliban and Kabul representatives officially came face to face in France. For the first time, “Taliban representatives at a meeting did not insist on total power in Afghanistan and pledged to grant rights to women.” The Taliban during the talks were insistent on rewriting the entire constitution afresh to make it fully subservient to the Shari’a. Although
the Karzai regime maintains that since the present Afghan constitution already regards *Shari'a*, the real source of its inspiration, still it is open to amend the constitution to the extent of accommodating some of the main concerns of Taliban.

What can we assess about the armed opposition groups? The Taliban may also have assessed it cannot win a victory on the battlefield and it is evident that are seizing the negotiation process as a stage for a publicity coup. News footage showed the Islamic Emirate flag and banner being raised in the Doha office building, like symbols of a government in exile; but at the same time, Taliban had been stepping up their actions and attacks, hitting violently the Afghan national security forces that have been taking the responsibility of the security as the US and Nato troops stepped back to a support role. However, the negotiate give the Taliban a platform to increase legitimacy.

What’s the next step for the US and Nato? As it is evident that the war cannot be won, the necessity to begin the reconciliation process through the peace talks between all the actors has been given fresh urgency by the fact that most US and Nato troops are due to leave the country by the end of the next year. Washington is planning the strategic exit from the Afghan battlefield drawing a new balance of power based on the formal approach of the “dialogue between Afghans”.

**Brief analysis**

2014 will be the year of the defeat of the military’s approach, not formally but substantially; for this reason, the conclusion of the Afghan war will be political. Compromise, conflict or collapse, are the possible scenarios for the short-term future.

The first (compromise) suggests the possibility of reaching some sort of power-sharing agreement with opposition armed groups (Taliban *in primis*).

Second scenario (conflict) would mean new phase of civil war.

Third scenario (collapse) it’s implied in the economical fall-down following the military withdrawal and, furthermore, in the exodus already underway of those Afghan citizens who can have the funds for to leave the country, looking for a safe place to land, preferably in Europe.

Following the most recent events, the first scenario seems to be the more probable. Showing a sudden willingness to open their “office” and start the talks, the taliban insurgency could appear to agree to an in-depth international effort to start with a possible negotiate; what is emerging is their willingness to take part to the peace talks as “formal afghan counterpart”, talking directly with the US because they see the Karzai regime as a puppet, illegitimate to represent Afghanistan.

The US has been working years to implement peace talks between Afghan government and Taliban after military commanders assessed they would not be able to win militarily; but at the moment, between Washington and Kabul it’s an open political-conflict over who is going to control these talks with the Taliban.

As reported by Martine van Bijlert (member of the *Afghanistan Analysts Network*), “Taliban are changing their public face, they are no longer a clandestine movement that people have to go through all kinds of channels to find them in a backwater; there is now a swish office”. Furthermore, it is evident that the “Taliban’s office ceremony” was intended to put the Taliban on the same level as the Afghan government, or as an alternative administration (supported by the activity of their “shadow government” all around the country).

The prospect of a solution based on a compromise makes the Afghan election (scheduled for April 2014) all the more critical. A compromise, which means a form of reintegration of the militants
into the political system, could open the doors of the power to the Taliban, but at the same time it represents a possible call for join the fighting for the anti-taliban groups (for example the former non-pashtun mujahidin); this could be the prodrome of a new phase of the Afghan civil war once international forces leave the country. Thus, the compromise is a risk, but it is the latest effort to revive Afghanistan peace talks and represents the better solution available at the moment giving a needed and possible contribute for the country’s stability.

As reminded by the former US commander in Afghanistan, John R. Allen, Washington (and the Allies) needs to clarify as soon as possible what sort of force it will leave “to help Afghans feel more confident about the future” (Financial Times).

But, the main topic remain the military presence in Afghanistan after the end of the combat mission: quit or stay?

*In brief: the US will keep strategic permanent bases in Afghanistan according to the principle that the International Community “will never abandon Afghanistan”; thus US (and Nato) forces will remain in Afghanistan for a long time.*
Abstract
This paper is meant to develop the concept of building technical competences, as set in the pamphlet “Intercultural Competences” published in 2013 by UNESCO, with emphasis on the dimension of acting. In particular, this issue will be dealt in the dimension of security, that will be considered in its wider meaning of human security, and in a multilateral and multicultural environment. The aim is to show an actionable model of practical cooperation and operational schemes that include an underlying strand of work on education.

The current context
According to Joseph Nye, father of the soft power theory, culture is one of the three resources that make soft power. Likewise strategy where, policies provide sense to the relationship between means and ways, the so called “set of values” (cultural, religious, life-style and so on) “creates meaning for a society”. In the evolution, an advanced state of human society pursuing a high level of culture, science, industry and so on, achieves the status of “civilization”. Therefore and by definition, cultures, as opposed to some theories, do not clash: empires do clash while cultures are victims. Cultures have been considered as stable sets. Rome’s cultural clout stopped at its limes (the military border); an aspect that M. Ghandi and J. Nye explained by stating respectively that “no culture survives if it tempts to be exclusive” and “narrow values and parochial cultures are less likely to produce soft power”. In fact, “when a culture includes universal values and interests that others share, it increases the probability of obtaining its desired outcomes, because of the relationship of attraction and duty that it creates⁶⁹”. Western history has provided us with startling examples summarized in the Horatius⁷⁰ saying that “Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit” (captive Greece captured her cruel winner). As Harry Mount, author of “Carpe Diem”, states that by knowing “Roman. [Latin]. you discern the layer that lies beneath the skin of western world⁷¹”.

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⁷⁰ Horace Epistolae, II, I, 156
⁷¹ Harry Mount, A vote for Latin, NYT
This attractive power of the aggregate was not confined to arts and culture; actually included even the way of war-fighting, epitomized by the ethics of the hoplites’ battle-to-death-on-foot, that made its way from the Greek to the Roman world. The latter summarized this principle in the common saying “fortis cadere non caedere”72. This way led to the so called “face-to-face” style of combat, that was taken subsequently by the Teutonic world, and hence the final manner of western war-making73. As a result of the above, this kind of attraction, is bound to encompass almost all the strands of life; therefore, cultural forces by enacting effects, such as attraction, may be considered as instruments of national politics, that we now call smart power, and not strictly governmental as the military power.

Hybridity, along with globalization is one of the symbols of current time. It captures the spirit of our era marked by the intermingling of different cultures, that, likewise sound’s technics, a multicultural environment tends to equalize and fuse. Diversity is the other key word and reflects an undeniable reality. “The effectual reality” as Machiavelli puts it, shows that we are all different by gender, age, language, skin, culture and religion. Let me give you an example of some effects in the social dimension of the trans-Mediterranean space, an area still affected by the North-South divide. In the Northern shores, against the background of greying populations, the migrant component, categorized both as illegal and “different”, is perceived as the root cause of a phenomenon called societal security. It is basically an unconscious fear of atavistic prejudices to lose the identity vis-à-vis the challenges of current dynamics of rapidly changing demographic patterns. A challenge tainted with political contours that the European Union will be required to come to grips with. Yet, this is the outer man; looking into the depth of his inner self, we reach the invariants of the human soul. Edward Tylor’s belief that human mind and capabilities are the same globally, despite the particular stages of society, is a concept not developed only by him, since many volumes by others have been written about this aspect. Yet, to better deal with diversity, personal and official professional interactions should draw upon acquaintance with cultures of potential partners.

Security and diversity: friction, hurdles and the spirit of cooperation

Cultures are considered as driving forces of development; connecting them has the potential to harmonize their comparative advantages. As I’ve personally experienced, the management of diversity entails a process defined by a human model, based on a stepped approach. In fact, over the past quarter century, a drastically changing international environment, unfolding under what K Waltz, since the 70.s, called “the buzz word of interdependence”74, has altered and continues to shape world’s politics and landscape. Exchanges between governments and across societies have increased. New actors such as NGOs are interacting without traditional intermediaries (the States), and communication & information technologies are making it impossible to stop contacts between cultures. Thus, the aggregate of the above trends, is helping to overcome the first hurdle of diversity that is the acceptance of this reality. It is both the first step of civilization and the first

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72 “Brave will fall but won’t yield”
73 John Keegan, A History of Warfare, pag. 390
condition to coexist: in today’s world it has become a state of necessity. Actually it is not newness. In the 1930s, some Italian scholars symbolized the Mediterranean as a sort of condominium, autrement dit a space to share in order to coexist by de-conflicting reciprocal interests, as opposed to the compelling logic of geopolitics that associated the “Sea between lands” with the status of strategic crossroads (launching pad for power projection purposes or as a shortcut of sea lines of trade between East and West).

A drastically changing security environment, the emergence of an array of non-traditional threats and challenges, such as transnational terrorism and crime, proliferation of sensitive security-related materials, diseases, environment and so on, coupled with the growing skepticism about the viability of traditional means, has pushed scholars all over the world, to seek a new security paradigm. Actually, as acknowledged by many world leaders, no one seems able to withstand alone the global challenges of today and of the foreseeable future; especially if the latter materializes in various combinations.

At the core of the a new conceptual framework, sketched under the auspices of the United Nations, is the common belief that the state-centric approach to security was too narrowly focused and inadequate to address the needs of a fast changing world. In fact, the concept of security, as conceived up to the Cold War, reflected a state-centric paradigm associated chiefly with the notion of the raison d’Etat. This unbalance was at the expense of citizenry, the very people that the State, in keeping with the philosophical trends of the Enlightenment, is required to protect. Let me dwell on some key general principles, ignited by Cicero’s rhetoric question (“what is really this security?”) still relevant nowadays. Hobbes established the duties of the science and art of governance as follows: “the safety of the people” and “all the contentments of life”. A really daunting task for a ruler indeed. For his part, Leibniz stated that “ma définition de l’Etat où de ce que les Romains appellaient Respublica est: que c’est une grande société don’t let but est la seureté commune. Il sérait à souhaiter qu’on put procurer aux hommes quelque chose de plus que la seureté commune, à savoir le bonheur et l’on doit s’y appliquer; mais du moins la seureté est essentielle...et sans cela le bien cesse.” These were revolutionary concepts vis à vis the dominant culture of those times, yet difficult to put into practice. This difficulty was expressed unequivocally by Catherine II of Russia in a letter to D. Diderot in the following terms: “M. Diderot, J’ai entendu avec le plus gran plaisir ce que votre brilliant esprit vous a inspiré, mais avec tous vos grands principes, que je comprends très bien, on fait des bons livres de mauvais besogne. Vous oubliez dans tous vos plans de réforme la difference de nos deux positions; vous, vous ne travailliez que sur le papier...il est tout uni, souple et n’oppose d’obstacle ni à votre imagination, ni à votre plume, tandis que moi, pauvre impératrice, je travaille sur la peau humaine, qui est bien autrement irritable, et chatouilleuse.” Irrespective of the tranchant words, that give grounds to

75 A term coined by Cicero, who, in the Epistolae called it “securitas”.
76 “Quod est enim ista securitas?”. Actually the Romans associated security (sine cura), to an intimate state of freedom from concerns and, as such, it was considered a virtue. Today, it has an opposite interpretation.
77 Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, B.1 chap. 13 Of the Natural Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery
79 See Lucien Poirier, Strategie Théorique, Economica, Paris 1987, pag. 45-46
the notion of friction as conceptualized by von Clausewitz, the passionate reaction of Catherine II lays bare the weaknesses of the philosophic thought, lacking both political and operational language. The latter, ensures the transfer of unambiguous and actionable guidelines to the actors who are required to implement them. As a result, it took more than two centuries and several revolutions to see the above concepts developed and encapsulated in the framework documents we refer to today as enduring universal principles.

Back to nowadays, against the background of new dynamics, where “politics has become a contest of competitive credibility”, scholars found that what was needed was a broader, more encompassing definition of security. As a result of this new reflection, the emerging notion of “human security” is making the individual as the focus of governance, and it is the security of individuals within a society that should be the primary objective of any security concerns. As an evolution of the rule of law, that advocates individual rights, this concept is a sort of work in progress. The conclusions of the 2009 London G20 meeting, set off another important milestone since, along with the notion of security, also “prosperity is indivisible”. A significant achievement, in my view, since, until then, the indivisibility was related to security only. All in all, these accomplishments are a clear demonstration of the progress mankind has made towards the fulfillment of the demands for human rights. In addition, it puts into stark relief that it is the spirit of cooperativeness that makes the world go round (starting from, but not limited to, arms control). Of course there is a gap between declarations of intent and deeds. Moreover, the implementation of the above definitions implies suitable and effective structures and operational schemes that are needed to transform concepts into real projects. The problem arises when there are neither structures nor ideas nor people able and willing to put the dimensions of le savoir into practice.

Now more than ever, the strategic context of the XXI.st century requires cooperation. Former US secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, has stated that growing global governance demands are making the new context multi-partner. Actually, as a result of different trends, the world is undertaking a two tracks transition: multipolar, as a result of the already emerged new centers of power as well multi-partner, as a result of new inter-regional partnerships aiming at the governance of global commons. Intercultural competences are therefore needed also in the dimension of doing, where le sens du practicable is at premium. Yet, as praxeology dictates, some method has to be followed. To this regard, Lord Robertson, a former NATO’s Secretary General, used to stress that there were too many think tanks around the world, when what we really needed were “do tanks”.

### A potential path in the dimension of doing

As already mentioned, the new environment makes the acceptance of the “other” (the customary first step of an interaction), necessary; yet, to make the context receptive it is non-sufficient. This can’t happen overnight; in order to maximize effects, a stepped approach that encompasses both the amalgamation of personal and group features and also decision making/problem solving duties.

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80 Joseph S. Nye, Soft Power, pag 106
81 “Having adequate relevant knowledge about particular cultures, as well as a general knowledge about the sorts of issues arising when members of different cultures interact, holding receptive attitudes that encourage stabling and maintaining contacts with diverse others, as well as having the skills required to draw upon both knowledge and attitudes when interacting with others from different cultures. See Intercultural Competences, Conceptual and Operational Framework, pag 16.
the group or diverse entities are tasked to discharge. Theoretically what I would call, the second step, is associated to the development of a thorough familiar attitude. Some hurdles of a twofold nature stand in the way of this dynamic: first language. Yet, since today’s language skills do not pose insurmountable obstacles, the key aspects of relevant cultures (values, beliefs, attitude and sensitivities) need to be properly addressed and digested. An understanding of each other allows to rally like-minded people, in line with the dictum that “simil cum simile facillime congregantur” (likes easily merge with likes). When one begins to understand the other, the way to third step is paved. Basically, it consists of an incremental type of interaction, spanning from dialogue, collaboration, to cooperation. Dialogue is the prerequisite to kick off any human undertaking, since the necessary climate of trust and confidence is built through dialogue, which goes hand in hand with another important feature of the human interaction: inclusiveness. Moreover a multicultural diversity context shouldn’t be approached under the perspective of cultural mediation that leads to the relativeness of the so called “politically correct”, that distorts the reality. Coming to the table without prejudices, such as the claim to teach the diverse, the output of this interaction, basically an operational dialogue, underpinned by above climate, can’t but sort out outputs bearing benefits to share. Actually it allows first to de-conflict agendas and, once this objective has been achieved, it leads, in sequence, to two different stages of acting: collaboration and cooperation. The first, derives from the Latin *cum labore*, and is a generic expression meaning a more or less assistance to work one with another; the latter is more specific and refers to a definite project (*cum opere*) for a common purpose. In the dimension of doing, actions, or functions, are carried out (willingly and agreeably) by establishing relations on spatial and temporal domains in the area of operation. As a result of the increased degree of involvement, the cooperation involves a sort of burden share. And in the social and security dimensions, sharing activities enacts mutual benefits.

Politics maneuvers forces, be it diplomatic, military, cultural and so on. Like in physics, the above mentioned forces produce effects. Therefore, going further in this stepped approach, the upper stage of the will to work together is the integration, where an enterprise assumes the connotation of a joint undertaking. It entails empathy. Here concurrent/joint actions enact synergies, conducive to the maximization of effects. This level of interaction requires the recognition, appreciation and merging of diverse aspects, that, among others, enact stimuli, which in turn expand mutual views. This leads to the status that Romans called *conviventia*, that is sharing a vision and a way of life, well beyond mere coexistence. It encompasses also solidarity in response to natural or man-made disasters. When the right balance of give and take is reached, the diversity has the potential to enrich each other and allows dealing in a reinvigorated relationship with more openness and farsightedness. This new paradigm has the capacity to grant additional and positive features to the whole, such as continuity, resilience and adaptation.

**A practical example in the flexible multilateralism.**

The Mediterranean is a complex environment that F. Braudel summarizes in a sentence “*mille choses à la fois...non pas une mer mais une succession de mers, non pas une civilisation mais des civilisations entassées les unes sur les autres*”. Working in this environment, I’ve personally experienced concrete results in the domain of cooperation that leads to building both competences and concrete capabilities. The idea to set in place a practical cooperation, on limited scale, in keeping with what scholars call “flexible multilateralism”, has been fleshed out in the
5+5 Defense initiative. It regroups 5 partners of Northern Mediterranean on the one side and 5 of the Southern Shores, as a subset of the Euro-Med Barcelona Process. It was based on the parent assumption that, in the meeting of diverse realities, twinning common or complementary interest with practical activities of cooperation enacts a win-win context and a sort of functional identity. A second assumption: the combination of quite small size and informal character allows an effective dialogue, prerequisite to beginning any kind of cooperation since the necessary climate of trust, confidence and mutual respect is built the rough dialogue. Third assumption: in a more interconnected world, the enduring realities of geographical contiguity and proximity imply responsibilities, in particular for those entities that enjoy international standing in important fora, such as G8-G20. Fourth assumption: the dialogue has to be operational in order to facilitate the development of practical activities (otherwise is bound to become a sterile verbal exercise). I had the chance to elaborate a discussion paper with a coherent framework, containing organizing principles, laying the foundations for an agreement on common activities and operational schemes. The given aim was to promote cooperative ventures designed to respond to common needs. The nature of this undertaking, the 5+5 Defense Initiative, is based on the cooperation in practical activities responding to common and real – daily needs of the “two sides”, whose solution implies a minimum of interoperability problems, that can be solved on the ground through methodologies worked out in workshops of experts, and tested through exercises. Its ingredients: cohesion + voluntary basis + bottom up approach, the underlying base of an informal undertaking consensus based, project – oriented, of progressive development, and permeated by a tone of solidarity: transparency, egalitarian character, trust and confidence climate, two ways street, win-win situation and networking. In this context, on the one side the one way street is considered unfair, on the other, Political Science tells us that “networks establish a structure of effective communication channels and narrative are created across cultures”. Conventional wisdom says that without history there’s no future. In this case, the military, along with their embodied sense of respect, order, discipline and commitment, are the ideal front runners. Besides maximizing outputs, this aggregate does contribute to enact virtuous circles and spiraling effects. All in all, experience has proven that in dealing with diverse cultures, perceptions do matter in international relations, which is considered a non- exact science. Convincing partners to act for the sake of the community and “non sibi” (not for self), is an important move, as well as some expedients such as beginning with simple and easy going activities within reach to keep all partners engaged. Moreover, “finis origine pende” (the end depends from the beginning) is an old Latin saying that we may translate as “success generates success”. Allow me to be more specific with one example on technical competences developed on the domain of Maritime Surveillance related activities, in the framework of capacity building. Actually, in maritime security affairs, States are the foremost actors in accordance with international law, conventions and agreements, whose overall provisions are based on two fundamental principles: the freedom which prevails on the open sea and the common responsibility for preserv-
Ing this prime human patrimony. It is therefore up to states to decide how to organize themselves and to deal with threats and risks which may endanger their prosperity, and security. As we know, from the juridical stand point, the Mediterranean has been classified as semi-closed, hence implying a fragile common good, whose environment must be safeguarded. Actually, even the Med’s natural resilience is in danger of being seriously compromised. Pollution, habitat loss and overfishing are dangerous threats on their own. But when these negative factors come together, they can destroy marine ecosystems, that, combined with maritime cluster activities grant a significant source of jobs. Against this background, the whole of the international legal framework suggests, as previously said, sharing. Therefore the Mediterranean should be seen from a perspective of cooperation, especially when there are some national shortfalls in the safety grids. In this field, joint exercises, in view of real world activities, have granted capacity building in areas associated with maritime surveillance, which is backed by sui generis and practical confidence building measures. The interoperability on the field is also backed by the meeting of the minds leading to the “interoperability of minds”. In the Latin culture the common feeling goes hand in hand with the common willing (simil sentire ac velle). The latter, is the task of the education strand of work, based on a sui generis itinerant College and the Euro-Maghreb Centre for Researches and Strategic Studies for the Western Mediterranean CEMRES” (in Tunisia). In a nutshell, I’m personally convinced that in the dimension of the Ciceronian cultura animi, its derivative of education is instrumental to rally likeminded people; especially if, backed by common or complementary needs and sharing the same aim, this functional identity is corroborated by concrete activities. Let me dwell a little bit on this topic. The aggregate of high level schooling programs friends and partners financed by individual nations, NATO and so on have contributed to the education of a generation of officers of partner nations in EAPC and Mediterranean Dialogue to mention some. This has contributed to the dissemination of a culture based on the primacy of democratic control of armed forces, respect of enduring principles and universal values. In the Arab spring (now called Arab decade), the behaviour of the military has been marked by the adherence to democratic values and strict control of the use of force. Had the Tunisian CHOD carried out the order to use deadly fire against his compatriots, things would have been different. This is therefore to stress the value of promoting education and culture, understood respectively as general abilities of the mind and as mode of thought that shapes the profile of the man under authority in accordance with democratic standards.

Conclusions

In a context bound to be less self-centric, and characterized by unremitting social and technological dynamics, that requires increased cooperation, the proper management of the “diversity” factor has become a must. Frameworks for solving the above inescapable problem have been set in place. Yet models for matching theory and practice are required in order to act as facilitators in the dimension of acting. Along with operational schemes they allow to minimize friction, to

85 This issue is object of several UNEP/Map reports on the environment of the Mediterranean Sea
86 Such as the internet-based Virtual Regional Maritime Traffic Center, VRMTC, sponsored by the Italian Navy.
87 See article “The "Arab Spring” Becomes the “Arab Decade” http://csis.org/publication/arab-spring-becomes-arab-decade.
maximize efforts and to enact synergies. Networking and education are paramount to make the integration processes sustainable.

In conclusion, building cooperation undertakings in a context of diverse realities and following innovative approaches, requires a painstaking effort and a commitment that is even tending, but rewarding.
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