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The possible break up of the Radical – Socialist alliance and the new evolutionary phase of Serbian politics

Confronted with western democratic standards, the political life in Serbia, has always appeared to belong to a sort of different realm. Serbian politics appeared to belong to a pre-political society, where the course of the events and the fight for power did not follow an ordinary political rationality. Nevertheless 2014 could represent a new turning point in the recent political history of the country, concluding a period of resilient divisions in the political spectrum. This change could be symbolized by early elections in the first half of 2014.

Since 2012 Serbia is based on two political cultures that, until few years ago, were considered as pariah and not compatible with Western and European values: the Serbian Socialist Party (SPS) and the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS). In the name, SPS is still the same party funded by Slobodan Milosevic in the nineties as successor party of the Serbian League of Communists, now chaired by Ivica Dacic, the present Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Serbia. During the war in Yugoslavia Dacic was the spokesperson of Milosevic's party and a key figure in the party information and propaganda system. SNS is a split party from the ultranationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS), created by Seselj but now chaired by deputy Prime Minister Vucic, who has been secretary general of SRS since 1995 and Minister of Information during the war in Kosovo.

The first half of 2013 has been an intense period for Serbia's politics, characterised by the breakthrough achieved in the EU brokered process of normalisation of the relation with Kosovo. This can be regarded as one of the most important recent results of Serbia's diplomacy and it opened the way for the EU's commitment to open accession talks in January 2014. It is a particularly remarkable success for a government that, when it was established in 2012, it appeared to be based on dangerous nationalist platforms. The new government of Serbia was formed after the triumph in the presidential elections of Tomislav Nikolic over Boris Tadic. The defeat of the outgoing President Tadic opened the possibility for a change in the government (made possible by the good performance of the socialist party that achieved an unexpected result with 14,5%), but also for an inversion of the post-Milosevic political architecture. But the neo-

In this paper the different characters of the evolution of post-89 Serbian political system are discussed. It is argued that the last two decades of political transition have been characterised by three different sub-periods. The first sub-period (period 1.0, from 1990 to 2000) has been shaped by the dominance of the Socialist-Radical axis inside a de facto authoritarian, blocked system; the second sub-period (period 2.0, 2000 - 2012) saw the establishment of a pluralistic system based however on the unwritten principle of political ban of the Socialist – Radical axis from the government.

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The bad management of the post-Milosevic transition, the economic crisis and the declaration of independence of Kosovo, brought to an end this period in 2012, creating the condition for a return to power of the former Radical and Socialists movements (period 3,0). This paper argues that the systemic alternation Socialist-Radical/DOS/neo-Socialist-Radical is over. The 3.0 phase is mostly will be very likely a short transitional/clearance period, that will lead to early political elections and to the creation of a open political architecture, without red-lines among the political parties, where everybody can basically govern with anybody. The beginning of 2014 could see the end of the transitional phase began in 2012. In order to focus on the innovative elements of the possible changes it is worth recalling the different political passage inside the Serbian system.

Model of Serbian post 1989 political models adopted in this paper

Post-89 political model n.	System	Political model	Elections	Change
1.0	Authoritarian, multiparty	Blocked. Socialist – Radical Axis. Socialist run.	1990, 1992, 1993, 1997	2000
2.0	Democratic, multiparty	Anti 1.0. Legitimacy of DOS spectrum only	2000, 2003, 2007, 2008	2012 (partially started in 2008)
3.0 Transitional	Democratic, multiparty	New Radical – Socialist axis within a politically open context. Post-2.0	2012	2014?
?	Democratic, multiparty	Open, no systemic determined alliance	2014?	?

During the first decade of democratisation (2001 to 2012) following the arrest of Milosevic, Serbia's political system has been characterised by the need to isolate and exclude politicians, parties and ideological movements that were considered compromised with the fallen regime and the war wrongdoings and crimes: the Serbian Socialist Party and the Serbian Radical Party. The moral basis for this exclusion was grounded on the fact that both the leaderships of the Radical and Socialist parties had high responsibilities in the beginning and in the conduct of the war by the previous regime (while the practical basis were that the political leadership of the nineties lost the Yugoslavia secession wars at very high price for the country). Both parties had their leaders, Milosevic and Seselj, indicted and transferred to the Hague, although the International Tribunal failed

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to sentence them. Milosevic (handed over to ICTY in 2001) died in prison in 2006 before his process ended and without being found guilty. Seselj (who surrendered to ICTY in 2003) is entering his 11th year of detention in the Hague without being sentenced yet.

Due to the strong popular support and legitimacy that nationalism and socialism enjoyed in communist and post-communist Yugoslavia, post-Milosevic transition was characterised by a political fables and by an ideological vacuum that could be filled up only by grouping together all the political parties not directly compromised with the old regime, and that could claim some credentials of democratic opposition. These were new parties or parties that during the rule of Milosevic Socialist Party where in the opposition. This big *rassemblement* was grouped in the DOS, the Democratic Opposition of Serbia) a grand alliance of almost 20 political parties united by the intent of ousting Milosevic from power. In October 2000, after Kosovo war and NATO bombings over Serbia, and after a decade of prolonged wars and economic crisis, the popularity of Milosevic regime start crumbling. DOS could win presidential and political elections, collecting 2,4 millions votes, and opening a new age in Serbia's political landscape. Accomplished its role, the DOS showed its weakness and the incapacity to create a new alternative political system, that could be both democratic and enjoying internal popular consensus. After the killing of Zoran Djindjic (march 2003) and the dismantling of DOS, Serbian political system suffered from a chronic instability, exacerbated by the strong in-fight for power among the two rising politicians of the democratic field: Boris Tadic and Vojislav Kostunica.

The difficulties for the post-Milosevic political system in taking roots into the Serbian society can be clearly seen by the developments of the voters attitude in Serbia. An analysis of the elections in Serbia in the last 20 years shows one structural character of Serbian political society: a relevantly low turnover, usually below 60% of the registered voters, that puts to 1,5 million the average threshold for obtaining the majority of seats in parliament. At the first multiparty elections in 1990, the Socialist Party of Serbia could count on more than 2,3 millions of voters and could rule alone with an absolute majority in parliament. This was the last time it could. Since the elections in 1992 the Socialist party had to be confronted with the rise of a stronger Radical party and to include other parties in coalition government. The Radical party managed to collect 1 million votes in 1992, half million votes in 1993, 1,1 million of votes in 1997. With the fall of Milosevic in 2000 DOS obtained 2,4 millions votes, while the Socialist party fell to 0,5 million and the SRS to 300.000 votes. Three years later, in 2003, after the dissolution of DOS, the new democratic parties that emerged in the post Milosevic period could hardly reach half million votes each (600.000 DSS, 480.000 DS, 430.000 G17), while the Radical party became the first political party of Serbia with more than one million votes. The Socialist party was still able to collect almost 300.000 voters, the same as Vuk Draskovic SPO, who has been Milosevic stronger adversary in the nineties. Basically, in this political phase, the overall electoral strength of Serbia's democratic parties was slightly stronger to that of the heirs of its undemocratic predecessors, the socialist and nationalist parties who ruled the country in the nineties within an authoritarian system.

This two "heritage" parties could still collect around 40% of the votes of the electorate in free elections after the passage to democracy. In 2007 the situation was not very different. The Radical party was still the first party of the country with 1,1 million voters and the socialists still had more than 200.000. It was the year of the Kosovo unilateral declaration of independence and a lot of



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economic aid was guided toward Serbia to strengthen the divided democratic front, split between the country President Tadic DS and Prime Minister Kostunica DSS.

After the declaration of independence of Kosovo new elections were held in 2008. Although they resulted in a victory of Tadic DS, who regained the place of first political party of the country with more than 1,5 million vote, they were also characterised by the definitive split inside the democratic front between DSS, that wanted to halt Serbia EU integration after the loss of Kosovo, and the rest of the pro-European parties led by the president Boris Tadic. Due to the conflict with Kostunica, Tadic opted to break the unwritten non-inclusion rule of Milosevic era parties and decided to embrace the smaller of the two in a new government coalition that included also the Serbia Socialist Party. SPS was eager to find the chance to clear its reputation re-entering the government after almost 10 year of being politically outcast and manage to get the crucial ministry of home affairs. This was the first breach of the DOS spirit, less than 10 years after the fall of Milosevic. Meanwhile the Radical Party, after having failed for a little to conquer the presidency of the Republic in 2008 (collecting nevertheless 2,1 millions votes), it went toward an internal split with the creation of the more moderate SNS (Serbian Progressive Party). With the Socialists in the government and with the transformation of the Serbian Radical Party into SNS, times were ripe for a new systemic change in the political landscape of Serbia. The first sign of the change was represented by the victory of Tomislav Nikolic against Boris Tadic in the presidential elections of 2012, with 1,5 million of voters for the SNS leader. It was an anticipation of the complete U-turn that was going to happen in Serbia's political arena when SNS and the Socialist Party were able to form a government together with any of the parties of the former opposition to Milosevic. This was possible due to the fact that SNS got almost 1 million votes and the coalition lead by the Socialist Party reached more than half a million preferences. Jointly they manage to reach the 1,5 million threshold that usually marks the capacity to create a government in Serbia. It was the complete end of the 2.0 new political architecture that started in 2000 with DOS, as well as the end of a strategy, mostly inspired from abroad, of parliamentary exclusion of the parties connected with the previous regime.

Trying to categorise roughly the above-mentioned political changes that took place in Serbia, it could be useful to divide the post-Yugoslav period into two main different epochs: 1992 – 2000 and 2003 – 2012. The first one (1990 – 2000) was characterised by the authoritarian rule of the Serbian Socialist Party, whose strength was not detached by its own populist consent. The Socialist Party saw a rising competition from the Radical Party who embodied a more nationalist and pan-Serbian view of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia and played its relevant part in the events as well as in the government as Milosevic ally. This alliance was feasible due to Yugoslav nationalism “ideology” that was a relevant element of post-war Yugoslavia both in the internal and international affairs. In the four elections that took place between 1992 and 2000 (1992, 1993, 1997 and 2000) the Serbian Socialist Party collected more than 4,7 millions votes, while SRS could count as well on a relevant political strength of almost 3 millions votes. The Radicals and the Socialists were undoubtedly the political backbone of post 1989 Serbia, an alliance favoured by the ultra-nationalism boosted by the war and by the international isolation of Serbia. After the fall of Milosevic the rise of a democratic opposition minimised electorally the anti-western parties, and especially the Socialist Party. SPS lost most of its consensus and was reduced to its minimum

of 200.000 votes (2007 elections). In the new democratic system, on the contrary, the more radical SRS increased its wartime support, establishing itself as the first party of the country, with an average electorate of 1 million of voters. If in the nineties the Radicals electoral strength never exceeded 60% of that of the Socialist Party, after the regime change in 2000 the balance of power inside the Socialist-Radical axis shifted, with the Socialists votes that in the last decade averagely where below 30% of those of SRS. But until 2012, the votes of the Radicals and of the Socialists, although numerically relevant (between 1,3 and 1,5 million in the period 2003 – 2012) were virtually frozen, due the incompatibility of the democratic regime with their revisionist views. The new democratic regime was created on the assumption that only those parties non-committed with Milosevic era and not under investigation by the International Criminal Tribunal on Yugoslavia could assume a governing role in the new Serbia. Having put under quarantine almost a third of Serbian votes, produced the consequence of making all the other political parties almost indispensable. This contributed relevantly to the volatility, instability and – moreover – corruptibility of the DOS originated political system. A strong, anti-systemic, irresponsible and isolated opposition with more than a third of the seats of the parliament forced the other political parties to build complex and crowded coalition alliances, increasing the internal in-fight and the bad governance. DOS originated political system lasted until 2009 and was mostly characterised by the conflict between the two main political cartels, headed by Kostunica and Tadic, for the leadership of the democratic front.

Several elements were responsible for the weakening and final collapse of the post-Milosevic political system. Among them: a. the criminalisation of the society, politics and – partially – institutions, that reached its climax during the war years but continued to determine many of the post-Milosevic equilibrium in the country; b. the issue of Kosovo, that prevented many governments of Serbia to openly follow a Euro-Atlantic integration path; c. the economic crisis of 2008, that hit Serbia and the whole region very hard, undermining the sustainability of further reforms; d. the “return” of Russia as an assertive foreign policy player after 2008 and the strengthening of its presence in the regional energy sector; e. the crisis of the Euro-zone and the slow-down of the integration process.

The combination of these elements has contributed to derail Serbian post authoritarian transitional process, leaving it unfinished and, mostly, has dissatisfied the Serbian society with the political parties that arose after the fall of Milosevic. Together with a process of *cadres* turnover inside the SPS and a split inside the Radical party, after ten years of unsatisfactory transition, time was ripe for a new U-turn revolution inside the Serbian political system. The year 2008, marked by the unilateral declaration of independence of Pristina and the beginning of a long economic crisis, activated the return of the “new” socialist-radical axis into the Serbian mainstream politics. It started with 2008 early elections, prompted by a disagreement between the ruling parties of Tadic and Kostunica on Kosovo related issues, and ended with the inclusion of Ivica Dacic’s Socialist Party into the government in the place of Kostunica’s DSS. The return of Milosevic party in the government of Serbia marked the end of the DOS phase of the country politics. With the clearance of the Serbian Socialist Party – the more compromised with the Milosevic era policies – the crack in the Serbian political system was opened also for the return of the Radical party (or a new softened version of it). This happened at the next electoral term, with presidential and parliamentary elec-

tions scheduled for May 2012. SNS, the splitter Radical party, won presidential elections against the outgoing Boris Tadic, collecting 1,5 million votes in the second ballot, and it became again the first political party in the parliament elections with almost 1 million votes. Ten years after the transition, the socialist and the “new” radical party had now the chance to re-create a political alliance occupying all the most relevant political positions in the country. Tadic’s political move in 2008 was probably aimed to include the Socialist Party in the government in order to erode the consensus of the radicals by opening to a “similar” minded party. This strategy backfired and the growing strength of SNS and the eager to return in power of the Socialist Party brought into the new “democratic” context a re-edition of the Socialist-Radical *entente* of the nineties. The new strategic alliance between SNS and SPS, was brokered with an agreement that exchanged the socialists’ half million votes in support of Nikolic (necessary to become president) with the premiership for Dacic in a new post-DOS government.

With 2012 election year, also the second phase of the post-89 politics in Serbia was set aside. Milosevic and his allies lost power after a long mismanagement of the war of secession in Yugoslavia. But the anti-Milosevic parties lost the reconstruction and rehabilitation period, leaving the country in a limb that granted a window of opportunity for the reformed and democratised Milosevic era parties to reach again the power. It was not a return to the past but simply the removal of a political dam that blocked for a long time the Serbian political scenario. Interestingly, the awkward return of Socialists and reformed Radicals to power in Serbia has corresponded to the achievement of the EU brokered agreement on the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo as well as with the EU decision of opening negotiations with Serbia in January 2014: two diplomatic successes that were missed by the post Milosevic parties. The return to power of the heirs of the Serbian wartime political parties didn’t produce set-backs in the young Serbian democracy nor it created particular troubles with the neighbouring countries (that met with strong disappointment the election of Nikolic as president of Serbia) but it also failed to produce the long awaited internal political stability. After less than two years in power, the SNS – SPS coalition is still crumbling. Many in the SNS party (that, after Vucic resigned from Minister of Defence has few relevant position in the government) are pushing toward the opening of a political crisis with the Socialist Party in order to curb the power of Dacic, strong man of the government, President of SPS, Prime minister and Minister of Home Affairs. The reason behind this unexpected move could be that SNS feels now that it has completed its clearance phase and doesn’t need any more a junior partner, especially with such an extensive power like SPS has achieved in the government and in the economy. For SNS a political crisis is a risky option, but it could eventually be rewarded with its full reintegration into Serbian political system (maybe after a new clearance inside the party), achievable with a coalition government with DS or even with DSS. In any of these options SNS would have a greater role in the governance of the country and also in its economic management. According to some polls, SNS could conquer as much as 40% of voters in early elections, taking over consensus mostly from Dacic’s SPS and Tadic’s DS. SNS is prioritising fight against corruption and a drastic liberalisation of the economy as main political priorities, collecting high consensus in a country where criminality is deeply connected with political power and unemployment remains the most urgent need. An almost doubled consensus for SNS could result in a greatly increased capacity of Nikolic and Vucic party to create alliances, even without DS and SPS, the



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countries second and third largest parties.

With these figures in mind, many inside SNS believe that the party could reach the premiership once denounced the alliance with the Socialists. On the contrary, remaining in the alliance could drag the party towards losing its consensus due to the unlikelihood that SPS could improve the present negative economic situation and can get rid of most of the countries criminal networks. On the economic front, 2014 will be an year when the country will enter very hard economic times with important scheduled talks with IMF and dramatic economic cuts of public expenditure and new austerity measures, after the one introduced in 2013, as well as a new round of privatisations of the main public controlled companies. If SNS will decide to denounce the alliance with the Socialists, and a new majority will be created after early elections, the third phase of the post communist political life of Serbia may be considered over and a new systemic change will transform Serbian political system. It could result in a no redlines scheme, where all the parties could virtually ally with any other, in an open and competitive political system. This has never been the case in Serbia's history. Although this is not necessarily an improvement, nor can guarantee for the fairness and transparency of the system, it would mark a relevant change in the rules of the political game in the most relevant country of the so called Western Balkans.



Latin America



Alessandro Politi

TPP-Mercosul: trade pivot Biofuels: the balance between export and energy security in Latin America not to Asia

In Latin America the only countries that have and may have in future serious production and export capacities are Brazil and Argentina. During 2010 these countries represented respectively 22,4% and 3,8% of a world production dominated until now by the USA (48%) and by the European Union (16,5%).

The main problems regarding the positive production forecasts are on one hand given by some structural ecological risks already highlighted by the FAO in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico and on the other by medium-long term drought risks. Unfortunately they may affect Brazil (especially some high intensity sugar cane and soybean farming areas), Mexico and Guatemala (sugar cane). Concerning energy security, the primary energy matrix of the whole region is still dominated by fossil fuels, traditional biomass consumption (burning wood) and by widespread poverty entailing a low energy intensity in mountainous rural and marginal urban areas. Therefore the crucial issues are on one hand the interconnection of transport systems (gas and oil pipelines) and of the electric grids and on the other the challenge of providing electricity to the remaining 10% of Latin American population (Caribbean basin included). In most cases this problem affects the vast majority of rural populations.

Only Brazil has a world class export infrastructure and is capable to contribute in a significant way to its own energy mix with a consistent amount of biofuels.

Part of the prospects for energy security and trade are related to uncertain variables such as the extent of agricultural subsidies that the US and EU continue to provide their farmers, despite the global economic and financial crisis, and the effects of European Union directives on the ILUC (Indirect land use change) issue and the related risks of aggravating the greenhouse effect.

The conflict of priorities

The debate on biofuels is driven by three significant vectors: the interests of this nascent energy industry, energy security concerns and greater attention to the factors of ecological sustainability. However, it is impossible to consider the issue in a sectoral manner precisely because it relates to vital resources such as water, arable land, food.

The issue of biofuels is one of those classic cross-cutting issues that it is impossible to confine only to the energy sector or the debate between fossil and renewable energy, because it affects not only strategic aspects such as land, water and food crops, needed to produce biofuel, but also highly cultural, political and collective psychological elements that can turn a debate into a dispute,



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and this in turn into a strong tension or a conflict. For millennia the appropriation or conquest of land, water and food were seen in fact as a compelling *casus belli*.

This considered, one can see that the first priority conflict in a biofuel programme is the opposition between the shaping flow of the ecosystem itself and the sustainability of crops which should provide the raw material for biofuel. The following map shows the systemic ecological risks in the various Latin American countries in association with the predominant cultivation or expected product.¹

Systemic ecological risks and biofuel crops in Latin America



Source: Author's elaboration of a map in FAO, SOLAW (State of the World's Land and Water Resources for food and agriculture).²

As one can see, all the major producers or potential of ethanol, palm oil and jatropha are exposed to non-negligible ecosystem risks that regard in particular established powers such as Brazil and emerging powers such as Mexico and Argentina. It is important to understand that the production of biofuels is highly concentrated in the world and that, in terms of energy yield, it takes 1,5 biofuel barrel to match a barrel of oil equivalent. United States (48%), Brazil (22,4%) and the European Union (16,5%) accounted for 86,9% of world production. After the two giants, the big producers



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are Germany (4,8%) and Argentina (3,8%, 2012 data).

However gross production capabilities produce very different results: Brazil is an established major exporter, even when bad harvests may cause significant drops, while Argentina shows a much more uncertain trend for a number of reasons. In 2011, according to the Brazilian SECEX (Secretaria de Comércio Exterior), 78% of the ethanol world exports were distributed as follows:

USA 38%

South Korea 13%

Japan 13,1%

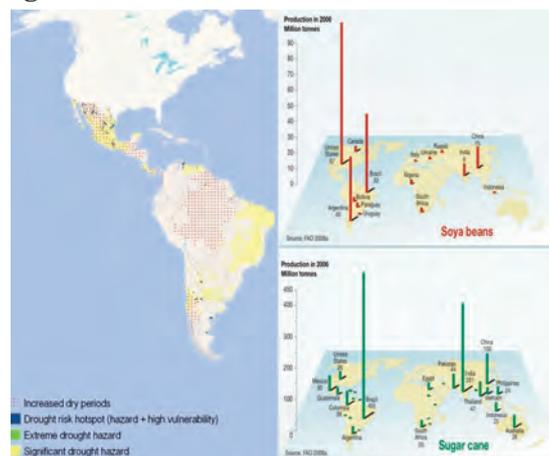
Jamaica 7,3%

Trinidad and Tobago 7%

In 2007 Buenos Aires exported to the USA 75% of its ethanol approved for foreign markets and 24% in the EU (data of the Subsecretaría de Desarrollo de Inversiones), but three years later exports were reduced to meet a domestic demand supported by new legislation in 2013. Later on the EU anti-dumping tariffs caused a 58,4% collapse of exports. In the sector of biodiesel, Argentina and Brazil are still rather irrelevant, but both, notwithstanding tariff barriers, have a demonstrated growth potential.

The second conflict concerns the stress of hydrogeological systems vis-à-vis biofuel crops, other crops and further uses. Sources such as the WWF do not report any significant short-term water stress in Latin America, except for the coastal Pacific strip from Colombia to Chile and some Andean areas of Argentina, but in the medium to long term the situation is more problematic.³

Medium-long term drought risks in Latin America



Source: left, Author's cut out of a Maplecroft and CARE map, Humanitarian Implications of Climate Change Mapping emerging trends and risk hotspots, second edition November 2009, (http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/reports/Implications_drought_risk_world_7.jpg, 10/10/2013); right, UNEP-GRID <http://maps.grida.no/go/graphic/major-producers-of-soya-beans-and-sugar-cane> (22/10/2013).



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This means that within 5-10 years, in the same period around year 2020, when the production is forecasted as increasing, some of the most significant sugarcane areas in the continent will be exposed to significant risks of drought (coastal areas of Brazil and significant areas of the states of Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais). Mexico and Guatemala, among the largest producers of sugar cane, after Brazil, will be expected to have the same problems, but not Colombia and Cuba. Also the best soybeans growing areas in Brazil are exposed to the risk of major droughts in the state of Parana (an intensive farming area) and prolonged dry periods in Mato Grosso.⁴

The geopolitical implications are that two large Latin American countries will have serious problems with major ecological impacts beyond the production of biofuels, meaning that at least two continental powers will be less capable to influence actors like Venezuela and the USA. Colombia and Cuba instead would not be affected by the current climate change. Bogota could have an opportunity to further finance the possible reconciliation with its narco-guerrillas (FARC and ELN) after decades of low intensity civil war and Cuba could reduce its energy dependence with a mix of sugar cane and jatropha, thus increasing at least on paper the regime's viability.

A last conflicting priority can be given by different land ownerships in the same country: if country B owns directly or indirectly real estate in country A, its decisions on land use could be at odds with the local ecosystem or the agricultural priorities of the host country. Luckily the phenomenon of land grabbing (and consequently the appropriation of fresh water sources) is less severe in this continent and affects relatively small extents (on a scale of tens or hundreds of thousands hectares). The data for 2013, in decreasing order, are linked to lands bought or on a long-term lease in: Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Cuba and Mexico.⁵

Towards what future and which energy security?

Most of the current definitions of energy security derive from the IEA (International Energy Agency) definition "the uninterrupted availability of renewable energy at an affordable price". It is a definition that goes back almost to the birth of the IEA in 1974 (just after the first oil shock in 1973) and that, if still conceptually valid, cannot definitely have the same significance as 40 years ago.

In the Latin American context one must distinguish between producing countries (Venezuela, Brazil, Peru Ecuador, Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago) and importing countries: the latter have definitely a more stringent energy security requirement.

The second necessary dividing line in the continent revolves around energy intensity in specific areas and populations. The great challenge regards electrification within each Latin American country. About 10% of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean (about 50 million people) has no access to electricity, including a 20-90% of the rural population and this has a considerable effect on national GDPs.⁶

At present the only country that has a serious chance to supply the global market is Brazil, albeit in an environment where ethanol will represent by year 2020 only 13% of the global fuel consumption and a mere 6% of the diesel automotive one. Moreover all its potential competitors will be outside the region (USA, EU and Japan and perhaps China), because only a few manufacturers will be certified to meet the standards for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.⁷



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Assuming that Brazil will not be hampered by anti-dumping disputes, like Argentina today, farming subsidies are and will remain a problem. The OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) points out that in 2012 farming subsidies increased in the 47 member states from 15 to 17% of annual farming revenues. Despite being under financial assault, the EU countries continue to pay 19% in subsidies vis-à-vis the total farming revenue. Indonesia (a great palm oil producer) pays 21%, China 17% against the 7% of USA and the 5% of Brazil. If one considers productive volumes, lower subsidies should counter-intuitively make agricultural systems more resilient against crops and prices fluctuations.

Other producers, starting with Argentina, will be engaged first and foremost in satisfying the internal demand, employing a small number of crop varieties with an ascertained potential, i.e.: sugarcane, soybean, palm and possibly cassava.⁸

The energy matrix of Latin America is still largely dominated by fossil fuels (oil and gas) with smaller contributions from hydroelectric energy and coal, plus a certain amount deriving from the combustion of wood (traditional biomass) in rural areas. Many regional energy security projects concern mainly the interconnection of pipelines and electricity grids in Central and South America.

Regarding the contribution of biofuels to the matrix, the problem arising for almost all countries is how to balance the land use between food crop, intensive food crops and bioenergy monoculture, respecting the national and regional biosphere. In fact only Argentina and Brazil have already dedicated land areas.

In any case, even the largest biofuel manufacturers must take into account the EU directives on ILUC (Indirect Land Use Change) because the expansion of crops or the infrastructure for processing the raw material may affect the total carbon dioxide production chain, reducing the lungs at regional and global level.



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¹ Regarding the definition of “shaping flows” See (ed. Alessandro Politi), Global Outlook 2013, CeMiSS, Rome 2013, pp. 148-149 of the Methodological Appendix. See also http://www.difesa.it/SMD_/CASD/IM/CeMiSS/Pubblicazioni/OsservatorioStrategico/Documents/OsservatorioStrategico2013/GlobalOutlook2013.pdf (16/11/2013). The shaping flows are: ecosystem, drinking water, food/agrotech, real/virtual migrations, conventional/non-conventional energy, financial and invested capitals, knowledge in its wider sense.

² The cultivations’ legend is: E – ethanol, P – palm oil, J – jatropha. The letter size is proportional vis-à-vis the estimated global productive level. See. FAO 2011. The state of the world’s land and water resources for food and agriculture (SOLAW) - Managing systems at risk. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome and Earthscan, London; http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/solaw/images_graphs/SYSTEMS_AT_RISK_MAP.pdf (7/10/2013).

³ See WWF/The Nature Conservancy, Freshwater Ecoregions of the World (FEOW), 2008 , http://www.feow.org/maps/threat/surface_water_abstraction_stress_to_rivers (07/10/2013).

⁴ See Soybean Diseases in Arkansas Asian Soybean Rust - Questions and Answers - County Agents Early Planting, Early Maturing Soybean Cultivars, Widens Rows and soybean Rust http://www.aragriculture.org/diseases/soybeans/rust/agent_questions_early.htm; Biofuels - Economy, Environment and Sustainability, Edited by Zhen Fang, ISBN 978-953-51-0950-1, 386 pages, Publisher: InTech, Chapters published January 23, 2013 under CC BY 3.0 license, Biofuels in Brazil in the Context of South America Energy Policy Luiz Pinguelli, Rosa Alberto Villela and Christiano Pires de Campo, http://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs/42165/InTech-Biofuels_in_brazil_in_the_context_of_south_america_energy_policy.pdf (22/10/2013).

⁵ The buyers are in decreasing order: Japan, India, South Korea, China; see. The Diplomat, Chinese Farms Go Global By Elleka Watts, May 31, 2013 (<http://agro.biodiver.se/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/map21.png>)



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e <http://thediplomat.com/china-power/chinese-farms-go-global/>, 10/10/2013). During the 2005-2009 period Argentina and Brazil are also land grabbers with acquisitions in each other's country, in Paraguay and in Africa. On the other hand they gave land to USA, France, countries of the Arabic Peninsula and China. See Global land and water grabbing Maria Cristina Rullia, Antonio Savoria, and Paolo D'Odorico, Edited by B. L. Turner, Arizona State University, Tempe, July 30, 2012 (<http://www.pnas.org/content/110/3/892/F1.large.jpg>, 10/10/2013). The research data belong to year 2012.

⁶ Mark Lambrides, Seguridad energética para el desarrollo económico en América Latina y el Caribe, Departamento de Desarrollo Sostenible Departamento de Desarrollo Sostenible Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA)

http://www.oas.org/dsd/SpecialMeetings/energy_presentation_lambrides_esp.pdf.

⁷ See Hart Energy, Global Biofuels Outlook 2010-2020, Rotterdam 23/3/2011, http://www.unece.lsu.edu/biofuels/documents/2013Mar/bf13_04.pdf (24/10/2013).

⁸ Regarding the vexed question of indirect land use changes and their effect on green-house gases, see VVAA, Use of U.S. Croplands for Biofuels Increases Greenhouse Gases Through Emissions from Land Use Change, Scienceexpress 07/02/08, http://www.princeton.edu/~tsearchi/writings/Searchinger_et_al-ScienceExpress.pdf (20/10/2013) and ECLAC UN, VVAA Biofuels Potential in Latin America and the Caribbean: Quantitative Considerations and Policy Implications for the Agricultural Sector, 29/07/2007.



Egypt and Syria, and the stability of the Middle East

Nicola Pedde

The intervention of the Egyptian army, and the massacre of the Muslim Brotherhood

On August 14th, just after a month since general al-Sisi's arbitrary decision to forcibly topple Mohammad Morsi's government, a new and much more intense wave of violence struck Egypt.

Since more than a month, Morsi's supporters were organizing counter-protests all over Egypt, and in particular in the bigger and more populated cities of the north. In Cairo, a sort of permanent presidium was aimed to resist and indefinitely continue its protests against the army, lamenting the arbitrariness of the military authority in toppling and then arresting the former president.

After a short ultimatum, then, on August 14th the armed forces intervened in Cairo and some other cities, storming the areas where Muslim Brotherhood's supporters gathered in the last month. Violence had been indiscriminately adopted by the army since the beginning in dispersing the protesters, deliberately using firearms and provoking a fearful carnage.

The exact number of casualties have not been yet precisely calculated, with estimates ranging around thousand of deaths and 3500 wounded.

The unmotivated and excessive use of force by the army promptly generated harsh reactions and critiques abroad, however also evidencing the ambiguity of the relations with Egypt and its military apparatus.

If in July the United States and the vast majority of the western governments didn't dare to denounce Morsi's deposition as a real *coup d'état*, adopting complex alternative lexical formulas, dubious as articulated, on August 14th they couldn't restrain from denouncing the excessive and unthinkable violence adopted against *Ikwan* supporters.

In the days following the intervention of the armed forces, general al-Sisi ordered a massive wave of arrests within Muslim Brotherhood's establishment, clearly aiming at beheading its chain of command and its political intelligentsia, making it impossible any attempt of revenge or a continuation of the protests against the provisional authority in Cairo.

Among the first which have been arrested there is Mohammad Badie, the 70 years old leader which have been always considered the political and ideological authority of the Muslim Brotherhood, and who have lost a son in the revolt. He have been arrested in his house in Nasr City, without opposing any resistance, and transferred in the Torah prison charged with the accusation of instigating violence.

Badie is replaced in the roster of the organization by Mahmoud Ezzat, also 70 years old, previously general secretary of the *Ikwan* and known for his anti-Mubarak activity in the last thirty years.



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General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi prepared a list of Muslim Brotherhood's members which must be necessarily arrested, including something around five to eight hundred names, aimed at eradicating the organizational capacity of the organization, and to be implemented if circumstances will require.

Egyptian's army action matured and was eventually made it possible by an extemporaneous political alliance among nationalists, "nasserians" and progressive secular political forces, which have temporarily shared their interests with those supporting the military apparatus, with the common goal of eradicating the "Islamic threat".

Repression have been also matched by a strong and growing anti-Islamic rhetorical violence, aimed at diffusing the idea of a correlation between the Muslim Brotherhood on one side, and *ihadism* and al-Qaida extremism on the other side. Thus alimentering an increase of violence against any confessional or religious group of the Islamic faction.

Saudi television broadcasted in the same days a message sent by king Abdullah (whose health conditions are still unclear), manifesting his full and convinced support to the Egyptian military authorities, insisting on the line of the necessity to fight any radical Islamic attempt to dominate the local political scene, and him too making a comparison between the Muslim Brotherhood and the jihadist terrorist organization.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates became the new more relevant political allies of Egypt, and in particular the more affordable and generous economic supporters, undertaking the full amount of the US military aid to Egypt, in case of cancellation from Washington.

It is not clear, however, which will be the position of the two Gulf's reigns with respect to the salafis' political and religious organization in Egypt, since few months ago openly and directly financed by both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi within the framework of a radical internal opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood. A position, that of the salafis, which represent the symmetrical opposite of those today governing Egypt, and supported by the Gulf's monarchies.

On the contrary, it is quite clear that the political positions of Qatar and the rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council – and in particular Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates – will be more and more divergent in the near future. Qatar, notoriously supporting the Muslim Brotherhood in both Egypt and Syria, had been progressively marginalized, within a growing process of distancing with its regional counterparts.

In particular, after the more recent domestic political evolutions, Qatar seems to be interested in following and defending a strategy based more on a cooperative approach toward the new emergent political and social regional trends. Avoiding a confrontation, which could prove to be soon extremely dangerous to handle.

The incognita of the chemical weapons in Syria, and the risk of escalation

On August 21st, some elements of the Syrian opposition denounced the utilization of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, and the consequential death of 355 civilians and the intoxication of other 3500 in three different areas of Damascus.

More sources have confirmed the utilization of chemical weapons, including the Syrian government, although it is still not exactly clear the dynamic of the events, and, moreover, the responsibility of the brutal action.

MSF (Doctors Without Borders, a French-based NGO), confirmed they have treated patients who

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died or were intoxicated by chemical agents, although without being able to clarify the type of substance, but founding similarities and compatibilities with the effects of the nerve agents.

Also Mohammad Rohani, the new president of Iran, confirmed the evidence of the utilization of chemical weapons, not specifying however who to blame for that, but clearly pointing at the opposition in terms of responsibility.

The Syrian government quickly reacted to the accusation formulated by the foreign press, openly accusing Saudi Arabia and Great Britain of giving primitive chemical weapons to the opposition groups, in order to be used as a pretext against the government.

State television showed some footages of boxes found in the district of Jobar – made with a scarcely credible stamp quoting “made in Saudi Arabia” – where traces of chemical agents have been supposedly found, and presenting it as the evidence of the Saudi involvement in the attack. The authorities of Damascus have immediately authorized a UN team of inspectors to reach the country and conduct an investigation, inviting the team led by professor Aake Sellstroem to quickly start its job in Damascus..

The news of the probable utilization of chemical weapons in Syria, provoked an immediate and large wave of protests all over the world, although within a framework of ambiguity, due to the difficulty of understanding the dynamic of the events, and the responsibilities.

France, Great Britain and Saudi Arabia traditionally represent the front of the nations which loudly request a military intervention against the Syrian regime. Not having the military capability of conducting such an attack by themselves, however, and fearing the consequences of an attack in the region, they try to make pressure on the US government in order to plan and lead a resolute attack against the Syrian chain of command and control.

Against any hypothesis of attack, on the contrary, there are Russia, Germany and Iran, which are manifesting various and growingly deeper doubts on the overall dynamics of the chemical weapons attack. Openly manifesting scepticism on the accusations toward Bashar al-Asad, and considering extremely dangerous the hypothesis of a military attack against Syria.

Thus, the United States hold the balance power again, where, however, an always more reluctant and timorous president Obama is divided between the interventionism of the hawks, and the prudence of the doves, which are growingly raising the ambiguity of the entire Syrian crisis and the possibility of a regional escalation.

According to a poll conducted between August 19th and 23rd by Ipsos, on behalf of Reuters, it emerged that more than 60% of the Americans is contrary to any hypothesis of military intervention in Syria, also in the event of the utilisation of chemical weapons by Bashar al-Asad's regime.

Only 25% of those interviewed is favourable to an attack in case chemical weapons utilization is proved, and only 9% is supporting the idea of an intervention in any case.

Demonstrating, according to the poll's organizers, that the American public opinion is not represented in any way by the politicians which have dominated the media in the last weeks, recurrently asking for an active role of the US in Syria.

The same poll have shown as only 11% of the public is favourable with the decision of helping the Syrian rebels, while 89% strongly opposed the idea of both sending weapons and helping with training.



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Conclusion

The crisis in Egypt and that in Syria are integral part of a regional process, which will have relevant consequences in the medium and long term.

There had been evident and growing confusion in managing this process of crisis since the beginning, mostly because of the role of actors which proved to be inadequate in their capacity of assessing the nature of the problems, and defining solutions.

Saudi Arabia, and with her the vast majority of the Gulf's monarchies, consider as an existential threat the fall of the authoritarian regimes and the surface of even vaguely pluralist movements. Being ready to invest whatever sum in order to arrest the emergence of such a threat.

Europe is more than ever divided and bellicose in managing regional crises, with France and Great Britain apparently interested in the obstinate research of a new international role – although without being able to provide the necessary financial cover to sustain it – and Germany on the contrary decidedly oriented toward the idea of a disengagement. Followed, and almost openly sustained, by the great part of the other historical members of the European Union.

The government of Barack Obama seems to be in the mid of a full stasis, divided between the interventionism of the Congress and – at least apparently – a growing wave of dissent among the public opinion, which seems to oppose any further military engagement of the US, orienting elsewhere the national financial capacity. With the economy which is showing signs of growth, but not enough to generate optimism on the market and in term of industrial production.

It is difficult, at the moment, to express a clear and precise opinion on the issue of chemical weapons in Syria. Considering the possible scenarios form a logical point of view, it seems difficult to accept the idea that Bashar al-Asad would have been so ingenuous to freely cross the “red line” – which is clearly known in Damascus – separating a domestic crisis from an enlarged regional conflict.

And even more difficult seems the idea of utilizing these kind of weapons in a phase where, at the end of the day, the conflict is much more favourable to the regime after the fall of Qusayr, the massive and fruitful intervention of Hezbollah and the trapping of the opposition in areas more and more exiguous areas, difficult to protect and logistically sustain. With a growing, conflicting behaviour among the various factions of the opposition.

All that is not justifying or clearing the responsibilities of Bashar al-Asad, only stressing the need of a concrete and sound analysis of factors before opting for a military solution against Syria.

While inspectors are working in Damascus in order to find evidence of what happened on August 21st, the United States and Great Britain had developed a plan to be adopted against Syria in case of a green light form the UN. And the risk of an enlargement to Iran and Lebanon is dramatically emerging as one of the possible consequences of a military attack against the Syrian regime.

Similar considerations could be made also for Egypt. The events of July and August represented an extremely serious precedent in the political evolution of the country.

The Muslim Brotherhood could be charged with deep and evident responsibilities for what had been done during their recent political experience, but it cannot denied that Morsi's cabinet represented the first legitimate government of Egypt, freely elected by voters.

A vote conquered through an extremely positive and non-violent process of transformation, expression of a large popular majority.



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The Muslim Brotherhood had already lost much of its support last July, when it was forcibly ousted, because of its incapacity in managing the country, and also in delivering what have been promised during the political campaign. Almost certainly, they would have fall politically in few weeks, under the burden of the critiques of their own voters and supporters.

The intervention of the armed forces, as expression of the extemporaneous coalition of deeply heterogeneous political groups, have dramatically halted the general process of change and reform in Egypt, determining what should be qualified – without inventing articulated lexical games – as a full restoration.

It is difficult to think that what had been achieved in two intense and stimulating years of transition, even if through violence and chaos, could be wiped out so easily by the action of the armed forces. It is already evident that it will be extremely difficult for the armed forces to keep united and cohesive the fragmented and different groups that had generated the process of change.

But it will be as well evident as poorly credible will be any these political force in the future, in promoting ideals of pluralism, justice and freedom.

Not to mention the risk of a *jihadistic* shift of the more radical and frustrated components of the Muslim Brotherhood, which will now certainly consider the use of force and terrorism as a legitimate way to fight the establishment and especially the military apparatus.

*Marco Massoni*

Somalia. A New Deal Country?

The UN Deputy Secretary General, the Eritrean Haile Menkerios, is the new head of mission of the United Nations Integrated Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and also the UN Special Representative to the AU in Addis Ababa, having replaced in this function the Kenyan diplomat Zachary Muburi-Muita. It is a very strong signal about the intentions of the international community to open a chink in the normalization of Eritrea within the wider region of the Greater Horn of Africa.

With increasing intensity a series of high-level international meetings on *Somalia* has been taking place in recent months. The aim is to maintain the momentum, or to promptly take advantage of the present general favourable circumstances, because these same encouraging conditions that now seem to bring back the hope for the fate of the former Italian colony cannot however be given for granted for too long. In fact, this time the international community cannot fail to provide an adequate response to the necessary settlement of the Somali State and to the consequent recovery of its entire territorial sovereignty. The improvement of the security conditions in the country, mainly thanks to the concrete results that the *African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)* has so far obtained, plus the effect of terrorism stem, along with the containment of piracy off the coast of Somalia, and the international recognition of the Somali political authorities – in the persons of the Prime Minister, *Abdi Farah Shirdon 'Saaid'*, and of the President, *Sheikh Hassan Mohamoud* – in less than one year time have clearly improved the overall setting, giving more confidence to a realistic recovery at institutional, economic, social and political levels. In terms of multilateral engagement on the division of tasks among the major international actors involved in the reconstruction of Somalia (such as Italy, UK, Ethiopia, Kenya, some Gulf Countries, Turkey, etc...), while Rome has taken over the judiciary sector, with the specific mandate to follow and implement the reform of the Somali codes – *customary law, Islamic law and public law* – London is focusing on tax reform and anti-corruption practices. Among other things, Italy, well aware of the delicate relationship between central government and regional authorities, – within a federal framework – wishes to maintain the whole territorial integrity together with a balanced administrative decentralization. Among the dynamics of events of major importance occurred in recent months, it should certainly be highlighted the great activism in London, expressed *inter alia*, through the London Conference of Foreign Ministers of the G8 held last April, which released a document stressing the importance for the international community of the future of Somalia. The G8 countries therefore have committed themselves, so that the World Bank, the International Mon-

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etary Fund and the African Development Bank may help with specific programmes to promote macro-economic stability, fiscal sustainability, economic growth and finally the conditions for the entry of foreign investors and the expansion of trade in the country. More specifically, towards these International Financial Institutions (IFIs) will be made operational a specific tool, or the *World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund*. With regard to counter-terrorism activities, on that occasion, G8 Foreign Ministers expressed their concern for the task, although limited, of *al-Shebaab* and for the presence of recruited abroad foreign fighters that are operational in Somalia, thus decreeing the need to promote activities aimed to border security, combating of illegal funding of Somali terrorists and against money laundering, related to the piracy ransom revenues. Always in April an *ad hoc* meeting for dialogue between the Federal Government of Somalia and the authorities of Somaliland was held in Ankara, thus reflecting the great importance that Turkey puts again to Somalia¹.



The major event was undoubtedly *The Second Lancaster House Somalia Conference* of May 7 organized by the British and the Somali Government, in order to promote a series of concrete measures, directly managed and coordinated by Mogadishu on the following three main issues: *security, justice* and the reconstruction of the *financial public system* and of its management. On that occasion, the Somali Federal Government presented its plan for the implementation of feder-

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alism, for the final adoption of the Constitution and, finally, for the holding of democratic elections scheduled in 2016. Incidentally, it should be noted that, although there had been a consensus of the international partners of Somalia for holding local elections in Puntland on July 15, yet Puntland Government announced a suspension of the 2013 local council elections, officially due to security reasons. Getting back to the London Conference, key objective of the meeting, which was attended by some 54 international delegations, with the absence of both *Puntland* and *Somaliland*, has been to support the reform programme of the so-called *Six Pillar Policy*. Actually, regarding the issue of *security*, the reintegration of militias into the national Armed Forces is expected. Therefore, the Somali government has pledged to ensure that the security structures be accountable, inclusive, sustainable, as well as proportionate and that the civilian chain of command, the rule of law and the human rights be respected too. In regard of the fight against *maritime piracy*, the *Federal Government's Maritime Resource and Security Strategy* has been welcomed. For what concerns the theme of *Justice*, Somali authorities have put forward their own four-year plan to streamline the Police and discussed the possibility to activate a dedicated financial measure: *The Rule of Law Fund*. Besides, the importance of the adoption of the *National Dialogue on Justice in Mogadishu* was also recognized. On the issue of greater British interest, that of *public financial management*, Cameron administration is working at the *Special Financing Facility*, inasmuch it is necessary to restore – the sooner the better – a safe, transparent and efficient administration for the reliability of Somalia, so as to recover a full confidence for the citizens toward the public sector. Moreover, the UK has allocated 12 million euros for the development of the capabilities of the Armed Forces and 17 million euros for the training of police and Justice, whereas the European Union will allocate up to 44 million euros for the strengthening of the judicial system and security on the whole. As for the *regional players*, under the presidency of the Ethiopian Premier, *Desalegn*, on May 3 and May 24 and there were two extraordinary summits of the Heads of State and Government of the *Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD)* – the regional Organization of States of the *Greater Horn of Africa* – the second of which expressly covered the situation in Somalia. The result was the adoption of a framework for a sustained dialogue on crosscutting issues that unite the East African nations. The main outcomes of the two Summit concern a clear desire to promote national reconciliation in Somalia and lead to the restoration of the administrative control of all regions of Somalia, with a special emphasis on those in the South. IGAD also expressed itself in favour of a rapid reintegration of the various militias within the unified command of the National Armed Forces of Somalia. In addition, but without any significant result, on May 29 a *Regional Conference for Investment and Reconstruction in Somalia* was held in Nairobi. Probably of lesser importance, but still indicative of international interest towards Somalia, was the fifth edition of the Japanese traditional forum on Africa, the *Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V)*, held this time at the beginning June in *Yokohama*, with a special session on Somalia. For the last twenty years, Japan has been convening TICAD every five years that is an event of great impact in the media, but by now it seems to pay for the growing economic difficulties faced by the *Land of the Rising Sun*, very conditioning about the real possibilities of any Tokyo's geopolitical projection in East Africa. Compared to the activism of other Asian powers in Africa, such as China and India, Japanese partnership is proving to be more and more distant from African expectations, notwithstanding the booming and repetitive announcements in recent years of a massive Tokyo's engagement in the African continent. Actually, this

edition of the TICAD was focused on the progress of the United Nations *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* as well as on the consolidation of peace processes and good governance in Africa, without forgetting the lessons learned up to this point. As a matter of fact, Japan is convinced that introducing a policy of cooperation and development – through TICAD – and a diplomatic approach based on technical expertise and resources can prove to be rewarding. To tell the truth, Japanese have never really wholeheartedly come to Africa and now more than ever are fiercely struggling, to carve out a role and a place among the many and merciless Asian powers, intending to secure their place under the African sun. The dynamic geopolitical equilibrium and the balance of power among the Asian Tigers are inevitably also reflected in the respective African policies pursued by each one of them. With regard to the *United Nations*, the Security Council resolution n° 2102 of May 2, has established the *United Nations Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)*, operational since June the 3rd in Mogadishu. It is led by the new *Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Somalia (SRSG)*, the British *Nicholas Kay*, replacing the previous *United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)*, which used to be ruled by the Tanzanian diplomat *Philip Augustine Mahiga*. The new UN political mission in Somalia shall be tasked to support the consolidation of the new Somali institutions and the political, security, human rights and the rule of law relevant reforms. The mandate of UNSOM is very detailed and includes among other things the support of the federal government in the delicate process of peace and reconciliation in Somalia and through specific actions, when it comes to peace-building and to state-building. Opportunely, the UN headquarters has decided to focus on *governance*, on the reform of the security sector (i.e. police, justice, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, mine clearance and maritime safety), on the development of a federal political system, on the constitutional review process and the subsequent Constitution approbation referendum, and, finally, on the preparations of the 2016 elections. From the European Union side, EU and Somalia have announced the *New Deal for Somalia Conference*, to be held in Brussels, September the 16th, whose aim will be to frame the priorities to comply with for the reconstruction of the Somali state, taking into account the indications resulting from the *Busan New Deal Principles for Fragile States*. In fact, in the case in point a peculiar partnership agreement will be approved: the *New Deal Compact*, to be valid for the next three years, which will just confirm the priorities for reconstruction, security, development and Good Governance in Somalia.

Western Africa: Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.

In *Burkina Faso*, in July, repeated moments of tension were recorded during a numbers of demonstrations in the capital, Ouagadougou, against the proposal to establish the Senate. According to the opposition claims, it would be a move of the President, *Blaise Compaoré*, to put his hand to a constitutional amendment that allows the modification of the limit of the mandate of the Head of State, so that he can present himself once again for the presidential elections scheduled in 2015. Both presidential and legislative elections in *Guinea-Bissau* have been set for November 24. This important event, announced by the interim president, *Manuel Serifos Nhamadjo*, should put an end to the ongoing transition as a result of the coup d'état of April 2012, which had interrupted the electoral process of one of the most fragile state of the entire West Africa.

In *Guinea*, the President, *Alpha Condé*, has confirmed the date of the next legislative elections, the 24th of September. Meanwhile, the Presidential Security Minister, the Colonel *Claude Pivi*,

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alias Coplan, has been indicted for his alleged involvement in the notorious massacre of 28 September 2009, when in the capital city stadium, the military junta led by *Moussa Dadis Camara*, shot dead approximately one hundred and fifty opponents, while they were demonstrating peacefully.

In *Mali*, presidential elections of July 28 took place without incident as well as the runoff of August the 11th between the two main contenders, *Ibrahim Boubacar Keita* alias IBK, who defeated *Soumaila Cissé*. In particular, former Premier (1994-2000) and former President of the National Assembly (2002-2007), Keita, is the leader of the *Rally for Mali (RPM)*. Since July the 1st, with a budget of 400 million dollars, the *United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)* has been operating, in order to guarantee the overall safety even in the northern regions, where it seemed more uncertain, especially on the occasion of the voting. On July 19, the French General *Bruno Guibert* has become the new head of the *European Union Training Mission (EUTM)* in Mali, replacing the General *François Lecointre*.

On 9 July the President of *Nigeria*, *Goodluck Jonathan*, paid a five-day official visit to *Beijing*, where he met with the Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister, *Li Yucheng*. Among the several topics discussed, it is worth mentioning the agreement according to which the *Central Bank of Nigeria* may enter into the Chinese bond market through the *Peoples' Bank of China*. In addition, the Nigerian delegation has secured loans for infrastructure for over a billion dollars at subsidized rates.

As the first leg of his African tour, from 26th to the 28th of June, U.S. President *Obama* made an official visit to *Senegal*, meeting the President *Macky Sall*.

Regarding *Togo*, after the end of a peaceful political campaign, legislative elections were held July 25. The contenders were the ruling party, the *Union for the Republic (UNIR)*, of the President, *Faure Gnassingbé*, and opposition blocs gathered under the *Rainbow Coalition (CAEC)* and the *Let's Save Togo Collective (CST)*. After long-delayed elections, the ruling party has won two-thirds of parliamentary seats.

Eastern Africa: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Tanzania.

As per *Djibouti*, the French diplomat *Etienne de Poncins* took over the command of the *European Union Regional Maritime Capacity Building for the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean (EUCAP NESTOR)*, replacing the French Admiral *Jacques Launay*.

Regarding *Ethiopia*, the Belgian *Chantal Hebberecht* is the new *Head of Delegation of the European Union (EU)* in Addis Ababa. In July in both *Dessie* and *Gondar* – important northern cities in the Amhara regions – public demonstrations took place without incidents; opposition political parties and movements promoted them for the release of political prisoners.

In *Somalia*, one of the most important *Shebaab* leaders, *Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys*, was arrested. Meanwhile in *Kismayo* there had been fighting between Kenyan soldiers and anti-government Somali militias, the authorities of Mogadishu expressed growing discontent for the continued presence of Kenyan troops in the country. In addition, Ethiopia has started the withdrawal of its troops from the town of *Baidoa*, which is going to be taken over by those of the *African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)*. The relative disengagement of Addis Ababa does not necessarily mean disregard for Somalia, but it is a signal highlighting the urgent need to accelerate the process of pacification especially in the southern regions of the former Italian colony.

In *Sudan*, the Chief of Staff, *General Ismat Abdel Ramane*, was replaced by *General Mustafa*

Osman Obeid Salim. According to some sources, the rotation at the top of Khartoum Armed Forces is explainable because of the violent clashes having occurred in *South Kordofan*, more specifically in *Abu Kershola*, which had been occupied by the rebels of the *Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF)*, an alliance of four political movements, which has set itself the aim of overthrowing the regime of President *Omar al-Bashir*. The UN has strongly condemned the increasing attacks against the *African Union / United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)* peacekeepers. Finally, the former intelligence chief, *Salah Gosh*, who last November was arrested allegedly for having orchestrated a coup ever made was pardoned.

Riek Machar, the Vice-President of *South Sudan*, (who belongs to the *Nuer* ethnic group) was immediately dismissed by the President *Salva Kiir* (who belongs to the *Dinka* ethnic group), which dissolved the Government, just when Machar had indicated his willingness to stand as candidate both to the presidency of the party, the *Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)*, and to the presidential elections scheduled in 2015.

Concerning *Tanzania*, as the third and final leg of his African tour between the 1st and the 2nd of July, U.S. President *Obama* has made an official visit to *Dar es Salaam*, meeting with President *Jakaya Kikwete*.

Central Africa: Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR) and Rwanda.

Unexpectedly, the President of *Cameroon*, *Paul Biya*, convened for 30 September the municipal and legislative elections. The opposition have expressed their disappointment. Also in Cameroon there is an ongoing debate about the desirability of the Senate.

As far as the *Central African Republic (CAR)* is concerned, the *Peace and Security Council (PSC)* of the African Union (AU) has decreed sending a contingent of two thousand six hundred green helmets, that from August onwards will complement the peace operation of the *Multinational Force in the Central African Republic-Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central African Republic (FOMUC-MICOPAX)*, the local mission of the *Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)* running since 2008. The aim is to ensure the country's security, hostage to the destabilizing effects of the Coup of March 24, operated by *Séléka*, a coalition under the leadership of self-declared interim Prime Minister, *Michel Djotodia*. With the commitment to provide substantial economic contributions to cope with the current crisis, which has produced over 260 thousand refugees, the European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, *Kristalina Georgieva*, and the Deputy Secretary of the United Nations, Baroness *Valerie Ann Amos*, went to visit the capital, *Bangui*.

As per *Rwanda*, the British *Michael Ryan* is the new Head of Delegation of the European Union (EU) in Kigali.

Southern Africa: Angola, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe

As per *Angola*, *José Filomeno de Sousa dos Santos*, one of the sons of the President of the Republic, *José Eduardo dos Santos*, was put in charge of the promising very first national sovereign wealth fund, the *Fundo Soberano de Angola (FSDEA)*, operational since 2012. By doing so, the key roles of the presidential family are undoubtedly getting stronger. In fact, President's son-in-law, *Manuel Vicente*, is Deputy Head of State, while his daughter, *Isabel dos Santos*, firmly at the

command of the national telecommunications company, is known for being the only African billionaire.

Regarding *Madagascar*, although scheduled for August 23, presidential elections have been postponed *sine die* to the chagrin of the international community on the whole. The stalemate is caused by the decision of the *Electoral Special Court (ESC)* to accept the applications of *Lalao Ravalomanana*, *Didier Ratsiraka* and of the interim President *Andry Rajoelina*. Therefore, the *International Contact Group on Madagascar (ICG-M)* of the African Union and the SADC Head Mediator, *Joachim Chissano*, are facilitating all the way for Madagascar to return to democracy, by means of a plan to change the composition of the members of the ESC, so as to force the withdrawal of the three contested nominations, in a nation where more than ninety percent of the population lives in extreme poverty.

In regards of *Mozambique*, the President, *Armando Guebuza*, has dismissed the Chief of Staff, *General Paulino José Macaringué*, replacing him with *General Graça Tomás Chongo*, because of sabotage and violence occurred a few weeks before in the province of *Sofala* and attributed, though without proof, to the largest opposition party, the *Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO)*. Guebuza and the leader of RENAMO, *Afonso Dhlakama*, agreed to meet in order to clarify their positions and reach an agreement in view of the upcoming administrative elections this year and general ones in 2014.

As the second leg of his African tour June 29th and the 30th, U.S. President *Obama* has made an official visit to *South Africa*, meeting the President *Jacob Zuma* and the President of the African Union Commission (AUC), *Nkosazana Zuma Clarise Dhlamini*, visiting Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

In *Zimbabwe*, presidential elections were held on 31 July. Anticipating the date through a surprise move, *Robert Mugabe*, the incumbent President of the Republic and leader of the *Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)*, has displaced the planning of the election campaign of the opposition, by definition represented by the Prime Minister, *Morgan Tsvangirai*, of the *Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T)*.

Conclusions

New dynamics, most of the time unpredicted, are affecting all African regions. For instance, South Africa is less and less a nation of reference both in Africa and outside its borders, since other countries in the African continent have – beyond all expectations – suddenly become very attractive to foreign investors. *According to the U.S. point of view Africa is no longer 'sick', rather a chance that the United States risks, however, not to take advantage of it seriously enough. A worrying point is not only China, but also that whole plethora of new global players, now deeply entering into the political and economic dynamics in Africa as in the case of India, Turkey, Japan, Brazil, Russia, South Korea, etc ...*

¹Between the 31st of May to 1st of June 2012, the Turkish Government hosted the Second Istanbul Conference on Somalia, titled Preparing Somalia's Future: Goals for 2015. Fifty-four international delegations attended it. The very first conference on Somalia prepared by the PM, Erdogan, had taken place two years earlier.



The constitutional debate in China

Nunziante Mastrolia

Something very strange is happening in China, that is, an open and hard debate on the Chinese Constitution. It is very strange because what the scholars and writers of the “pro-constitutionalism camp” are writing now is same as Liu Xiaobo wrote in 2008 in the document Charta '08. Actually, these words are quite similar to those pronounced in december 2012 by Xi Jinping. The meaning of these voices is quite clear: China needs reshaping its institutional and political structure and the blueprint for this new era of reform is the Constitution of China itself. The position of the members of the “anti-constitutionalism camp” is completely different and this is the second strange thing of this debate, because they are contrasting their own Constitution and they are taking a position that is in blatant contrast to the one expressed by Xi Jinping¹

In fact, the words pronounced by Xi Jinping in December, during the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the 1982 Constitution, ignited the debate on constitutionalism, saying something that encouraged the advocates of political reform: “We must firmly establish, throughout society, the authority of the Constitution and the law and allow the overwhelming masses to fully believe in the law.” Xi also said that “no organization or individual has the privilege to overstep the Constitution and the law, and any violation of the Constitution and the law must be investigated”. Moreover, Xi said: “We must establish mechanisms to restrain and supervise power. Power must be made responsible and must be supervised”. In the same days, the *China Daily* wrote “Safeguarding the dignity of the Constitution and ensuring its implementation serves as a premise to promote the rule of law.”

In the following days, Xi Jinping said something more: “power must be shut in the cage of regulation”; Bao Tong, former aide to late premier Zhao Ziyang, commented: “The Constitution of the People's Republic of China is the only ready-made cage we have to curb the exercise of state power”².

Xi Jinping's words sparked the enthusiasm of many liberals. In particular it is worth to quote the year's inaugural edition of the journal *Yanhuang Chunqiu*: “Only by honoring the commitment of constitutional governance, limiting and dividing power, will citizens be able to loudly proclaim their criticism of public power; will it be possible for everyone to live freely according to their inner beliefs; and will we be able to build a free and strong country”³. These are words that remind us of the voices of the American Founding Fathers, from John Adams to Thomas Paine.

The need of a political reform in China is becoming more and more urgent lately. The reason why this reform is so urgent a necessity can be understood if we look, in a comparative perspective, at



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previous modernization experiments carried out in other developing countries. Recent history has shown that the achievements in terms of economic and social development are likely to vanish, if economic and technological modernization is not followed by the political and institutional modernization.

This position is clear and is shared by many of the “pro-constitutionalism camp”. On June 10, an article, written by Feng Chongyi and Yang Hengjun, (“Avoiding Constitutionalism Means Cutting Off the Road Forward for China”) appeared on the newspaper *Ta Kung Pao*. The article states that promoting the rule of law is an urgent necessity in order to curb corruption and those abuses of power which are one of the principal sources of social discontent and to enforce those rights and those liberties that Chinese people need. Besides, the authors argue that the constitution is the only institutional guarantee to establish the rule of law, that is to say that without a *Grundnorm*, or “the ultimate norm from which every legal norm deduces its validity”, the concept of rule of law is a vain idea. They wrote also: “China doesn’t face a question of whether or not to recognize constitutionalism, or whether or not to accept it, but rather it faces a point where, if it does not make institutional progress toward constitutionalism and democracy, it will suffer complete erosion and slide into a place beyond redemption”⁴.

Moreover, according to the authors of the “pro-constitutionalism camp” the Constitution is not only the *Grundnorm* necessary to establish the rule of law in China, it is also the real framework to lead the political reform process in the country: “In fact, the consensus for political structural reform already exists. This is the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China”, as Yanhuang Chunqiu writes; then he adds “When comparing the Constitution with reality, we may discover that the current institutions, policies, decrees and many government acts are very far removed from the Constitution. Our Constitution is basically void.” In this sense, the essence of political reform process is a “campaign to uphold the Constitution”⁵.

The position of the “pro-constitutionalism camp” is a clear rationale, while the one of the anti-constitutionalism camp is no as clear.

Nevertheless, one point in their argumentation is very evident: the autocratic power of the Communist Party is incompatible with a full implementation of the Chinese Constitution. That is, giving a real application to the Chinese Constitution means altering the political structure that now *de facto* is ruling the country. That is to say that under a constitutional governance it is necessary to curb the power of Communist Party. Zhengzhi Xue clearly writes: “The direction of these «constitutional governance» viewpoints is extremely clear, (...) they want to abolish the leadership of the Communist Party in China, and overthrow the Socialist regime”⁶. Besides this point, their argumentations are not so easy to follow.

On May 21 with an article in the *Red Flag* Yang Xiaoqing, of Renmin University, writes what Qian Gang considers the “first shot in this year’s campaign against constitutionalism”⁷. The piece, bearing the title “A Research Comparison of Constitutionalism and People’s Democracy”, is principally an attack on the idea raised by the *Southern Weekly* newspaper that the “Chinese dream” of Xi Jinping should be a “dream of constitutionalism”. Yang Xiaoqing writes: “As the basic institutional structure of modern Western politics, the key systemic elements and concepts in constitutional governance only belong to capitalism and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and they do not belong to the Socialist people’s democratic system”. It said constitutionalism was “decep-

tive”: in fact, only politicians supported by “big interest groups” could get elected⁸.

On May 22 the *Global Times* points the finger against Western nations and denounce that the debate on constitutionalism aims at canceling China’s political system and trying to turn it into a Western one. This means, *The Economist* sums up, that in China: “Calling for constitutionalism is in fact unconstitutional”⁹ In June, on the *Red Flag* Wang Tingyou (“A Few Thoughts on the Issue of Constitutionalism”), writes that: “Western nations hope to propagate the idea of constitutionalism in China as a means of abolishing the leadership of the CCP and the socialist system.”¹⁰

On August from 5 to 7, the *People’s Daily* published a series of three pieces¹¹. The first is “Constitutionalism is Essentially a Weapon in a Public Opinion War”. The author, who probably writes under the pseudonym of Ma Zhongcheng, argues that “The strong Soviet Union once overwhelmed the US militarily, but still, starting in the 80s, it crumbled under the attack of the two information and psychological warfare weapons of «democratic Socialism» and «constitutionalism»”¹². Ma states that Mikhail Gorbachev “was thoroughly defeated because he used Western constitutionalism as a blueprint”¹³.

In the second article, “US Constitutionalism Is Unworthy of the Name”, Ma firstly writes that: “The US Constitution is a contradiction (...) In the US, the Constitution is higher than the will of the US popular masses, but it is not higher than everything. The US Constitution is not the highest authority, the will of the US oligarchs who monopolize capital is”. Then he adds that: “American constitutional governance is more in name than in reality (...) there is no such thing as democracy and freedom under U.S. constitutional governance”. Ma Zhongcheng also sustains that constitutional governance in the United States was “non-existent”. Then he argues: “That sort of constitutionalist conceptual structure is the myth with which the US misleads the popular masses and safeguards its own autocratic rule, and is a weapon of information and psychological war of the US capital-monopolist oligarchs and their representatives in China, used to overturn China’s Socialist system. This sort of constitutionalist structure that does not exist at all, naturally cannot be compatible with Socialism”¹⁴. In the third article, “Doing Constitutionalism in China Can Only Be Like Catching Fish in a Tree, Subverting the Rule of Socialism”¹⁵, Ma argues that constitutionalism in China is useless and bound to fail.

That said, it could be interesting to underline two things. First, the debate has not been censored and their authors, at least until now, have not been detained, although the essays of the “pro-constitutionalism camp” are very sharp and politically very sensitive in China: Zhang Qianfan in “A Constitution without Constitutionalism? The Paths of Constitutional Developments in China”, writes that: “Compared to the people in the United States or western European countries, who can rely on working constitutional mechanisms for their protection at least during «non-constitutional moments», the people in authoritarian states like China have nothing of that kind to protect them, and have no choice but to take things into their own hands – sometimes, even risk their own lives”¹⁶. It is very difficult not to read Zhang’s words as a true call to mobilize the masses against the Party. It is also very impressive what Cai Xia, a professor at the Central Party School, says: “If we continue refusing to push determinedly for political reforms, to push for the building of constitutionalism and democracy, the worsening of social tensions will be such that the ruling Party will lose the opportunity for reform altogether, and the government will have no space to manoeuvre”¹⁷. On August 29, Rong Jian in a piece entitled “Constitutionalism and the CCP’s Re-



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building of Legitimacy” writes “Where is the new path by which the Chinese Communist Party can rebuild its legitimacy? When guns, pens and pocketbooks are no longer capable of controlling the nation’s people, if you want to win recognition and support from the people anew, is there any other path than constitutionalism?”¹⁸.

The uniqueness of this debate becomes much more impressive if it is compared with the previous case of Liu Xiaobo, who in 2008 wrote the document Charta '08: “The Chinese people, who have endured human rights disasters and uncountable struggles across these same years, now include many who see clearly that freedom, equality, and human rights are universal values of humankind and that democracy and constitutional government are the fundamental framework for protecting these values. (...) The political reality, which is plain for anyone to see, is that China has many laws but no rule of law; it has a constitution but no constitutional government. (...) The constitution must be the highest law in the land, beyond violation by any individual, group, or political party”. Liu was formally arrested on 23 June 2009 on suspicion of “inciting subversion of state power” and was sentenced to eleven years' imprisonment and two years' deprivation of political rights on 25 December 2009.

The second point to underline is that the two camps, although they analyze the same issue, seem to speak two different languages. While the authors of the “pro-constitutionalism camp” are calling for a real enforcement of the Chinese Constitution, the opposite camp is fighting against an unlikely conspiracy arranged by foreign powers aiming at overthrowing the Chinese Communist Party and triggering the collapse of the Country.

Now, it is true that in the Constitution of China there are some elements of Western-style liberalism: article 35 “citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration”; article 36 “Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief”; article 37 “The freedom of person of citizens of the People's Republic of China is inviolable”; article 39 “The home of citizens of the People's Republic of China is inviolable”; article 49 “The freedom and privacy of correspondence of citizens of the People's Republic of China are protected by law”; article 41. “Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the right to criticize and make suggestions to any state organ or functionary”. And it also true that, in the same Constitution, there are institutional arrangements linked, to a certain degree, to the principles of the rule of law, the separation of powers and democracy.

But in the meantime, it is evident that those rights are the universal rights of humankind, and these institutional arrangements are, at least until now, the most useful means to enforce and guarantee human rights.

However, this is the constitutional text freely adopted by the 5th National People's Congress on December 4, 1982. So, it is difficult disagree with Zhang Qianfan when he writes that “Opposing constitutionalism must mean opposing the Constitution”.

In conclusion, it is evident that the advocates of the “anti-constitutionalism camp” are defending the *status quo* and the supremacy of the Party's power over the State and the Constitution. But there is a dilemma they have to solve: if the actual role of the party is incompatible with the same Constitution, that the representatives of the Chinese people freely adopted, they have to decide what is unconstitutional: is it the Constitution itself or the Communist Party?

1 Edward Wong and Jonathan Ansfield, “Reformers Aim to Get China to Live Up to Own Constitution”, The New York Times, February 3, 2013.

2 Quoted in Bao Tong, “Constitutional Politics Shouldn't be Fake”, RFA, August 8, 2013.

3 “The Constitution is a Consensus for Political Reform”, Yanhuang Chunqiu, January 1st 2013, quoted in David Bandurski, “A consensus for political reform”, China Media Project, January 2, 2013. See also David Bandurski, “China’s constitutional debate”, China Media Project, August 14, 2013.

4 See Qian Gang, “The uncertain death of “constitutionalism”, China Media Project, September 2, 2013

5 Yanhuang Chunqiu, “Constitutional Governance is the Consensus for Political Structural Reform”, January 4, 2013, <http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2013/01/04/constitutional-governance-is-the-consensus-for-political-structural-reform/>

6 Zhengzhi Xue, “Clearly Understanding the Essence of «Constitutional Governance»”, May 29, 2013, <http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2013/05/29/clearly-understanding-the-essence-of-constitutional-governance/>

7 Qian Gang, “The uncertain death of “constitutionalism”, China Media Project, September 2, 2013. See also Joanna Chiu, “China's Constitutional Crisis”, The Atlantic, September 3, 2013.

8 Quoted in Qian Gang, “The uncertain death of “constitutionalism”, China Media Project, September 2, 2013.

9 “Drawing the battle lines”, The Economist, June 1st 2013.

10 Quoted in Qian Gang, “The uncertain death of “constitutionalism”, China Media Project, September 2, 2013.

11 *Ivi*

12 “«Constitutionalism” Essentially Is a Weapon of Public Opinion War», August 7, 2013.

13 “Climbing trees to catch fish”, The Economist, August 17, 2013.

14 “US Constitutionalism Is Unworthy of the Name”, August 7, 2013, <http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2013/08/07/us-constitutionalism-is-unworthy-of-the-name-wang-hailou/>

15 Quoted in Qian Gang, “The uncertain death of “constitutionalism”, China Media Project, September 2, 2013. See also “Climbing trees to catch fish”, The Economist, August 17, 2013.

16 Zhang Qianfan, “A constitution without constitutionalism? The paths of constitutional development in China”, International Journal of Constitutional Law, Oct. 2010, Vol. 8 Issue 4, p. 950

17 Quoted in Quoted in Qian Gang, “The uncertain death of “constitutionalism”, China Media Project, September 2, 2013

18 *Ivi*



The Inconsistency of Indian Foreign Policy and Defence Budget

Claudia Astarita

It is a never-ending debate the one introducing India as a “soon to be” global power. However, in order to evaluate whether New Delhi’s priorities in terms of foreign policy are realistic or not, it is crucial to clarify its geo-strategic imperatives, highlighting the geo-strategic advantages the country has to offer to its existing and future partners, as well as to evaluate whether the country has a defence balance able to cope with its own ambitions.

Since the defence budget is based on facts rather than assumptions, it seems reasonable to start this analysis decoding the details of the Union Budget 2013-14 that was presented to the Indian Parliament a few months ago. In that occasion, the Finance Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram announced a 5.3 per cent increase in defence allocation to US\$ 37.4 billion, a modest top up compared to the ones of the previous two budgets (17.6 and 11.6 per cent, respectively). This limited growth has been caused by a depressing economic environment and by the government’s austerity drive ordered to face the current fiscal deficit. Such a modest increase as already been recognized as inadequate to sustain the running as well as the modernization requirements of Indian armed forces. Accordingly, it is reasonable to forecast that it will have a negative impact on Indian foreign policy feasibility as well.

Several scholars in India argue that the defence budget has taken a heavier burden than any other budget to accommodate the government austerity drive. According to Laxman Kumar Behera, although from a macro point of view the fiscal burden, in terms of controlled growth and total government expenditure, is equally shared by each minister, statistics show that “the defence budget has taken a larger burden than would probably be reasonable. This is evident from the growth rate of both the union budget and the defence budget. While the former has increased by 11.7 per cent, the increase in the latter is less than half of that. In other words, the defence budget has been harshly controlled not only in the interest of larger fiscal deficit, but also to accommodate the relatively larger shares of other government expenditure heads”.¹

Building on these remarks, it is easy to notice that due to high inflation (8 per cent, on average) and to a particularly unfavourable exchange rate regime, the limited nominal increase in defence allocation becomes even negative when looked in real terms. Further, considering that “the salary portion of the budget [...] is more or less insulated with suitable periodic increase in dearness allowance, [it goes without saying that] the most affected elements of the budget would be revenue works, transportation, and most importantly revenue stores and capital acquisition, which are critical for modernization and preparedness”.²



India

With India currently in the middle of a massive modernization process involving its three armed forces, it is open to debate whether the new defence budget will allow the Minister of Defence to finalize deals in its long-list of new acquisitions. To quote a few of them, the Air Force is once again expected to sign the much awaited \$20 billion contract for 126 French Rafale fighters. Besides French jets, India Air Force has already selected the prospective supplies for at least three more big contracts: 22 Boeing AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopters (\$1.2 billion); 15 Boeing CH-47F Chinook heavy lift helicopters (\$1.4 billion); and 6 Airbus A330 Multi Role Tanker Transport (\$1.0 billion). Moreover, both the Navy and the Army are expected to finalize \$2 billion contracts to cope with their own modernization programmes.

Analysing these data, and with a defence budget that in real terms is decreasing, it is easy to conclude that a mismatch of huge proportions is expected in the coming years between the allocation to and the expectation by the defence ministry. Although the government has stressed more than one time its commitment to stimulate domestic defence industry, placing contracts on local enterprises and funding their developmental costs up to 80 per cent (the so called “make” projects), it is a matter of fact that no major contract has been implemented so far. As highlighted by Dr. Behera, the ineffectiveness of this program “is evident from the utilisation and allocations of resources for the “make” projects. Of the total allocation of \$16.4 million made in 2012-13, not a single pie has been utilised so far. Moreover, the allocation has been further reduced to a mere \$0.2 million in the new budget, implying that no major work can be undertaken” with this program, making it an unfeasible alternative to current and already scheduled acquisitions.³

Once clarified that it will be compulsory for the Ministry of Defence to reprioritize its aims, as well as its main items of expenditures, it becomes crucial to focus on Indian priorities in terms of foreign policy in order to better evaluate what we can expect from this country.

India is currently behaving as if it just entered the third decade of its Look East Policy and as if this were its main foreign policy priority. However, thirty years after its launch, it is time for New Delhi to figure out which one should be the parameters of India’s new Look East Policy, given the fact that East, South, and Southeast Asia have witnessed so much transformation, clarifying how far should India look east, and from where.⁴

It is a matter of fact that the Indian Minister of External Affairs has been pushing for a re-launch of India’s Look East policy for quite a long time. Although this move seems mainly aimed at involving new actors and institutions outside the government, such as representatives of the business community, research institute and think tanks in India, it is argued that something more should be done in order to make its Look East Policy more active, more real. “There has been a serious criticism that India has only been ‘looking’ eastwards, but not pursuing a comprehensive strategy towards Southeast Asian countries, and the ASEAN”.⁵

Accordingly, its bilateral relations with specific countries in Asia, and its interaction with regional organizations and initiatives should become more frequent and being able to lead to tangible results. Another commitment for the Minister of External Affairs should be the one of “bringing east to India”, with the prism of economic, cultural, and societal fields.

Indian apparently void re-launch of its Look East policy confirms one more time that India needs to redefine its foreign policy. When the Look East policy was originally designed in the 1990s, it was primarily focused on Southeast Asia. Today, it seems it has been extended to include South



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Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Australia. Arguing that these countries are important for India in economic, political, and cultural terms, New Delhi believes that “a strong relationship with [them] will provide a concrete base for [India] to shape an Asian security architecture”.⁶ Although Dr. D Suba Chandram believes that “towards achieving the above objectives, India’s Look East 3.0 should use the ‘Indo-Pacific’ as its own pivot towards the Asia-Pacific”⁷, this paper questions whether India is ready to commit to such an over-stretched and ambitious plan. Further, a few elements confirm that for many Asian countries it remains hard to see India as a regional power they can count on.

It should be recognized that New Delhi relations with some Far-East Asian countries are improving. Moreover, due to its current economic and financial problems, it could be particularly useful for India to better integrate into the cross-border production and trade networks in Asia. However, this is not sufficient to state that India is ready to implement its Look East Policy 3.0 dream of transforming the country into a reliable regional stabilizer.

As far as Japan is concerned, although the bilateral relationship between Tokyo and New Delhi has been recently improving, and although a “sizable chunk of Japan \$954 billion foreign exchange reserves are expected to come to India by way of investments in the coming years”, it is not realistic to assume that Japanese companies will soon start shifting factories from China to India⁸. There are over 80,000 Japanese companies doing business in China, and only 900 in India. This difference depends of what the two countries have to offer, and the current gap is enough to prove that it is too early to imagine that a massive shift may occur.

Regarding Southeast Asia, since ASEAN economies today are more important for Indian exports than North America, and Northeast Asia almost as important as the EU27, and given the precarious energy situation on the country, India will continue to hunt all possible options⁹. Therefore, the country will try to remain as active as possible in a region where some of the biggest exporters of coal (Indonesia), gas (Myanmar, Malaysia), and oil (Vietnam) are located. However, although using the stabilizer card to raise its attractiveness in the region, it is realistic to believe that India will interact with Southeast Asia only to safeguard its national and strategic interests: ensuing freedom of navigation through this region and protecting the investments it has already made in energy resources exploration.

The case of Australia is even more meaningful. China’s emergence in the region has undoubtedly pushed Canberra “to interest New Delhi in the concept of the ‘Indo-Pacific’”¹⁰. However, even though during the India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit organized in New Delhi in December 2012 the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated that “our future is inter-linked and a stable, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region is crucial for our own progress and prosperity. These is, therefore, mutual benefit in these aspects of our engagement”, the Australian delegation returned from New Delhi “with little clarity as to where India stood in terms of the Indo-Pacific and naval strategy in the region”.¹¹ Indeed, although Australia has pushed more than one time for a more visible Indian footprint, as the Prime Minister Julia Gillard decision to end the moratorium on selling uranium to India in 2011 and her visit last October confirm, it seems that the two Asian powers are procrastinating their history of false starts.

In conclusion, it is argued that “for India to be taken seriously by its neighbours, and other friends and adversaries alike, it has to be clear in its mind as to what it is and where it is headed, and

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where it wants to go – and can actually travel to. [...] Post-War global history has shown that no nation in the world had become a global power without having a secure and peaceful neighbourhood”.¹² Furthermore, Dr. Moorthy idea that “in the midst of economic re-evaluation of the self, New Delhi needs to flag a national discourse on India’s strategic priorities and goals” is completely sharable.¹³ “Has it already over-stretched its geo-strategic ambitions and goals, and has spread the available and anticipated wares this in the question for which India needs to have an open and transparent discourse, leading to attainable goals (even if in stages and phases) accompanied by the economic strength that could fund and sustain those dreams”.¹⁴ Accordingly, it seems both consistent and realistic to recommend India to focus on its neighbourhood rather than overstretching its foreign policy in areas in which New Delhi will not be able to exercise any real influence any time soon.

A study conducted by Manjari Chatterjee Miller has highlighted that two important facts dominate and shape Indian policymaking¹⁵. First, it is argued that “New Delhi’s foreign policy decision are often highly individualistic – the province of senior officials responsible for particular policy areas, not strategic planners at the top. As a result, India rarely engages in long-term thinking about its foreign policy goals, which prevents it from spelling out the role it aims to play in global affairs. Second, India foreign-policy makers are insulated from outside influences, such as think tanks, which in other countries reinforce a government’s sense of its place in the world.”¹⁶

Although it is not particularly strange that the content of the documents issued by the Ministry of External Affairs is broad and sometimes vague, the one of officers complaining that they almost never received any direction from the Government is a serious problem. Most of them lament that all along their career they never received “any direction or any paper from the foreign office to tell me what India’s long-term attitude should be toward country X”, or that “there is little or no instruction from the [prime minister’s office], even in cases of major countries. I had to take decisions based on a hunch. I sometimes got very, very broad directives.”¹⁷

If this is true, it is consistent to argue that New Delhi’s foreign policy priorities can be inferred by Ministry of External Affairs Annual Reports. The one issued in 2012-2013, for example, states that: “India’s foreign policy, rooted in the national ethos, supports the processes of national development and transformation through the furtherance of the country’s national interests. Ensuring India’s security, promoting its socio-economic development, maintaining the country’s strategic autonomy and working towards a more just global order, are integral to the policy. India aspires for a peaceful and security periphery, expanding ties with its extended neighbourhood, cordial and balanced relations with major powers and mutually beneficial partnerships with developing countries. India’s foreign policy also has a strong multilateral dimension with the country working closely with partners in international body and fora to tackle global challenges of today such as terrorism, climate change, sustainable development, energy and food security and cyber and space security. India seeks reform on international institutions to reflect the global reality of the present day world and to ensure an appropriate role for India.”¹⁸

It is a matter of fact that all these ambitious goals will remain unattended if New Delhi does not define a strategy that can be sustainable not only in terms on India political power projection, but also from an economic and financial perspective. This is the reason why it would be better not to expect too much from India right now. Although the defence budget that has been recently ap-

proved, together with the scepticism on Indian real power expressed by East Asian countries, would be enough to confirm the weakness of New Delhi's foreign projection, the country broad attitude towards foreign policy further prove that "India can be convinced to play an international role in areas where its narrow interests are at stake, but it will not respond positively to abstract calls for it to assume more global responsibility."¹⁹

If this is true and, even more important, if foreign countries understand that these are the dynamics that are currently shaping Indian foreign policy, it would be wiser for them not to count too much on New Delhi, which implies also stop considering it a potential stabilizer for the region. As far as India is concerned, instead, it would be better not to keep on promising what the country cannot keep, and focus on its own borders before committing to engage in any counterbalancing activity in East or Southeast Asia.

¹ Laxman Kumar Behera, "India's Defence Budget 2013-14: A Bumpy Road Head", *Idsa Comment*, March 4, 2013.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ D Suba Chandram, "The Indo-Pacific: India's Look East 3.0", *ICPS*, April 8, 2013.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Rajaram Panda, "Towards a New Asian Security Architecture?: India and Japan", *IPCS Issue Brief*, June 2013.

⁹ P. K. Ghosh, "Look East Policy compulsions", in *The New India Express*, February 2nd, 2013.

¹⁰ Ashok Malik, "Under China's Shadow, India Looks to Australia. India and Australia strategize on trade, energy and naval security", *YaleGlobal*, 8 February 2013.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² N Sathya Moorthy, "Re-visiting neighbourhood policy", *Observer Research Foundation*, April 10, 2013.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Manjari Chatterjee Miller, "India's Feeble Foreign Policy. A Would-Be Great Power Resists Its Own Rise", *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2013 Issue.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ India, Ministry of External Affairs, Annual Report 2012-2013. Introduction and Synopsis, p. i.

¹⁹ Manjari Chatterjee Miller, *op. cit.*



The Run-Up For The December European Council

Claudio Catalano

The Run-Up For The December European Council

An Interim Report was released on 24 July 2013 by the High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton. The Interim Report was published on the same day of the release of the European Commission Communication on European Defence and Security Sector “Towards a More Competitive and Efficient Defence and Security Sector”, that we analysed in the issue 2/2013 of the Quarterly.

The Interim Report covers the strategic/capability issues of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) while the communication covers the debate on the European Defence Industrial and Technology Base (EDTIB), thus encompassing all three topics to be discussed by the heads of state and governments in December. Moreover, the informal Defence Minister meeting of the Lithuanian European presidency took place on 5-6 September in Vilnius.

The Interim Report by the High Representative

The Interim Report starts with the description of the strategic scenario, which is in line with the literature, thus not bearing any particular innovative view on the shift of focus to the Asia-Pacific or to the blurring of external and internal security. The principle of interdependence and the notion of fragile states have been well established in the security studies for more than ten years now, and they were already included in the 2003 Solana’s EU security strategy and the 2008 update, which the Interim Report should try to innovate. The emergence of technology as a security threat is the only innovation in security threats, though its first definition as such was in the French Defence and Security White Book published in April, to which the Interim Report owes the concept. It is interesting that for the military dimension, the EU includes 5 “environments” (land, air, maritime, space and cyber). This is a concept which is very similar to the 4 domains of the Global Commons of the recent US military doctrine, which lack the “land” domain being it considered under State sovereignty. The EU put its accent on “sea” and “space” - being operation nowadays “more and more dependent on space assets” - and cyberspace, which is the “flavor of the month” of security doctrines.

The “comprehensive approach” is still in the CSDP jargon. Having been introduced by Lord Ashdown during its mandate as High Representative (both UN-mandated and EU-mandated) in Bosnia Herzegovina, to claim authority over all the UN and EU missions in the theatre and above all over the NATO SFOR mission, it was a way to fill the gaps of the chain of command created by the

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Dayton Agreement. NATO tried to utilize it in Afghanistan to coordinate all international missions in the country, but this kind of initiatives do work only when you find the right person to implement these, such as Lord Ashdown in Bosnia Herzegovina. So after a few years, NATO abandoned this concept which has never been very clear to the practitioners, nor the academics.

The EU utilises the “comprehensive approach” more like an “adjective” than as a concept, as it states that the “*CSDP is becoming part of a wider, more comprehensive approach*”.

More importantly, the EU states its results in international operations which we quote in full:

“thanks to the leadership of EU maritime operation Atalanta the scourge of piracy off the coast of Somalia has been drastically reduced; thanks to the training provided by EUTM Somalia to 3000 Somali recruits and the EU funding of AMISOM, security in Somalia has greatly improved. EUPOL Afghanistan has trained up to 5,000 Afghan police officers, and EULEX Kosovo plays a key role

in accompanying implementation of the recent Belgrade-Pristina agreement. In the Sahel, the Union is deploying a military mission (EUTM Mali) and a civilian mission (EUCAP Niger Sahel), both of which contribute to stabilizing the region. The impact of CSDP has raised interest among many partners (the US, Asia, Middle-East,...). In short, the EU has become an effective security provider, and is increasingly being recognized as such.”

However, the EU recognizes its strengths but also its weaknesses in particular on the lack of a long-term vision; on the decision-making of operations; on Member States’ contribution to missions both in troops and in funding and in particular in force generation; and the very well-known shortfalls in capabilities and finances.

A longstanding concept which underlines the fundamentals of European construction, as it was in the lines of Jean Monnet’s declarations and in De Gasperi’s speeches is that: “*The security of Europe has been a historic prerequisite for its economic welfare; we now need to avoid that Europe’s economic difficulties affect its capacity to maintain its own security.*” A statement which brings us directly from Post-second world war to the financial crisis.

The Interim Report also includes proposals for the CSDP which are regrouped under three clusters, the first dealing with effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP; the second on capabilities and the third on EDTIB. The third cluster mainly builds on the Commission’s communication on Defence industry. These three clusters have been mandated by the European Council for its discussions at the December meeting.

Therefore, the Interim Report contains mainly the EU institution official views for discussion at the December Council. There are 12 proposed actions for the three clusters.

For the first cluster, the EU proposes to:

1. Further develop the comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, crisis management and stabilisation
2. Improve CSDP visibility
3. Respond to upcoming security challenges (‘networked security’)
4. Increase our ability to address the challenges at our borders
5. Allow for deployment of the right assets, timely and effectively on the whole spectrum of crisis management operations
6. Increase the focus on conflict prevention and post conflict management

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For the second cluster, to improve capabilities:

7. Allow for systematic and more long term European defence cooperation
8. Focus on delivering key capabilities
9. Facilitate synergies between bilateral, sub-regional, European and multilateral initiatives
10. Civilian capabilities

For the third cluster, to improve EDTIB:

11. Making a more integrated, sustainable, innovative and competitive EDTIB a Reality
12. Stimulate synergies between civilian and defence R&T

These are proposals which the High Representative has left for the Member States to discuss and to implement.

As a conclusion, the Interim Report quotes a statement asking for more “*political will from the very top*”. So if anything happens we know where to look for.

The informal Defence Ministers meeting in Vilnius

On 5–6 September 2013, an informal EU Defence Ministers meeting took place in Vilnius, being it one of the key preparatory phases of the run-up to the December European Council. For this reason this was supposed to address possible recommendations for the discussion on defence issues at the December Council.

The meeting was chaired by Baroness Ashton, and 21 delegations of the 28 Member States were led by their Defence Ministers. The event was also attended by European Commissioner for the Internal Market and Services Michel Barnier; the Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) General Patrick de Rousiers, Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency Claude-France Arnould, General Sir Richard Shirreff Operation Commander of EUFOR ALTHEA and Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) and the commanders of the EU operations ATALANTA, and training missions (EUTM) in Somalia and Mali. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen was also invited to attend the event and to meet bilaterally some of the Defence Ministers. As in the EU Council tradition, at the margins of the Defence ministerial, the delegations will have bilateral and multilateral meetings. On 6 September, Prof. Mario Mauro, Italian Minister of Defence, met with the Lithuanian Minister of National Defence Juozas Olekas.

Lithuanian presidency had prepared plenty of proposals on cyber and energy security, and NATO–EU dialogue and partnerships. Two documents provided the basis for discussions in Vilnius. The first was the Interim Report. The second document was the Commission communication on Defence Industry.

The informal Defence Ministers meeting also addressed issues of EU military operations, EU security partnerships the strengthening of which is one of Lithuania’s priorities of the EU Presidency.

The Lithuanian Minister of Defence, Juozas Olekas, in particular focused the meeting on the re-launch of Battle Groups (BG) for the operations; he also stressed the importance of increasing military energy efficiency in the light of the fact that energy consumption accounts for the major

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part of defence budgets and increased cost of military operations.

Mr. Olekas welcomed the emphasis which the Interim Report placed on the need to have a debate on the changing EU's strategic context:

“I would compare strategic guidelines to GPS: navigation system maps should be updated constantly along with changing environment, otherwise they would lead to wrong directions. And I therefore think that commitment by the European Council to begin updating of the current strategic guidelines would be just be in time”.

The EU Security Strategy which is currently in force was developed ten years ago and updated five years ago therefore it needs a new update. Another concept on which the CSDP insist is that of the EU as a security provider. When expressing the hope that the appropriate attention would be paid to EU's relations with partner countries at the European Council in December, Mr. Olekas said that *“The deterioration of the situation in our Southern neighbourhood clearly shows that the EU needs to enhance its role as a security provider. More active engagement of partners to the Common Security and Defence Policy should therefore be one of the solutions”.*

At the EU Defence Ministers session on European Defence Industry, Mr Olekas put forward the plans to engage Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in European Commission support programmes, thus giving them better conditions to anchor in the markets of European and international defence industries.

The Key outcome of the Lithuanian presidency in Defence issues was the decision that the upcoming European Council should also address the future of BGs. The BGs have been left a part to die for a long time, since their declaration of Full Operational Capability in 2005. Problems of financing and above all the lack of an efficient decision-making system to quickly authorize the force generation for a BG and its sending into the area of operations were the main obstacles to the BG project.

Multinational units are useful for force generation. For example, the Italian-Spanish amphibious brigade has been on call as BG, and Lithuania and Poland engaged Ukraine in creating trilateral brigade LITPOLUKRBRIG, which could be used as a part of BG or NATO NRF force. NATO NRF is a competitor for BGs though no one has really seen further concept development since their creation.

Mr Olekas said that: *“We would like to get a strong political message in December to update the current level of ambition and commitment to use EU Battlegroups... We propose to use EU Battlegroups in a more flexible way by using, for instance, only some part of the group in line with a crisis scenario”.*

In case of activation, the EUBG will be ready for deployment on the ground within 5–10 days to carry out humanitarian and rescue tasks, conflict prevention and peacekeeping, combat forces in crisis management; joint disarmament, military advice and assistance tasks, post conflict stabilisation.

In Vilnius, on 5 September, during a separate meeting at margins of the informal Defence Meeting, the Defence Ministers of the five countries (United Kingdom, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Sweden), which currently contribute the military personnel to the 2000-strong BG on standby since 1 July, met to discuss how to use this EU rapid response capability in a more efficient way. Lithuania suggests promoting a more flexible use and extended standby periods of the BGs (BGs

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are now on roaster for 6 months), thus reducing training-related costs and proposes a more equal burden sharing related to the EU BGs' activation among the EU members. According to Mr. Olekas, when addressing an emerging crisis, the BGs being a multinational entity should represent the whole of the EU rather than individual interests of the participating countries. In that context Ministries of Defence of Lithuania and the United Kingdom will hold a seminar on the EU BG efficiency in London on 14–15 October.

Another goal of the Lithuanian presidency was Energy security and in particular Energy efficiency in the military. Mr. Olekas underscored the support from his counterparts to the Commission's proposed actions to apply more measures to enhance energy efficiency in the field of defence which is traditionally the major energy consumer, as outlined in the Commission's communication and the Task Force on Defence Industry and Market non-paper published last year.

Speaking at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on 5 September, Mr. Olekas said:

“Our armed forces are among the largest energy consumers in Europe. The combined electricity demand of the armed forces of Member States is equal to that of a medium sized EU country. In addition, energy supply is an Achilles heel of military operations.

Therefore, we should look at the impact of energy consumption on defence budgets and military effectiveness and develop a comprehensive energy efficiency strategy for our armed forces.

We need solid political guidance which is consistent with and complementary to both the EU energy objectives and the ongoing discussion of the role of foreign policy in supporting EU energy policy.”

Lithuanian Defence Minister also said at the informal meeting:

“I am sure it would help promote the so called green approach including more extensive use of renewable resources for military purposes and to use more extensively renewable resources and diminish the negative impact on the environment.”

Energy is a key issue for the EU as expressed in the Commission's communication, and Energy security is one of Lithuania's Presidency priorities, with a particular emphasis on military energy efficiency, as Lithuania inaugurated on 6 September the NATO Energy Security Centre in Vilnius. This is why when on 6 September, in a meeting with NATO Secretary General Rasmussen, the Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Linas Linkevičius, stated *“let's begin with practical work, let's strengthen the EU-NATO cooperation through Centres of Excellence and other projects.”*

Estonia holds the NATO centre of excellence on Cyber security, this explains why Cyber and Energy security are key issues for Baltic Republics.

Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and CSDP

The informal defence ministerial meeting came along with the Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the CSDP, which took place at the Lithuanian Parliament (Seima).

The Inter-Parliamentary Conference is a new form of parliamentary cooperation which includes the discussion on the CSDP issues and parliamentary supervision of CSDP. The EU parliaments convened it in Warsaw on 19-21 April 2012, thus replacing previously existing forms of cooperation such as the Conference of Foreign Affairs Committee Chairpersons (COFACC) of the par-

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liaments and meetings of the Chairman of the Defence Committees.

In the framework of the parliamentary dimension of the Lithuanian Presidency, the Inter-Parliamentary Conference placed primary focus on the relevant EU strategies and priorities, the promotion of democratic values, EU-NATO cooperation, and Eastern Partnership.

A keynote issue was delivered by Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, who stressed that security and well-being were indivisible:

“And that is why I firmly believe that the signing of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine as well as the initialling of agreements with Moldova and Georgia at the Vilnius Summit this coming November would not only advance closer trade and economic relations, but would contribute to building a European continent that is secure, stable and prosperous. It would also reaffirm the credibility of Europe”.

She underlined that in the 21st century we could no longer discuss only conventional threats:

“The conflicts that are taking place in the world today have many sides to them – with information, environmental, energy, humanitarian, and religious aspects among many others. If we want peace, stability and prosperity, we cannot ignore any of these aspects. We must stand ready to deal with crises caused by the use of chemical weapons, water shortage and cyber attacks”.

She observed that it was necessary to find common agreement to address the highly complicated causes of modern conflicts.

The speaker of the Seimas, Vydas Gedvilas, stated that even though peace had been dominating the greater part of Europe for nearly seven decades while relations between the countries had been based on law and mutual trust, other regions of the world, unfortunately, face quite a different reality:

“Recent developments in North Africa and the Middle East serve once again as a reminder to us of how important it is to have an effective common foreign and security policy, seeking to contribute to peace, stability, democracy, human rights and the spread of common social and economic progress in this region that is of crucial strategic importance for us”.

In his opinion, EU Eastern partners also need effective engagement of the EU. They are still stuck in geopolitical crossroads and they could make use of the EU strategic support in making key historical choices:

“I am certain that only a strong, integrated and effective EU external policy can contribute to positive changes in North Africa or the Middle East at this historically crucial and difficult period of time. I also hope that we will manage to reach a common position on key issues related to the Eastern neighbours while our efforts will be crowned with success at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius this November”

Mr Olekas delivered a speech at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on 5 September, in which he stressed that:

“Over the last ten years EU security and defence policy has matured. Progress has been fast - we have deployed 29 missions and operations. However, if you put that into the context of global politics, the EU is still a very modest crisis management actor.... What we are lacking is a political vision on further European defence integration. We look to Heads of State and Government in December to provide the leadership and guidelines we all

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need in our daily work.”

The NATO-EU relation are also an important issue in EU defence, on which Lithuania, and all the Baltic Republics put a special emphasis:

“Attention should also be given to the issue of EU cooperation with the US and NATO. Strong transatlantic partnership remains essential for Europe in terms of security and defence. The need for closer cooperation between EU and NATO has been articulated a number of times. We need to make it happen, by ensuring active security dialogue as well as further strengthening coordination in capability building and operational activities”.

Regarding the role of the European Commission, indirectly commenting the EDTIB communication, Mr. Olekas said:

“European Commission is consolidating its role in creating a competitive and efficient European defence market. In addition it is also becoming a very important player in ensuring comprehensive EU action in such domains as energy, cyber and space, and by possibly facilitating multilateral defence cooperation. This is a shift which could have major implications for European defence. We very much welcome the added value the European Commission brings to the defence sector.”

According to Mr. Olekas, the December European Council will be an opportunity to commit to a number of European Flagship projects, such as Air-to-Air refueling, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, satellite communications and cyber defence. These are some of the longstanding CSDP capability gaps, which have so far made the European Defence less and less credible.

The Lithuanian Presidency will bring the revised version of the Interim Report revised when delivering concrete proposals at the December European Council. Last time European Heads of State and Government held a discussion on defence matters was five years ago. The December European Council will be the first meeting focusing exclusively on defence issues.

In Vilnius, the debates regarded mainly the institutional development with the Syria crisis been left a part, to be named only in the Interparliamentarian debate. Only issues related to the Northern neighborhood have been at the centre of the debate.

However, there are still unfinished business which are to be addressed. Another chance will be the seminar on energy security to be held on 12-13 September in Vilnius, and the seminar on the efficiency of the EU BGs, which will take place in London on 14–15 October 2013.

Key security threats such as energy security and energy efficiency or cyber security are to find a solution in the next few months, but for other issues such as the BGs an easy solution – and above all an efficient solution - is not in sight. Though a declaration on BGs may be inked in December, this will not solve the problem of EU rapid military intervention in crisis management, which is now 14-years old.



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A “new wave” of terrorism? Reflections on Philippines’ security after the “siege of Zamboanga”

Stefano Felician Beccari

During the first days of September a fierce fight between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and some insurgents of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has shaken the city of Zamboanga, one of the biggest in the Philippines. This confrontation lasted more than two weeks, and has been one of the most dangerous terrorist attacks of the last years. The “Zamboanga crisis” has shown the capacity and the ruthlessness of the terrorist groups in the Southern Philippines. This region of the archipelago, and especially the island of Mindanao, is an area traditionally known for the struggle between Manila’s government and many terrorist and separatist groups. Some of them exploit the Islamic identity of the local population and the poverty of the region to gain independence from Manila. The last clash between separatists and authorities has brought to the international attention the advanced skills of a “new wave” of terrorism: how does it affect the Philippines’ security?

Separatism and insurgencies in the Philippines: identifying the threat

During the 20th century and in the first decade of the 21st separatism, political terrorism and insurgencies have been a constant thorn in the side of the Philippines’ rulers. Since the time of the foreign domination (first Spain and then USA), many formal or informal armed groups have reacted against the central government exploiting political or religious motivations. Today the main areas of insurgency in the Philippines can be roughly divided in two spheres: politico-revolutionary activities and separatism. The “National Security Policy 2011-2016” of the Philippines’ Government classifies the two phenomena as “communist insurgency” and “separatist movement”. The “communist insurgency” mainly refers to a left-wing political group, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and especially to its armed wing, the New People’s Army or NPA. Since the end of the Sixties and according to the Maoist principles of “people’s war”, CPP-NPA has carried out many attacks and aggressions against both military and civilian targets. The last ambush against AFP took place on May 2013, when a NPA commando attacked a truck of the Filipino elite unit “Special Action Force”, killing six soldiers. After nearly 45 years of guerrilla tactics and clashes with the security forces, a political solutions is still far, and the NPA is listed as a terrorist organization both in the US and the EU. But maybe the most problematic threat concerns the second sphere, the ethnic-religious insurgency or “separatist movement”, which is mainly concentrated in Mindanao, an island in the south of the country. According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the



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island is <<a outpost in the predominantly Philippines>>. Here the religious confrontation dates back to Spanish colonial era. Some local populations embraced Islam long before the arrival of the Spanish colonizers, and still today they call themselves “Moro”, a Spanish word that means “Muslim”. This Islamic minority in the south has a long history of difficult relations with the ruling power of the Philippines. These tensions and instability are still present today. After the end of the US colonization (1946) the Moros tried to establish a separate state, but they were not successful. Mindanao became part of the Philippines, and soon (again?) the relations with Manila turned sour. During the Sixties the growing discontent of the Islamic minority in Mindanao led to the creation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), founded by its leader Nur Misuari in 1969. The aim of the group was the full independence from the government, an unacceptable request for Filipino dictator of the time, Ferdinand Marcos. Soon MNLF began to use guerrilla tactics and armed violence against Manila’s authorities. The situation began to change in 1987, when the Filipino President Corazon Aquino negotiated a cease-fire with Nur Misuari, which led to the creation of an autonomous region (Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao or ARMM) with its own elected Governor and unicameral Regional Assembly. But the establishment of the ARMM and some other agreements between the two parts have not been decisive to stop the violence, as the last siege of Zamboanga shows. During the Seventies and after the first round of talks with the authorities (“Tripoli agreement”, 1976) MNLF had an internal split between “hawks” and “doves”. In 1977 the hardliner faction left, and founded the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) with the initial aim to avoid negotiations with the central government. During the years the MILF has changed its position. Despite its more radical approach, since the end of the 1990s it was involved in some peace talks with Manila’s officers. But after many attempts and cease-fire (the last round of talks concluded the 20th of September 2013) a definitive agreement with MILF forces still lacks. For many years MILF and MNLF have been the most relevant separatist groups, but their leadership today is challenged by two other “new” movements, Abu Sayyaf (AS) and Jemaah Islamyah (JI), both listed as “terrorist organization” by the US Department of State “Foreign terrorist organization list”. AS and JI can be considered the “second generation” of separatist groups. They are known to be particularly dangerous due to a long record of attacks and aggressions. Abu Sayyaf is considered one of the most aggressive Filipino separatist organizations, which pursues its goals (Moro’s region independence) through <<kidnappings for ransom, bombings, beheadings, assassinations, and extortion>> (US Department of State). Manila’s authorities does not consider AS a political counterpart, and the group is more focused on terrorist and violent actions than on political strategies. Despite its small size (nearly 200-400 members according to the Council on Foreign Relations), in the last years AS has carried out many attacks also against US citizens. Jemaah Islamyah is a transnational terrorist organization << that seeks the establishment of an Islamic caliphate spanning Indonesia, Malaysia, southern Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, and the southern Philippines>> (US Department of State). JI received worldwide notoriety after the bloody Bali bombing (2002) which killed nearly 200 people. The organization is mainly active in Indonesia, but, according to an Australian intelligence report <<despite disruption efforts by Indonesian authorities and their regional counterparts, JI continues to exist as a functional terrorist organisation>>. JI has established some cells also in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao; in 2012 AFP units claimed to have killed two important JI officers active in the country. JI is supposed to

have some ties with MILF and other Filipino separatist organizations as well as with Al-Qaeda.

The siege of Zamboanga and the role of MNLF

After the creation of the MNLF and the other organizations Manila faced a long confrontation in the South against the attacks of the separatist groups. Bombings, kidnappings, murders and other violent actions have been a common *leitmotiv* despite some agreements and cease-fire negotiated with various groups. In 2012 there have been five major terrorist attacks (US Department of State) which have killed nearly sixty people. But during the month of September 2013 in the populous city of Zamboanga, in Mindanao island, there has been an extraordinary confrontation between the AFP and MNLF militants. The so called “Zamboanga crisis” or “siege” has paralysed the city for more than two weeks and has shocked the whole country. The morning of the 9th September 2013 nearly 200 armed men of the MNLF, using some boats, landed in Zamboanga and headed to the city hall. Their idea was to raise a flag of the “Bangsamoro Republik”, the name they use to call the ARMM region. But this attempt was unsuccessful, therefore the rebels seized four *barangays* (neighborhoods) and held nearly 100 citizens as hostages. This action marked the beginning of a long standoff that lasted until the 28th September. When the 10th September the Filipino police and the AFP blocked the city, they realize how serious the situation was. MNLF rebels, equipped with mortars, RPGs and some snipers forced Manila’s units to a tough urban guerrilla. When the negotiations for a cease-fire between the parts failed (13-15 September), the government decided to re-conquer the city launching a joint air-land operation. While helicopters and light aircrafts hit the rebels’ positions, the Filipino Army, supported by armoured vehicles and mortar units, began to recapture the single neighborhoods. The clashes set on fire various buildings and many citizens were forced to escape. Only after twenty days the authorities were able to completely defeat the separatists and reconquer all the sized districts. The results of the siege are impressive. During the clashes 126 rebels and fifteen soldiers and policemen have died, while more than 100.000 citizens are currently displaced in some “refugee camps” set outside the city and in schools or sport facilities. 10.000 houses have been destroyed, and the economy of Zamboanga has been seriously hit. Now the government has to face the difficult path of reconstruction, the recovery of local economy, the humanitarian emergency and its implications, especially the risk of possible diseases among the population due to the poor health conditions. The recovery process will take time and will be very expensive. But the effects of the Zamboanga siege will also affect the national security of the Philippines.

The effect of terrorism on the Philippines’ security: three open questions

After the end of the crisis is time to reflect on some questions about its implications and about the possible effects on Manila’s national security, both on the internal and the international level.

First: what are the direct consequences of the “Zamboanga crisis”? The answer involves both the MNLF and the Filipino authorities. For the MNLF the siege has been unsuccessful on the tactical level. It was obvious that 200 men had few possibilities to survive against an offensive made by a regular army: but conquering the city was not MNLF’s target. From a strategic point of view the opinions are different. MNLF units have demonstrated to be a tough rival for the AFP, which needed more than two weeks to “clean” the city from the insurgents. It means that the current



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MNLF military capabilities, training and resources are relevant and efficient. But the majority of Zamboanga's populations is Christian, not Muslim, and therefore the results of the siege could increase the anger of the inhabitants against the local Islamic community and hamper further pacification efforts: according to many experts, this strategy could be one of the main aims of the MNLF. In the last year the first separatist group has lost his primacy in favour of the MILF, whose leaders are currently negotiating an agreement with the government. This agreement could further enlarge the autonomy of the ARMM, leading to the establishment of a future "Bangsamoro region" that will replace the ARMM. This result could be an important political success for the MILF, and could diminish MNLF political weight. Therefore, the siege of Zamboanga has sent a political message both to the MILF than to Manila's authorities: there cannot be a political solution in Mindanao without the involvement of Nur Misuari's followers. The siege of Zamboanga will also have a deep impact on the Filipino security and defence forces. The military of the Philippines, one of the weakest in Asia, should seriously reflect in the aftermath of the crisis. It seems that Manila's intelligence had been informed in advance about a possible action by some insurgents, but AFP were not able to prevent the attack. Despite the weakness or the errors of the government's forces and the toughness of the siege, the crisis of Zamboanga is not the first episode and it probably will not be the last during the long confrontation between insurgents/separatists and the authorities. After nearly forty years of internal threats the country has developed a certain degree of sturdiness. It is possible that some political parties or the AFP will ask for a stronger position against the separatist groups, but the siege of Zamboanga will not have a radical political impact on the Philippines. The country is a young Asian democracy, therefore a return to authoritarian or military rule is unlikely. The second and the third questions concern the Filipino security, both on the internal level then considering the international role of the country. On the internal level (second question) the siege of Zamboanga has shown how the threat of domestic terrorism is still present and it must not be underestimated. In order to stop a possible "new wave" of attacks some options should be considered, involving many levels of action. The first is the ability to patrol the waters that surrounds Mindanao. Today the maritime control is weak, therefore one of the main priorities for the AFP (especially the Navy and the Coast Guard) is to enforce the maritime surveillance. A stronger presence in domestic waters, new naval assets (the future acquisition of former US Coast Guard "Hamilton class" cutters) and some agreements with the neighbour countries (Indonesia and Malaysia) could help to complicate the infiltration or the escape of the separatists. Second, on the island of Mindanao the Filipino civil police and the AFP should increase their control on training areas or "sanctuaries" of the various separatist groups. This requires more surveillance capabilities (for instance, the use of drones), intelligence but also a more effective training in counterinsurgency operations. The US military assistance, already active in the Philippines, could help to increase the tactics of the AFP in this field. Due to many splits and factions, the current situation of the separatists groups is quite fragmented, therefore it is important to monitor closely the existing groups to avoid future "spin-offs" of new – and maybe more aggressive – separatist organizations. Third, the government should continue its efforts to find a political solution (a definitive agreement or at least a stable and real cease-fire) but also it should support the development of the local economy. As an article of "the Economist" said in 2000, <<force will not solve [the Philippines'] problems in the south>>: today Mindanao, and especially the ARMM is still a poor area, despite its

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natural resources and its strategic position near the growing economies of Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. But future investments require stable security conditions to be effective, therefore Manila's authorities should first have a full control of the region: many observers still say that some areas of the island are "lawless". The third and last question is how this "new wave" of terrorism can influence Manila's foreign policy and its relations with its neighbours. A new escalation of separatism in Mindanao might lead to a focus on internal affairs, diverting the government's attention from the South China Sea issue and weakening Manila's claims in the disputed waters (mainly Scarborough Reef and Spratly Islands). Another important aspect of the future Filipino foreign policy is the coordination of counterinsurgency strategies with neighbour states. Some terrorist organizations, like Jemaah Islamiyah, are active in many South-East Asian countries, therefore a combined effort in this field is necessary, as well as the strengthening of the partnership with the United States. Even if Washington closed in 1992 its last military base in the Philippines and despite the 1951 *Mutual Defence Treaty* between Washington and Manila does not cover domestic terrorism, the US is still a strategic partner to provide training to the AFP troops and especially some new naval units to the Filipino Navy.

The crisis of Zamboanga has clearly demonstrated how a definitive agreement to stop the violence in the Philippines is still difficult to achieve. It is now time to plan a comprehensive answer that should concentrate its efforts on three axes: a tighter control of the internal situation (sharing AFP, police and intelligence expertise) and of the network of terrorist groups (to avoid other "spectacular" attacks), a comprehensive political agreement involving all the stakeholders and a package of economic and social reforms to cut separatists' support in Mindanao. While developing these actions, Manila should not forget the other important challenge, the disputes on South China Sea: it is now necessary to find a balance between internal threats and foreign policy.

¹ <<China will also be the strongest Asian military power, by a considerable margin. Its military modernization will be increasingly characterized by the development of power projection capabilities. A major power of China's stature can be expected to develop a globally significant military capability befitting its size. But the pace, scope and structure of China's military modernization have the potential to give its neighbours cause for concern if not carefully explained, and if China does not reach out to others to build confidence regarding its military plans>>, *Australia White Defence Paper 2009*, §4.26, p. 34 .



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The China's Central Asian dimension

Lorena Di Placido

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, China launched a renewed deal with Central Asia both by the extensive Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR - Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region), offshoot western China in Central Asia, and by renewed bi-and multilateral relations with the establishment of the post Soviet republics. It is important to develop the Xinjiang region also because it could act as a further driving factor to strengthening and developing China's economy as a whole.

For the official historiography those lands have been the ancestral seat of the nationalities of China and the same rule over Xinjiang (ie control over the western borders) begun as early as 60 BC, to mark (with a rhetoric vein) a continuity of Chinese control and domination¹.

Actually, in many respects that area appears rather an integral part of the Central Asian space itself, ie the cultural, social, linguistic and religious basin that unites the Turkic peoples of Central Asia to the Uyghurs, with whom they share language, religion and ancient nomadic traditions. The Uyghurs are a native population of the river Orkon valley, in Mongolia, which in the eighth century founded an empire extended up to the Ferghana Valley (an area currently shared among Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). When in 840 a.C. the Kyrgyz tribes from the north forced to flee the Uyghur population, they moved to the current regions of Gansu and Qinghai, on the border with Tibet, and in the Tarim Basin (Uyghurs already conquered those areas in the 800). The land - later defined as East Turkestan - became the Uyghurs real domain, who established the summer and winter kings' residences respectively in the current capital Urumqi and in the oasis of Turfan. Their culture was grafted on the local Turks, Iranians and the first Chinese peoples, all engaged in the trade that developed along the Silk Road. Later, with the spread of Islam, which took place after the death of Genghis Khan (1227) which ended the Mongol domination, the fate of the Uyghurs came to be tied with that of his successor Chagatai. Within the kingdom Uyghurs offered an important contribution in the state apparatus as directors. Meanwhile, the jumble of people belonging to different ethnic groups professing Nestorianism, Buddhism, Manichaeism and practicing forms of shamanism found internal consistency and unity gradually converting to Islam².

In 1759 the Qing Dynasty conquered the area of the Tarim Basin, determined to establish the ultimate control over a territory under constant looting and pillaging by the nomads who moved between the northern Xinjiang, Siberia and Mongolia. At this point begins the migration of Han, the dominant ethnic group in China, and for the first time Xinjiang takes its name, which means, pre-

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cisely, "new territories", as there was established a local government integrated with the imperial one. While maintaining some degree of autonomy, Uyghurs were laying the groundwork for a check of the suburbs that had much in common with the politics of nationality adopted in the Soviet Union. According to some scholars, the ultimate goal was the definition and "crystallization" of Uyghur identity, as well as the control of the culture tended to "break the Uyghur religious and cultural homogeneity with the Turkic peoples beyond the borders of China. After 1965, the vehicle for a decisive consolidation of colonization was the so-called "development campaign in the west": due to the construction of roads, railways and infrastructure, the migration was done on a voluntary basis, thanks to the greater freedom of movement and to the best prospects to gain social prestige. The Uyghurs living in the region generally considered themselves free of ethnic identity, but were deeply tied to the oasis where they lived. Instead of minimizing the difficulties, this push by China to assimilate them, has strengthened their ethnic identity as Uyghur and tied them even more to the entire territory of Xinjiang, not just their traditional oasis. Currently the Uyghur are one of the 56 ethnic groups officially recognized by the Chinese government: although there is uncertainty about the numbers we can reasonably assume that 8 million reside at home and 3 million abroad³. Overall, Xinjiang is inhabited by about 20 million individuals belonging to 47 different ethnic groups, including Han, Kazak, Hui, Mongolian, Kyrgyz, Xibe, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Daur, Tatar and Russian⁴.

In particular, the presence of Kyrgyz, Tajik, Kazakh and Mongolian minorities makes Xinjiang the fourth largest concentration of Turks in the world, after Turkey (Turkish 53.6 million), Iran (35 million Azeris) and Uzbekistan (23 million Uzbeks)⁵. This concentration of alien minorities (similar to those of the contiguous neo independent republics) other than the dominant ethnic Chinese, made the Beijing government particularly sensitive about possible claims of independence, inspired by the experience of other central-Asian ethnic Turks populations⁶, or from the memory of the short lived experience of autonomy from Xinjiang in the forties of the last century under the name of Republic of East Turkestan⁷.

The possible result of extremist Xinjiang is a major concern in Beijing and is made more acute by the proximity of overall weak state realities that could potentially fall prey to instability easily exploitable. From the Chinese point of view the Xinjiang could be a rather effective tool for the insertion of China in the Central Asian environment providing stability to its western frontier and develop a stimulus to the economic growth of the region: the current state of backwardness could serve as a driving force in the growing need for energy resources thus developing an economic push. Besides the energy resources located in Xinjiang, this region represents the gateway to the pipeline from the west (Caspian Sea and Central Asia). Over time, this awareness has enlivened the debate within Uyghur organizations who aspired to independence, divided between moderate autonomists and separatists in favor of violent actions. In recent years there have been committed numerous terrorist acts that have caused the death of many individuals and the destruction of state-owned assets. Periodic attacks of local police stations or in symbolic places of Xinjiang keep the tension high and bring to light Uighur resentment towards the authorities in Beijing. Resentment that although severely repressed, is still very much alive. Branded generically as separatist terrorism, the phenomenon that crosses the Xinjiang is certainly far more multifaceted and articulated than how it is made to appear by the official propaganda. However, after September 11, 2001, in

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the wake of the global campaign against terrorism, all the dissident groups have fallen under the generic name of "Islamic terrorist groups" and, as such, internationally condemned and persecuted. We cannot know the number of adherents to these Islamic extremist organizations, but some believe that more and more are gaining the favor of the younger generation⁸. Beyond these speculations, periodic violence that run through the region mean that the presence of the security forces remains high, in a stigmatized situation of apparent calm. In recent years, there have been moments of particular gravity, in July 2009 and 2011 and in February 2012, confirming a latent instability and continued smoldering under the forcible control of the central authorities. On 5 July 2009, in Urumqi, there were demonstrations against the killing of Uyghur workers took place in a toy factory in Guandong, a south-western region of China, as a result of a clash between Han and Uyghurs. It is difficult to determine how, but the protest has degenerated, giving rise to violence, a real urban warfare, and security forces have intervened decisively. As a result, there were nearly 200 deaths and 1,000 arrests and trials were held in the following autumn even some death or life imprisonment sentences were given out⁹. After a period of relative calm, new clashes in July 18-20 2011 in Kashgar and Hotan, dozens among Uighurs and Han have died. A new element was inserted in the facts of 2011, as China claimed that the bombers of Kashgar had been trained in tribal areas of Pakistan, a good ally of Beijing. Often news circulate of continuous movements of suspicious people across the common boundary with Xinjiang and, above all, the use of a certain type of explosive in Kashgar have confirmed the worst Chinese fears. Beijing has even asked to be able to open its own military bases either in the Pakistani province of Khyber Pakhtunkhawa or in the Federal administrated Tribal Areas (FATA), in order to operate directly in the places where terrorists active in Xinjiang are trained. Already in 2009 there had been evidence of ETIM activity in Pakistan, as in a letter delivered to the Chinese embassy in Islamabad terrorists threatened to kidnap the diplomatic and consular personnel. Informed by Beijing, the Pakistani authorities proceeded to arrest and extradite 10 suspected ETIM militants to China, provoking the reaction of NGOs and human rights activists. Some bilateral agreements have been concluded in the next few months to facilitate management practices and transfer of terrorists arrested in Pakistan. For China, dislocating its men on foreign territory would be an absolute novelty¹⁰, a radical choice aimed to protect the safety of Xinjiang which constitutes, together with Tibet, a huge concern for Beijing authorities.

In conclusion, the case of the Uyghurs could be exposed as an example of people involved into a separatist ethnic fight with the State in which it is incorporated. Subsequently, this people has been presented to the international opinion as a pure Islamic terrorist group and, as such, it has been severely persecuted in the wake of the global anti-terrorism campaign promoted by the United States. The instrumental choice of China to assimilate the aspirations of an ethnic group of Islamic religion as international terrorism has had the paradoxical effect of pushing the until then non-violent fringes of independence movements toward the armed struggle organized by radical jihadist groups with international ramifications.

For the People's Republic of China Xinjiang is not only a part of its territory for a very long time, but also the possibility to open new opportunities for development westward. It is also a spacious and sparsely populated land, which has been used for nuclear testing and military exercises, as well as significant reservoir of numerous natural resources. The commitment in the fight against



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Islamic terrorism as an instrument of national separatism (that threatens Xinjiang directly and can constitute a menace also for the safety of the whole country) is specifically intended to neutralize all subversive forces, potential disturbing factors in the exploitation of the region.

In addition, being the gateway to the pipeline from the Caspian Sea, the Xinjiang itself is a possible source of energy supply, certainly minor, but not negligible. In the early nineties, the Chinese authorities decided to encourage the overall development of the region by establishing special economic zones, subsidizing cotton farmers and revising the tax system. At the same time, infrastructure projects have been launched, such as the Tarim Desert Highway and new railway lines, which connect the Xinjiang with the rest of the country. More generally, these initiatives can be fit into the campaign initiated by Beijing already in the early fifties of the XX century to "open the West" and "go west" in order to create the conditions for the exploitation of natural resources to allow the Xinjiang to alleviate widespread poverty and become itself engine for a new phase of China's development¹¹. The growing employment opportunities have attracted a great deal of migrant workers, mostly ethnic Han, who altered the demographic balance of Xinjiang in favor of the latter group, as well as changing the physical appearance of the major urban centers, subject to forced modernization and a wild construction of new buildings that does not save from destruction the historical centers of the oldest cities, Urumqi and Kashgar.

According to a report by the U.S. Congress in 2007¹², the Chinese government would be involved in encouraging the migration of workers from all over China to Xinjiang in order to recruit talent and ensure stability. Since the days of the Celestial Empire, China has promoted the settlement of Han in the suburbs for the purpose of integration, although the official reasons are pointing to the economic development and the conduct of population policies. The growing influence of Han has fueled strong discontent among Uyghurs, especially with respect to the hoarding of best jobs, control of resources and access to land and water

The main economic pillar of Xinjiang is energy resources, which are estimated to account for more 25% of China's oil, 30% gas and 40% coal. The Beijing authorities have announced the opening in 2010 of 139 large and small coal mines, with plans to extract 100 million tons, after 67.7 in 2008 and 80 in 2009. In addition, thanks to the "West-East Gas Pipeline", four thousand kilometers long, the oil of the Tarim Basin goes to replenish the area of the Yangtze Delta, in China far east. The opening of new pipelines would have allowed the partial liberation from dependence on coal, which is widely used for the production of electricity, thanks to many fossil fuel plants. With a capacity of 17 billion cubic meters per year and the possible construction of extensions and detours to reach more destinations¹³, the WEPG has been an example of how the West mature fruits can be shared for all of China.

On 14 December 2009 a huge gas pipeline from Turkmenistan was inaugurated reaching the heart of China, entering from Xinjiang. It is an enormous enterprise that will supply gas to China for the next 30 years, carrying 40 billion cubic meters of gas per year from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. In 2009, the Chinese state oil company CNPC has also announced that it will invest \$30 billion in Xinjiang and for the extraction of oil and gas for the construction of refining plants.

The second pillar of the economy of the region is agriculture, which is based on a reliable system of irrigation, and produces mainly cotton, on an area of 1.53 million hectares.

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In spite of the historical and cultural heritage of the land of the Uyghurs, tourism is not developed and the only resource used in this sense is constituted by the sky resort of Kanas.

With US\$2800 per capita GDP, the Xinjiang ranks 15th place among the 31 administrative units of the Chinese territory¹⁴.

It remains to define the amount of reserves of precious metals such as gold, and determine if so much wealth can play a role in the current development of the region or the possibility that it will bring new impetus in the already industrialized areas of China¹⁵.

Above and beyond what is possessed by its westernmost region, however, Xinjiang is the gateway to Central Asian energy resources, which greatly affect China pervaded by an extremely lively industrial production. For this reason, the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism, border security, regional stability, joint actions of economic development, the establishment of friendly relations with the Central Asian Republics are a prerequisite for regional security. Moreover, keeping Central Asian Republics away from the influence hostile countries or military alliances also helps China in its own security and development.

For its part, China provides Central Asian partners with commercial, infrastructure investments and, as a basic condition of mutual benefit, the commitment to the maintenance of regional stability, mostly through Shanghai Cooperation Organization¹⁶.

¹ M. Clarke-C. Clarke-C. Mackerras by Mackerras (ed.), op. cit.

² C. Mutti, *Between the Empire and The Uighur separatism*, Eurasia Review, September 2006,

³ A. Cappelletti, *The Uyghurs in Xinjiang: political processes and disagreement between China and Central Asia*, ISPI Analysis, n9 April 2010

⁴ 2010 www.ispionline.it <http://www.xinjiang.gov.cn/10018/10008/00015/2005/22699.htm>

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⁵ Uyghur minorities are present in varying degrees in all the five Central Asian Republics. The largest group resides in Kazakhstan, where, according to the 1999 census, the Uyghurs are more than two hundred thousand, or approximately 1,4% of the population (out of approximately 15 million individuals), mostly concentrated in the south, in Almaty region (the old capital) and in Almaty itself, representing the seventh group for consistency after Kazakhs, Russians, Ukrainians, Uzbeks, Germans, and Tatars. Cultural infrastructure of the Uyghur are present and active, with 64 schools (3 of which have only Uyghur pupils), 31 theaters, music venues, university training for Uighur teachers, television and radio programs. According to official data of 1999, the Uyghurs in Kyrgyzstan are about 47 thousand residents (out of a total population of 7 million), located in two distinct regions, one in the north (about 33,200) and one in the south of the country. A minority group is living in the Fergana Valley between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In the Soviet period, there were no cultural institutions in the Uyghur area of Kyrgyzstan, but, benefiting from the interconnection favored by the normal relations between the different components of the Soviet Union, the local community was still tied to Uyghurs from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The establishment of the current Central Asian republics in 1991 has failed for the Uyghurs the possibility to move and to maintain relations with the other Uyghur communities. Over the years cultural spaces for the Uyghurs have been opened at the University of Bishkek and some associations were founded. In Uzbekistan, the Uyghurs are currently living in the Fergana Valley (Andijan region) and in the Tashkent region. In the Valley, the Uyghurs have undergone a process of assimilation to the Uzbek majority, which has fostered relationships and integration between similar ethnic groups, albeit with some forcing due to the campaign of "uzbekization" practiced by the government to facilitate social cohesion around the dominant group and majority. On the other hand, already in the Soviet period the assimilation of the Uyghur in Uzbekistan was very strong and highlighted by the widespread of bilingualism, which has led to an almost total loss of the use of the Uyghur language in the everyday life. Although Uzbek President Islam Karimov has declared that there are no Uyghurs in Uzbekistan (in order to avoid problems with China, an increasingly important strategic partner) a 1989 census shows that even before the end of the USSR Uyghurs in Uzbekistan were about 23 thousand, of which 14 thousand in the city of Andijan, 8 thousand in Tashkent region and in just over a thousand in the city capital itself. The smallest Uyghurs group is living in Turkmenistan and descends from 272 families who migrated in 1890, settling in Bailam-Ali. Here the assimilation process has been facilitated by low population growth. The Uyghurs of Turkmenistan are the most isolated among those living in the Central Asian republics and, therefore, those that mostly have easily lost original language and culture. In Tajikistan there are Uyghur communities living in the capital, Dushanbe, where there is also an association.

⁶M. Burles, *Chinese Policy Toward Russia and the Central Asian Republics*, www.rand.org/publications

⁷ The term "East Turkistan" was originally used by Russians and Europeans in the early eighteenth century to designate the region of Xinjiang in western China. The simultaneous movement of the "East Turkistan" originated in the twentieth century. In 1933 and 1944 two East Turkestan Republics were established in Xinjiang, both had a very short life. These events belong to the first period of activity of the movement of the "East Turkistan". The contemporary separatists who use that name aspire to an "East Turkistan" independence and were sometimes violent, using terrorist actions.

⁸ Gr. Fuller, SF Starr, *The Xinjiang Problem*, 2003 www.cacianalyst.org

⁹ www.asianews.it, 14/10/2009

¹⁰ A. Mir, *Uyghur Militants Threaten Sino-Pak Ties*, www.asiatimes.com, 10/08/2011

¹¹ In March 2008, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao emphasized the "harmonious development" of Xinjiang in the Report on the Work of the Government, March 5, 2008, available at: www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008npc/2008-03/19/content_6549177.htm

¹² Congressional Executive Commission on China, www.cecc.gov

¹³ RM Cutler, *Xinjiang: the access to energy for China*, July 15, 2009, www.medarabnews.com



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¹⁴ D. Gosset, *Beyond the "Great Game" stereotype, the "Zhang Qian's*

¹⁵ In more recent years economic relations between China and Pakistan are intensifying, based on the foreseeable development of Xinjiang. For further information you can see *Sino-Pak Relations and Xinjiang: Writings of Pakistani Scholars*, Khalid Rahman and Rashida Hameed, in "Politic Perspectives", Volume 6, Number 2, July-December 2009, available on www.ips.org.pk/pakistanaffairs/security-a-foreign-policy/1082.html

¹⁶ Z. Huasheng, *Kitaj, Tsentral'naija Azija the Shanhajskaja Organizatsija Sotrudnicestva*, Moskovsky Zentr Karnegi, Rabocie Materialy, No. 5, 2005



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Lucio Martino

Beyond the 2010 START: the Obama Administration between Disarmament and Budgetary Problems

In recent weeks, the attention of the Obama Administration has turned once again to the future of nuclear arsenals. Speaking in Berlin almost exactly fifty years after his predecessor Kennedy's momentous address to the then divided city, President Barack Obama declared that climate change is the global threat of our time, and proclaimed that the effort to slow it required bold action. However, the speech included a major pledge to move toward nuclear disarmament. Taken all together, the statements made by President Obama during his trip to Germany, and the release of a new strategic document intended to establish criteria for the use of nuclear weapons, seem to herald a new round of negotiations aimed at reducing the role and the number of such weapons and, therefore, to put into question the modernization programs of the entire U.S. Strategic Triad.

President Obama has publicly traced a path intended to pursue, with renewed emphasis, the demise of a strategic posture still congruent with the logic of a Cold War drifting ever further into the past. To this extent, President Obama identified the need to take three additional steps in what remains of his second term: The first one is a new agreement with the Russian Federation to reduce the total number of nuclear weapons; The second is another international summit on nuclear safety to be held in Washington; The third is a treaty banning nuclear weapons testing and the production of fissile material. As a result, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of 2010 (START 2010), far from being a point of arrival, seems now, more than ever, a starting point from which to advance the pursuit of the global nuclear disarmament proposed by President Obama in Spring 2009.

As stated by President Obama, this time not anymore in Prague like four years ago but just few steps away from the Brandenburg Gate, his administration will seek to reduce the number of strategic nuclear weapons deployed by the United States and the Russian Federation by more than a third. The numerical strength of the two countries' arsenals, in that case, is expected to fall from the fifteen hundred warheads envisaged by START 2010 to just over a thousand. To prevent some radioactive material from falling into the hands of a terrorist organization or a rogue state, the Obama administration has promised to host the 2016 Fourth World Conference for Nuclear Safety. When added to the Third Conference for Nuclear Safety, scheduled to take place the following year in the Netherlands, this fourth initiative would "de facto" institutionalize the conference on biannual basis. Furthermore, the Obama administration intends to negotiate a new international agreement aimed at ending the production of fissile material for military use. To this extent, the problems to overcome are many, because such an agreement is impossible without overcoming the objections expressed by countries like Pakistan, and without convincing the Congress to ratify

a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the like of which was already rejected nearly fifteen years ago.

The Nuclear Weapons Guidance 2013

President Obama's intervention coincides with his administration's release of a document meant to guide the Department of Defense's choices in the field of nuclear weapons. The Obama Administration's goal is to line up the U.S. military planning with the contents of the last Nuclear Posture Review (NPR 2010). According to the NPR 2010, the use of any nuclear weapon must be taken into account only under extreme circumstances, and always with the sole purpose of defending vital interests of the United States, its Allies, and partners. Interaction between the NPR 2010 and the Nuclear Weapons Guidance 2013 (NWG 2013) would supposedly crystallize into a strategy for strengthening deterrence, reassuring Allies and partners, and laying the foundation for a new negotiating process with the Russian Federation. This strategy would, in theory, decrease significantly the dimensions of their strategic and non-strategic nuclear arsenals.

Russian government sources reiterated the extent to which the country's future negotiating availability will depend on the direction taken by U.S. ballistic missile defense, and subsequently addressed the potential impact of implementing Obama's suggested reductions from a broader viewpoint. If implemented, these sources asserted, the reductions would effectively make the respective nuclear capabilities comparable with those of the other nuclear powers, implying a direct involvement of these other nuclear powers in any future disarmament process.

Saving money, but how much and where?

Within the United States, the speech in Berlin this summer was met with acclaim and criticism in almost equal measure, but it has quickly led to a resolute stance. Signed by twenty-four Republican senators, that stance stipulates that each new reduction of the United States nuclear arsenal should be undertaken only through an international agreement which, precisely as such, is necessarily subject to the consent of the Senate. Behind the move lies an obvious concern that the Obama Administration will ultimately concede to those who argue for justifying, within the framework set by START 2010, a further reduction in the number of nuclear warheads deployed by both sides. Another common worry among Republicans is that President Obama would one day choose to repeat the path of unilateral reductions enforced twenty years ago by the Administration of Bush the elder.

On the other hand, also within the Senate, Republicans and Democrats alike realize the inherent risk in linking any future changes in their country's strategic nuclear arsenal to a similar modification in Russia. In doing so, the United States would endow Russian authorities with a kind of veto power over a set of decisions that could lighten a Federal spending often wasted on sustaining an expensive array of weapon systems exceeded by the times. However, the whole debate seems to show that in the United States, and in many ways in the Russian Federation, not many are convinced of the need to modernize strategic nuclear forces. Unsurprising, given the way to achieve the modernization would be by investing scarce resources in a range of indisputably expensive, strategically unnecessary, and potentially destabilizing programs.

The commitment with which the Obama administration continues to push for further reductions

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of nuclear forces respond to a twofold set of reasons. First, there is the strong desire to make a mark, to make history, and to cancel what remains of the old nuclear risk. Then, there is a strong desire to take any action possible that could shrink the Federal deficit. To rephrase, the Obama administration is doing its best to take advantage of the opportunities granted by the circumstances of today.

At this moment in history, the Department of Defense is poised to make a slew of decisions, both large and small, establishing the qualitative and quantitative parameters of their nuclear delivery means for decades to come. In this, the Obama administration is far from isolated. They are neither few nor marginal voices, inside and outside of the current administration contrary to U.S. Navy planning of a fleet of twelve new nuclear ballistic missile submarine expected to cost over three hundred billion dollars, to the U.S. Air Force development of a new long-range bomber worth at least another seventy billion dollars and the creation of a new generation of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) whose cost is still almost impossible to forecast. Not to mention the ten billion needed to extend the operating life, and bringing to the standard "-12", of something like four hundred non-strategic B61 bombs, half of which could in the meantime lose its bases in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Given that the Obama Administration has always promised to work on this field in concert with the Allies, the outcome of the Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR) delivered by the Atlantic Alliance last year, in tying the fate of the American non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe to that of the Russian sub-strategic nuclear weapons, seems to complicate things further. So far it seems really difficult to decide the steps to take to overcome the difficulties that have arisen in this particular area. The only to date result of the DDPR is a strong and widespread impression of strategic rigidity. The Allies do not seem to be able to walk the path indicated by the Obama administration and to leave behind them an arsenal of a couple of hundred nuclear bombs that to be used requires the consent of all twenty-eight member countries of the Atlantic Alliance. Each year, the United States spends nearly thirty billion dollars to sustain a nuclear arsenal in the order of five thousand warheads, including strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed. Given that, apart from the Russian Federation, the only conceivable opponent with a credible long-range nuclear capability is a China that according to the Department of Defense has no more than a sixty ICBM, the temptation to reduce both the size, as capabilities, of the U.S. nuclear arsenal is really hard to resist in this age of economical crisis.

At the top of the list of the weapon systems that could be scaled down is the number, and type, of SSBN that will remain in service for the foreseeable future. Despite resistance by the U.S. Navy, a fleet of only eight new generation SSBN, compared to today's fourteen and to the expected twelve, seems to ensure the transportation of the same number of strategic nuclear warheads envisaged by the 2010 START and allow the saving of a couple of billion dollars a year.

Other economies could be achieved indefinitely by postponing the implementation of a new long-range nuclear bomber for the U.S. Air Force. The U.S. Air Force's need for that bomber does not seem exactly urgent, given its intention to continue, for the next three decades, deploying a fleet of sixty strategic bombers made up of one third B-2As and two-thirds of the much older B-52Hs. Yet more savings are possible by consolidating the number of deployed ICBMs from four hundred



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to three hundred, and keeping operational the current force of Minuteman III ICBM until 2075. Finally, the extension of the operational life of the remaining in Europe B61 nuclear bombs could simply be postponed, waiting for the launch of some diplomatic initiative set on their retirement. The problem is that the B61s seem potentially able to divide the Atlantic Alliance as perhaps nothing else today. For many old Allies, the Russian Federation is not by any means a threat but a valuable asset and the B61s are just something useless to be withdrawn soon from their territory, if not from the entire European continent. For many of the new Allies, instead, the Russian Federation continues to be a not insignificant concern, and the B61s deployed in Europe serve as a symbol of the commitment of the United States to their defense.

Negotiation prospects

In this difficult context, hypothetical negotiations with the Russian Federation on this type of weapon are complicated by Moscow's critical intent to maintaining a brand of non-strategic nuclear capability aimed at deterring Beijing from any military adventurism in the eastern suburbs of its continental platform. Strange as it may seem, one of the crisis scenarios of crisis ventilated in recent times comprises precisely that of a future conflict between the Russian Federation and China, following Beijing's attempts to obtain direct access to the resources of the Arctic Ocean. From any point of view, the fate of non-strategic nuclear weapons is a much more multifaceted and complex affair than that of the future of strategic nuclear weapons. The kind of stalemate resulting in the work of DDPR seems to leave the Obama administration no other possibilities than to engage in some unusual negotiating formula involving the Chinese authorities in addition to the Russians; or else, to bravely return to unilateral reductions typical of the early Nineties. In this case, the Obama Administration could eventually agree with the Putin government on a parallel, symmetric reduction in the number of warheads as well as in the number of strategic delivery deployed by the two countries, bypassing, in this way, the Congress.

Despite appearances, the impact of a new round of nuclear disarmament that will consolidate a mere thousand units the number of strategic warheads available to the two great nuclear powers would be more modest even than it seems at first sight. A one-third reduction of operationally deployed warheads would meet the original American proposal of four years ago, at the beginning of the negotiations of the START 2010. At that time, both parties agreed on a ceiling of one thousand five hundred warheads and seven hundred strategic delivery systems, mainly because of the willingness of the Obama administration to close a politically important deal as soon as possible. In the present international circumstances, with the credibility of the concept of nuclear deterrence in obvious crisis, the debate about what should be the size of the U.S. strategic arsenal seems to call for quantitative and qualitative decreases in the forces. Especially notable is the position taken in April 2012 by the current Secretary of Defense Hagel, according to whom the United States should deploy only four hundred strategic nuclear warheads. Therefore, it seems very likely that in the coming months President Obama will intensify his efforts to explain why reductions in strategic arsenals even greater than those established by the 2010 START are in the interest of the United States and the Russian Federation. In doing so, such an important part of his political vision would probably face at least some skepticism from his country's core alliance. Much will depend on how the Obama Administration will be able to frame, within a single large and complex strategic



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vision, the various policies implemented so far, in an attempt to protect its values and interests, and the Federal Budget.

In this context, it is particularly important that the NWG 2013, contrary to the provisions of the NPR 2010, recognizes the possibility of the launch of a massive nuclear attack as very unlikely, and, therefore, suggested that the Department of Defense explores new solutions in order to reduce the number of nuclear weapons ready to be launched at any given moment. Nevertheless, not even the NWG 2013 seems completely immune from those old strategic logics that the Obama Administration wants to leave behind forever. There is strong evidence to forecast that the U.S. strategic arsenal, instead of embracing the concept of "minimum deterrence strategy," will continue to develop the vast nuclear capabilities necessary for a "Counter Force" strategy, aimed at balancing the nuclear capabilities of any potential opponent rather than move toward relatively smaller capabilities suitable within the context of a "Counter Value" strategy.



Afghanistan: electoral processes and security concerns

Claudio Bertolotti

News about energy and infrastructures

Talks on the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project are in progress, even though Pakistan refused to participate to the quadrilateral held on 22 August as a result of the escalation of violence along the Line of Control. The meeting coincided with the visit to India by representatives of the US State Department and Chevron (interested in investing in the TAPI) to discuss issues regarding the TAPI project.

At the moment, Islamabad is left with two options:

1. either dropping the IP pipeline project or getting the support of large international stakeholder (as China);
2. starting to take shape as China is keen on linking the IP pipeline with the touted 2,000 km-long Kashgar-Gwadar transport corridor.

It is not excluded that China and Pakistan will sign a Memorandum of Understanding to develop the Kashgar-Gwadar corridor that some sources say will include the IP gas pipeline.

At the same time, the main Amu Darya basin oil extraction project (result of a joint venture between the China National Petroleum Corporation and Afghanistan's Watan Oil and Gas) has been halted in northern Afghanistan due to the lack of a transit agreement for the extracted product. The extraction of oil began last October without a transit agreement with the Uzbek government. Jalil Jumriany, Policy Director at the Ministry of Mines, affirmed that talks are underway for an agreement with the Uzbek government.

The Herat main airport would be reconstructed with financial support from Italy and Spain. The comprehensive renovation of Herat International Airport is expected to cost four/seven million dollars, but the contract is not yet solidified.

Governor Wahidi said that he already talked with officials from the Italian Embassy; Italian Prime Minister, Enrico Letta, confirmed that Italy would support the airport's reconstruction.

Spanish officials have also agreed to cooperate with Italy in the airport reconstruction.

The Herat International Airport, regardless of its name, does not support international flights. It is only a hub for daily flights to and from Kabul.

The electoral process is ongoing: real concerns about the Afghan ability to deliver on its election promises.

Following the examination reported on *CeMiSS Quarterly Summer n. 2/2013*, according to the

Afghan Independent Election Commission (IEC), the candidates interested to participate to the Afghan presidential election running (planned in April 2014) are required to register between 16 September and 06 October. Although (at 8th of September) no party has yet formally announced names of presidential nominees, several names of potential contenders have emerged. These include:

- Umer Daudzai, an ethnic Pashtun, currently Afghan ambassador to Pakistan.
- Abdullah Abdullah (who ran against President Karzai in the 2009 presidential election), former Afghan foreign minister and current chief of the National Coalition of Afghanistan party.

Abdul Rasool Sayyaf, former *Mujahedeen* commander and at present chief of Islamic Dawah Organization of Afghanistan.

Several local sources reported President Karzai urged Afghan political parties to support Sayyaf. Karzai didn't confirm his support to Karzai.

Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) would field a presidential candidate if their demands were endorsed. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the party, offered the Kabul government a two-point proposal for his group's participation in the 2014 presidential election:

- a complete pull out of foreign troops and
- vote transparency.

What is important to underline is that while HIA's participation is welcomed but, more important, it is the Taliban (Mullah Omar's group) that need to be co-opted. In April, President Karzai affirmed that Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar could officially run for the presidency next year on the condition that the group broke ties with al-Qaeda and renounced violence; but in August Mullah Omar himself stated he will not participate to electoral competition.

Finally, it is reported a limited participation of women in the election process, (*Pajhwok*). The main issues restraining women participation include lack of access to remote areas due to weather constraints, an insufficient number of mobile voter registration centers, and the presence of armed opposition groups discouraging residents from obtaining voter cards.

Security viewpoint

Afghan President Hamid Karzai met the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif over the stalled peace process. Karzai urged Pakistan to facilitate peace talks by providing opportunities for contacts between the Taliban and the Afghan High Peace Council. Sharif assured Karzai of Pakistan's support for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan, a peace process that – according to Pakistan recommendations – has to be inclusive, Afghan-owned and Afghan-led. However it is uncertain whether Sharif wields sufficient influence to convince the Taliban to discuss with Afghan President Karzai. During the visit, President Karzai also requested the release of high-ranking Taliban detainees held in Pakistan who might act as interlocutors in the peace negotiations, as Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar (detained in Karachi in 2010).

In addition, Islamabad and Washington are weighing the option of shifting the Taliban's political

office from Qatar to another country in a bid to revive the stalled reconciliation process in Afghanistan. The option came under discussion during US Secretary of State John Kerry's recent visit to Islamabad, where the two sides explored a variety of ways of breaking the deadlock in peace negotiations.

Furthermore, Afghanistan's second Vice President Mohammad Karim Khalili visited India with a high level ministerial delegation on 20 August in order to discuss security related issues as the NATO troop withdrawal draw near. The meeting was mainly focused on enhanced military cooperation. Afghan army and police officers are trained in Indian academies and India is planning to supply Afghanistan with vehicles and helicopters.

President Karzai has created a new team of high-profile negotiators in order to solve the stalled negotiations between Afghanistan and US. The new negotiation committee, consisting of the president's national security adviser Rangin Dadfar Spanta, former Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and Foreign Minister Zalmay Rasul, is expected to facilitate the process toward an agreement. The new team of negotiators will discuss role, shape and legal status of US military forces and civilian trainers in post-2014 mission.

A recent increase in the activities of militants from Central Asia, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), in northern Afghanistan indicates that they intend to take advantage of the security vacuum that may ensue post-2014. The magnitude of recent insurgents attacks in northern Afghanistan shows an effort to gain a country-wide presence ahead of the drawdown of NATO forces. Central Asian militants fit into this setting as experienced and trusted allies for the Taliban who have some affinity to Tajik and Uzbek communities in the area.

Latest news (on August), in brief:

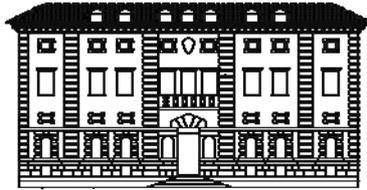
- Ghazni, Kandahar, Wardak and Zabol: provincial governors met to discuss improvements to one of the most volatile parts of Afghanistan's highway system, the Kabul-Kandahar highway.
- Herat province: local authorities reported that clashes between the security forces and Taliban militants on the Kandahar-Herat highway killed at least 83 people including eleven security forces and 72 militants.
- Farah province: a bomb exploded in near a vehicle carrying the provincial commander of the National Directorate of Security (NDS) Abdul Samada, killing and wounding civilian people and security personnel.

Brief analysis

Infrastructural reconstruction and strategic projects are slowly in progress, due to lack in security. Regionally speaking, Pakistan could be not able to contrast the Afghan Taliban offensive and it is not sure a constructive role of Islamabad as facilitator in peace talks process.

In brief, security agreement between Afghanistan and the United States will be defined and signed but it could have consequences merely on political dynamics.

In general, the security situation in Afghanistan is worsening because of the Nato withdrawal. It is assessed that in a short-term violence, criminality and insurgents activity will increase further.



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