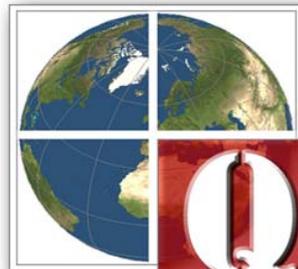


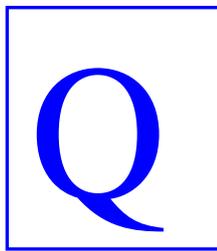


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## Middle East - Persian Gulf



### **Political tensions in Iran, clashes in Syria and in Yemen**

Nicola Pedde

*In the Islamic Republic of Iran the confrontation between the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and the President, Mahmood Ahmadinejad, aroused clearly. The removal of the Minister for the Intelligence, Moslehi by the President last May, has been the casus belli that reveals evident political contrasts between the two political figures of the country. In Syria Bashar al-Assad has to face a crisis supported by a series of facts that are potentially contrary to any solution. In Yemen, after five months since the beginning of the revolts, there is any glimmer of solution stopping the clashes.*

#### **Iran**

The event of the removal of the Minister for the Intelligence trigger off charges against President Ahmadinejad, giving some troubles to the executive power, headed by the President himself. Faithful to the fundamentalist alignment near the Guide, Moslehi has been reinstated by an act issued by Khamenei. Further, the strange and unprecedented absence of Ahmadinejad for five days from the political arena has been perceived by many as an attempt to find a solution to the serious crisis, even if without further exacerbate the mood of the heterogeneous and restless Iranian politics.

The issue risen around the charge of the Minister of the Intelligence, who has been dismissed again by the president, however, has only represented an excuse, useful to trigger a mechanism of crisis, that has been harbored within the Guide's entourage. Today the Iranian political scene is essentially dominated by the conservatives, with a more and more mild external opposition, the so-called "green movement", that groups together a heterogeneous whole of moderate conservative forces, the remains of the reformist movement and some minority vanguards of mixed inspiration.

The conservatives, who dominate the parliamentary and institutional context are affected by deep differences from within, and can be broadly divided into three main groups. The first one is those of fundamentalist conservatives, that is probably the most numerous, and it is oriented to the pursuit of a policy close to the basic principles of revolutionary and Khomeini's thought.

Although further divided into subgroups and internal factions, this macro-component perceived the Guide (although it recognizes the limits and especially differences with his predecessor Khomeini) as the institutional point of reference and the referee of a complex political and religious system.

The second group is the one of pragmatic conservatives, historically related to the positions of the Ayatollah Rafsanjani, and marked by moderately innovative positions on the international role of the country, its economic opening and, above all, the need to normalize relations with the United States.

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The third group is that one of the radicals, although the name could deceive someone, not representing fully the nature and the positions of those which for various reasons gather around the figure of President Ahmadinejad. The word "radical" has been given to them by political dissidents inside Iran and many Western observers, reducing the movement loyal to the President to a simple image of a gang of reactionary politicians, particularly aggressive in conducting their own political agenda.

On the other side, those who call themselves "principalists", they have positions quite different between each other, and especially in contrast with those of previous politics' generations, which are considered essentially corrupt and unfit to govern modern Iran. The principalists are at a very large extent an expression of post-revolutionary third generation, with a political background built on assumptions completely different from those of their predecessors. Most of their decision board comes from the ranks of the IRGC, (the military flank of the complex world of Pasdaran), or of the intelligence, that has gradually established a network of alliances and synergies that is totally different from the one of previous conservatives generations.

The principalists are, in short, the younger element of the process of generational replacement that since about a decade affects every aspect of political, economic and social country life. Radicals have been so defined primarily because of their attitude towards the current Iranian political class, who is openly opposed and which they accuse of corruption and lack of vision.

The principalists are no longer scared by the interaction with the regional neighbor, because they are aware of Iranian role in the region - especially after 2001 events and even more after the removal by the United States of two of their most dangerous regional enemies, the 'Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Taliban's Afghanistan - and they intend to promote every possible action to impose the acknowledgement of the country as a key player for regional stability and security.

Unlike the fundamentalists, they do not see the opening to USA an insidious ideological threat to young Iranians, but they seek to obtain a normalization of dignity and not subject to Israeli interests. Using aggressive rhetoric, full of metaphors, such as that of the messianic Mahdism, through which they openly attack the role of the previous generation of power, especially the Guide and his entourage. This is the reason that drove the fundamentalist conservatives on the offensive, believing that the ideological threat of the principalists has now gained strategic importance, becoming potentially dangerous for the continuity of political interests - and not least economic - of the political establishment.

When conflicts get a public dimension, most of the country's political and religious leaders, along with the military ones, confirmed their loyalty to the Guide, taking openly distance from the President and from his dangerous attitude.

Although the President could count up on a modest support until two years ago, it is unclear how this could have strengthened in recent history.

The enacted reforms, mainly in the area of subsidies, have in fact produced effects on some segments of the population - and especially on the vast public workers - probably generating a significant increase in the number of President supporters.

The implication for the future are essentially related to the choices that the President and the Guide will want to take in the near future, opting for an increase in conflict and - almost certainly - for an open and direct political confrontation, or by choosing the path of trying to mediate, finding a mechanism to exit from crisis and safety led the government to the next presidential elections of 2013.

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### **Syria's uncertain balance and Bashar al-Assad's unknown future**

In the eighties Hafez al-Assad ordered the armed forces to enter the villages where Muslim Brotherhood organized the first stage of a revolt against the Alawite regime. At that time Bashar al-Assad's father has had at least three favorable facts. The first one was the special and weak balance deriving from the Cold War, which required the maintenance of compact blocks at any cost. The second one was the almost total absence of media, and, above all, social media with their widespread broadcast. The third and last one was rather of social nature, close connected to a low awareness by Arab masses of their role, especially, political role, that only few times erupted in rebellions or revolts.

On the contrary, today Bashar al-Assad has to face a crisis supported by a series of facts that are potentially contrary to any solution.

Since the beginning, in late February, getting worse in April and May, Syrian crisis has been reported day by day by international media, due to the unceasing flow of information, data and images from the country. The younger generations of Syrian society, especially in areas affected by the protests and crackdown by the increasing activities of military forces and police have been able to collect and transmit outside the country a steady stream of information that the international press has raised and disseminated widely. Furthermore the increase of economic crisis and the unemployment rate push Syrian citizen to manifest and the refugees to run away to the border of the country.

Report says that by mid-June the clashes caused about 1300 died among demonstrators and military forces. Nevertheless, if compared with those generated by the Hafez al-Assad's repression in the Eighties, it is about 5%, but this time it has been broadcasted immediately by the media. This information flow led to the total condemnation by the International Community. At the moment President al-Assad can no longer ignore IC position, which requires constant strategic measures in order to hold down the crisis, especially those concerning the employment of military forces.

At international level, however, the Syrian crisis represents a particular element of risk, both to regional stability and, more general, to global balance, which has already a weak stability. The USA and Europe look with particular concern to the Syrian crisis, because they acknowledge well the destabilizing potential of an eventual collapse of the system and its impact on the region. Although historically evident suspicion and veiled hostility characterized Syria's relations with the USA and Western countries, the fear for the collapse of the Alawite regime is now considered greater despite the ambiguous and controversial Syria's role in the region. Consequently this attitude needs to adopt a cautious and waiting stance, even in relation to the increasingly pressing demands for an explicit condemnation by the UN of the violence on rebels.

At the same time, especially in Western public opinion, the clear and specific criticism towards the different approach to the Syrian crisis compared to the Libyan one doesn't seem to get stopped. The critical position notes that it has been deliberately chosen not to intervene on Syrian crisis, even in terms of sanctions, in order to assure the maintenance of the regime and prevent the collapse of the country.

However the fall of the regime remains a concrete possibility, especially in relation with the armed forces loyalty to the regime. Rumors report, indeed, that there has been numerous desertion and many armed units refused to execute orders against the protesters, by foreshadow an increasing and widespread sense of hostility to the institutions within military system. If

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continued, this behaviour would lead to an acceleration of the crisis process, and consequently to a quick fall of the regime.

### **Yemen**

After five months since the beginning of the revolts, there is any glimmer of solution stopping the clashes in Yemen. The attack on the presidential palace last June 3<sup>rd</sup>, which resulted in the wounding of President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his subsequent transfer to Saudi Arabia, has not had the effect that the opposition, but not exclusively it, wanted.

The clashes between loyalists and opponents to the regime within the country attest the tension that has always harbored the ashes after the unification of North Yemen and South Yemen in 1990. The country has had also to deal with the tensions arising from being considered a haven for international terrorism, and the growing discontent of the population.

In late May, however, tensions have been exacerbated by foreshadow the outbreak of civil war. President Saleh, in fact, declined for the third consecutive time to sign an agreement proposed by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which called for a rotation at the apex of power. Not surprisingly, Saleh is accused of killing hundreds of civilians following the violent repression adopted to put down the clashes.

To earn immunity, Saleh would have to appoint a prime minister, coming from the ranks of the opposition, which would then lead the country in the path of transition, first, and new presidential elections, then. There is no clear position on the reasons that led the GCC to act as an intermediary. Formed as a sort of economic union, the organization includes the Sunni monarchies of the Persian Gulf, which Yemen does not belong. Probably, considering the new structure of regional influences (i.e. Iran) and the possible threat of street demonstrations in the wake of Arab spring in North Africa, the GCC has found it necessary to ensure the area's safety. A transition agreement would undoubtedly have prevented the situation from degenerating. What regional actors fear -primarily Saudi Arabia - is that a sudden upheaval of the Yemeni status quo could trigger a domino effect in the other Gulf monarchies. The not narrow agreement proposed by the Council prove clearly that the GCC has not intervene to support the population, rather than to ensure a convenient departure for Saleh and his entourage, which is, among other things, accused of corruption.

Saleh, in fact, has also to face a split within the army, a fringe of which, under the leadership of Commander Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, choose to support the demonstrators. The change of position of the General was the real breaking point. In fact, the attitude of Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, although, according to his words, he acted to defend the civil demonstrators, it seems, however, a real putsch against Saleh. On the other side, the President has sought to promote economic aid on the one hand, but on the other hand has not spared a violent crackdown, respecting the approach used by dictators in jeopardy. The old carrot and stick technique.

The other danger that regional and international actors fear is a greater spread of Islamic radicalism, not as ideological reasons, much as to "necessity". With the bad primacy of being the poorest country in the Arab world, with a literacy rate just over 50%, Yemen is a fertile ground for the favorable striking of militant radicalism, that everyone wants to avoid.

The stalemate of negotiations in late May gave way to violent clashes between the military and "rebels" loyal to Sadiq al-Ahmar, head of the confederation of tribes Hashid, one of the most powerful of the country. The personal competition between the two factions has significantly affected the path of negotiations, which provided for a peaceful transfer of power. This clash at the apex of power could be very dangerous for the future of the country, with an escalation of

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violence that would lead to civil war. Yemen is characterized by a tribal structure, and because of it suffers the check of the conflicting interests between different tribes. The decision of Hashid tribe to join the opposition coalition, the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), is a blow to the General People's Congress (the ruling party), for Saleh and his tribe, the Sanhan. At this time in Yemen there is a vacuum of power that worries the U.S. and the Western countries. The escape of Saleh has coincided with the beginning of an Islamist offensive across the country and, in particular, in the province of Abyen. Although there are no obvious links between this group and the al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), or other qaedist organizations, it is clear that the difficulties of Yemeni government encourage the proliferation of terrorism.

Also because of it the U.S. is continuing to use the drones and other combat aircraft to hit suspected al Qaeda militants. The number of civilian casualties and the poor results obtained, however, should lead Washington and Western allies to invest more on the transition process as the key to tackling terrorism. The situation is not, however, still clear. Only when Saleh's fate will be known it should be determine the real scope for mediation between the parties. The peculiarity of the country, in fact, requires an internal resolution of the conflict, first of all. The international intervention may be the next phase of intervention, trying to limit the role of the two majority groups in the transition, in order to avoid a civil war, while the concrete reforms would remain only in the minds of the poor.



## **The Turkish neo-Ottoman foreign policy and the Arab spring**

*Paolo Quercia*

*The third victory of Erdogan in Turkish recent political elections is something different from his previous electoral successes in 2002 and 2007. After this third term in 2011, the Islamist AKP party will be staying in power for a total of fifteen years, maintaining the control over the country in one of the most turbulent decade for the Middle East that started with 9/11 and ended up with the turmoil of the Arab spring. The new post-kemalist political era for Turkey began in 2002 with the first political victory of AKP just at the dawn of the Iraqi war, a crucial event that shaped the region's balance of power and that happened to be one of the main political driver of Turkish neo-Ottoman revival.*

In this ten year long time frame, the islamist government of Turkey had to face many and structural changes in its neighbourhood and inside Turkey as well. Among them it is worth mentioning: the decline of the geopolitical perspective of entering the EU in a reasonable time, the rupture of the strategic axis with Tel Aviv, the opening of its border with Syria, the improved tactical cooperation with Iran, the constructive approach toward Iraq's North Kurdistan, the enhanced energy cooperation with Moscow, the political "return" in the Balkans. All these geopolitical changes have been labelled by some observers as neo-Ottomanism and – more officially – they have been presented by Ankara's government as a new foreign policy focused on Turkey's near abroad and centred on Davutoglu's concept of Strategic depth. Such a policy, that has been nicknamed "zero problems with the neighbours", assumed that the first strategic goal of Turkish foreign policy is to prioritise the settlement of all its contentious issues with the neighbours (above all with Syria, Iraq and Iran) even at the expenses (in case of conflict of policy option) of other privileged relations or geopolitical priorities (Israel, US, EU and the West in general).

The start of the so called "arab spring" has dramatically changed Turkish near abroad geopolitical situation to a point that Ankara had to shift from a policy based on "zero problems with the neighbours" to a reality of "problems within the neighbours". The reaction of the third AKP government to the turmoil caused by the popular uprising in the Arab Middle East will very likely characterise the future political evolution of the third AKP government and it could differentiate its foreign policy and geopolitical posture. In this evolving geopolitical context the electoral results of 2011 represented also an important test for AKP's foreign policy pursued in the last decade.

### **The election results: confirmation and changes in the Turkish political landscape**

The first element to note regarding the political elections in Turkey is the positive evidence of the good shape of Turkish democracy in the occasion of an important electoral test, a test passed

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both in terms of transparency and efficiency of its electoral mechanism, as well as in terms of the peaceful carrying out of the electoral process and the absence of any significant challenges to the election results. Reports sent by ODHIR and OSCE, which had monitored the electoral process, recognized the elections as democratic and its results as reliable. Aside from the temporary boycott on the part of the BDP's members of parliament due to Dicle's case, the new Turkish parliament provides a wide array of political options and is probably one of the most pluralist parliaments in Turkish electoral history. For instance in this government the role of the Kurdish minority, through a series of alliances with other minority parties, succeeded in almost doubling its parliamentary representatives. According to many analysts Erdogan, sooner or later, will approach and handle more proactively the Kurdish issue, working to create a policy of inclusion in the institutional reform of independent Kurdish candidates elected in the BDP. The electoral results confirm the positive status of the Turkish democracy and the Turkish parliamentary system, disproving accusations of authoritarianism on the part of Erdogan and the AKP that have frequently come out of the media and from some Western political circles. Indeed, it now appears that those claims of "AKP putting Turkish democracy at risk" were either simply erroneous or motivated by political calculations, perhaps made to counter the increasingly assertive role Turkey is now playing on the international scene or to slowdown the process for obtaining European Union membership. During the Turkish electoral campaigns, the Economist and the Wall Street Journal were distinctly anti-AKP, openly calling upon the CHP to block Erdogan's "autocratic instincts" bent on transforming the country into an oppressed police state. The influential magazine Economist has been in the forefront of this campaign explicitly calling upon the Turks to vote against the AKP in order "to protect Turkish democracy". The fairness of the electoral process, AKP's victory, the fact that they did not arrive at the "feared" majority of two thirds, the rich composition of the Turkish parliament are all important indicators upon which the West should reflect, resisting the stereotypes of certain "reliable" international press. The first conclusion of the last political elections is that ten years of an AKP government have not reduced freedom within Turkey, but rather have probably expanded it; paradoxically this internal political result is not in contradiction with the fact that Turkey has, in that same decade, rethought and revised its relationship with the West, even re-evaluating relations with regimes and neighbouring governments that are in the West political black-list. To paraphrase a slogan in vogue in certain research centres and intellectual arenas in the United States, Turkey "might be geopolitically lost, but remains politically democratic". In this regard, one of the most important lessons learned for the West from the Turkish parliamentary elections is represented by the very confirmation of the fact that in the current international system the pro-Western alignment does not necessarily correspond with the adoption of an internal political system in line with Western style.

After the Turkish elections of June 2011, two are the primary issues: first, the effect of this election on the state of the art of democracy in the country and the potential development of an autochthonous concept of islamist-democracy different by the European liberal-democratic concept of democracy; second, the degree of alignment or eccentricity that the new Turkish government will produce in the international field and in particular in geopolitical scenarios in the Mediterranean, the Balkans and the Middle East. It will take time to learn how these two internal and external dimensions of Turkish politics will be influenced by the results of June 2011 elections. However some preliminary observations can be deduced on what has been defined as Erdogan's "Victory speech" of 12 June 2011.

**The victory speech and the consequences of the AKP's third victory on the future of Turkish foreign policy**

The victory speech that Erdogan gave on June 12<sup>th</sup> represents the first political speech of the re-elected Turkish president. In this speech there are three recurring elements worth mentioning: two internal and one international. The two internal aspects of Erdogan's speech are complementary to one another, one of which regards identity and ethnic issues in the country and the other the evolution of the democratic political system. Erdogan focuses in a few passages of his speeches on the definition of the Turkish nation, which, according to him, does not necessarily coincide with the Turkish speaking population or with the Turanian kinship, but is rather defined by the Turkish prime minister as "a nation of 74 million composed of many diverse identities, from Turks to Kurds, from Rom to Laz". The chosen multi-ethnic approach is natural for an Islamic Party, in which the common Muslim religious identity represents a stronger bond than the linguistic one; a point that the AKP has tried to utilize in the past in order to overcome, with a transnational ideology the identity borders of secularism and nationalism, i.e., the two founding points of the Kemalist state. Therefore, it is likely that in the legislature that will take shape following the June 2011 elections there will be an intensification of multiethnic and pan-Islamic agenda for the shaping of the post-Kemalist Turkish national identity, especially in the process of constitutional reform. Not by chance, one of the key passages of Erdogan's speech mentions the need to adopt a new constitution, presenting it as a multiethnic constitution that "will respond to the question of freedom, democracy, peace and justice of every single ethnic identity in Turkey". In the same words of Erdogan, this new constitution will be at the same time "the constitution of Turks, Kurds, Zaza, Arabs, Circassians, Laz, the Georgians, the Roma, the Alevis. It will be the Constitution of 74 million Turks". The message, repeated many times throughout Erdogan's speech, is that the AKP victory is a victory of inclusion for every minority and every ethnic group that lives in Turkey. At the same time, the issue of democracy is emphasized many times throughout the speech, although without any particular specificity and without the same stress that is devoted to the issue of Turkish national identity.

The third aspect of Erdogan's speech deals with geopolitical issues, and it regards what some analysts have identified as a neo-Ottoman message. If the mainstream message is one of overcoming nationalist divisions and extending the electoral victory of more than 20 million votes for the AKP to "all brothers and sisters", to all the "74 million Turks" and to all the "780,000 square kilometres", the international message aims to extend the victory beyond Turkish borders. Attention was given first of all to the Turkish diaspora and Turkish immigration, citing some of the cities where a significant Turkish community is present. Erdogan also identifies five capitals where, according to him, the population was closely following Turkish elections and participating in AKP's victory: Baghdad, Cairo, Sarajevo, Baku and Nicosia. Mentioning Iraq, Egypt, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Azerbaijan and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as countries directly involved in the Turkish elections, Erdogan traces out Turkey's primary near abroad geopolitical space. A geopolitical space that, not surprisingly, includes Northern Cyprus and Azerbaijan, stretches to a "second circle" that includes Egypt and Iraq, and draws in the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo. By virtue of the heritage of Ottoman dominion in the Balkans and the excessive sensitivity with which the Serbs (and other peoples of the region) remember Turkish domination, it is clear that having inserted a passage in his speech in which he suggests that the citizens of Sarajevo were waiting anxiously for the

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Turkish election results and the AKP victory, signals a strong message that was surely studied and wanted.

The neo-Ottoman tenor of Erdogan's speech is not by chance, and is reinforced again shortly after with a well constructed metaphor in which Erdogan states: "Believe me, today Sarajevo has won just as Istanbul has won; and Beirut has won just as Izmir has won; Gaza and the West Bank have won just as Diyarbakir has won. Today the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Balkans have won as Turkey has won". Erdogan has traced out a prioritized space of political action that is important not only for the named countries but also for the countries and capitals excluded. Reading Erdogan's speech it seems that Brussels, Washington, or Tel Aviv have not won together with AKP, nor has Teheran, Syria, nor the Turkish speaking countries of central Asia. The range of Erdogan's geopolitical compass now seems to be short, maybe shorter than what was before: it embraces only some of the countries that can be sensitive to AKP's geopolitical claims with a clear vision of segmenting, prioritizing and clusterizing the possible neo-Ottoman geopolitical space. The next five years term of AKP government will demonstrate if this post electoral vision will be confirmed and – moreover – if there will be a concrete capability to realize that vision.

### **The Libyan and Syrian crises challenge the sustainability of the Turkish neo-Ottoman policy**

With great surprise for some observers, among the countries included in the *shared Ottoman style victory* two countries were noticeably absent: Syria and Libya. More than a desired geopolitical choice the absence of Libya and Siria in the victory speech, it seems it was rather the desire to overlook the difficulties that Turkey faces in managing the crises in these two countries. Assad's violent repression in Syria has forced Erdogan to dissociate with the Syrian regime with which instead - since 2009 - many important neighbouring accords had been made, (free trade agreements, the abolition of visas, a joint strategic and security committee). After having initially maintained a pro-government stance, Erdogan was forced to abandon it due to the wave of protests that have taken place in Turkey as a response to the Syrian regime's violence against its own people in revolt. Thousands of refugees have escaped to Turkey pursued by Syrian security forces that seem to have entered into Turkish territory risking border incidents. In the case of Syria, the warming up of bilateral relations and the growing closeness with Ankara is now boomeranging after the explosion of the anti authoritarian revolt in the country. The level of openness achieved with Syria and the integration built between the two countries in the last years contributed to increase the number of refugees and produced a sensitivity and a reaction of Islamic solidarity in Turkish public opinion of which Erdogan's government cannot take note. Erdogan is forced to abandon Assad's regime and to wait on the events as they unfold. The "zero problems with the neighbours" policy (primarily based on a government to government approach) did not foresee that Turkish near abroad would have very soon experienced internal problems and that these problems could have soon been exported to Turkey. The Syrian crisis, but in general the revolts in the Arab world and in particular in Egypt, seem to contradict AKP's geopolitical vision to privilege state to state relationships with Turkey's neighbours in the former Ottoman space. This area today demonstrates its internal fragility and future regional instability in the medium term, both in the case that regime change will occur or in case of the survival of current regimes.

Also the developments in the war in Libya have contributed to produce cracks in the concept of the neo-Ottoman geopolitical space. In the Libyan crisis the Turkish position has been marginal

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and Ankara has tried to play a neutralist role, moving between its original pro-Gheddafi position to the late recognition of CNT. But, in both cases, Ankara was not able to play a relevant role neither in terms of support nor in terms of the fall of Gheddafi. At the same time, the neutralist approach didn't pay back Ankara's stand in the Libyan war in term of possible mediator since the role of neutral negotiator has been stripped by the African Union, whose relationship with the Libyan regime and Gheddafi are—from many points of view—much deeper and established than they are with Turkey. One of the problems that Erdogan's new government must deal with in the near future will be that of recalibrating its neo-Ottoman policy and Davutoglu's "strategic depth" in a near abroad that in only few months shifted from a political, economic and religious space in which to distribute Turkish soft power into a powder keg from which to escape.

## **Commonwealth of Independent States – Eastern Europe**



### **On the geo-strategic balance in Eastern Europe**

*Andrea Grazioso*

*Two decades after the end of the bipolar system, the European continent remains pivotal for the balance of global security, since this region still has the highest level of concentration of sophisticated weapon systems, although rather different from those levels reached in the past decades as a result of the accumulation of military power, uninterruptedly continued for all the decades of the Cold War.*

Over the past twenty years, first the re-deployment in the Gulf of a substantial part of U.S. military capabilities, then the drastic reduction in military budgets of NATO countries, led to a sharp decline in overall military capabilities. This process, of course, has been paralleled by the more-than-symmetrical reductions implemented by Russia and other states already part of the Soviet Union, affected by a political and economic crisis with few equals in the history.

In recent years, moreover, political attention, as far as the international security is concerned, has been focused towards the military commitments in distant theatres of operations, particularly Iraq and Afghanistan. NATO itself, upon the establishment of the New Strategic Concept, has been facing a deep dilemma, which threatened to divide the alliance: was the need to defend the member states by a direct threat to their security - threats difficult to outline, if not in the specialists' calculations - still predominant or the Euro-Atlantic Alliance had to be re-oriented to the management of global security, committing the (reduced) military capabilities toward objectives concretely perceived as priorities by the political leadership?

The results of the comparison has led to a solution that seems to harmonize, in a reasonably effective way, these two trends, but in this context, the “collective defence”, i.e. the explicit commitment between all members of NATO to assist each other in case of an armed attack against one of them, came out - if not stronger - certainly “renewed”.

The traditional collective defence against “traditional” threats of military aggression has now been widened by the concept of defence against “new” threats, either “kinetic” in nature - as represented by attacks with weapons launched from a stand-off distance, without a threat of invasion - or “non-kinetic”, as in the cyber domain.

It is in this context that current developments on the political and military decisions taken by the countries of the region must be read and, more specifically, the relationship between the Atlantic Alliance and Russia, as well as internal developments in Ukraine has to be understood.

As a matter of fact, the strategic developments in the theatre of operations where Western military forces are heavily committed should not overshadow developments - historical in their own way - recently recorded in relations between NATO and Russia.

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### **Stalemate in cooperation on missile defence**

Over the last few months, the central issue in relations between the Alliance and Russia was undoubtedly that of missile defence.

As already discussed on these pages several times in the past, missile defence program conducted by the United States, aiming ultimately to balance - or even make ineffective - the developments in the spread of ballistic weapons able to reach the continental U.S., has always led to a deep hostility from the Russian side.

Moscow does not have the technological and financial resources to pursue the United States in the development of this type of systems, and therefore aims to bind the other party, through political manoeuvring, so as to delay or prevent these developments.

In the original plans, set by the Bush administration, after the completion of the first two missile interceptor sites in Alaska and California, the United States should create a “third site” in Europe, to defend the North American continent from intercontinental missiles launched from the Persian Gulf - Iran in essence and, perhaps, from Syria - and to this end, bilateral agreements were concluded with Poland - to deploy the interceptor missile site - and the Czech Republic - to locate the tracking sensor for such missiles.

The Obama Administration conducted a review of this project, and the announcement of the cancellation of the “third site” has produced on the one hand a sudden cooling of relations with Poland, on the other led to the belief that Washington wanted above all to re-establish a partnership and strategic relationship with Moscow, and was therefore ready to sacrifice this segment of the anti-missile system, strongly opposed by Russia.

Indeed, it has rapidly emerged as the new U.S. program provided for a more cautious approach in terms of technology and financial burden, but was nevertheless aimed at complementing the architecture of missile defence, albeit over a longer time, and in compliance with the actual developments of the threat.

That's why the U.S. has set up the so-called “European Phased Adaptive Approach” (EPAA), which provides that defence architecture, between 2011 and 2020, to deploy gradually increasing anti-missile capabilities, in order to field at the end of the decade, in Romania and Poland, interceptor missile sites with similar performance of those originally envisaged in the program of the Bush era.

NATO, in turn committed to developing missile defence capabilities, albeit with a lower level of ambition, has welcomed and embraced the American project, integrating it into new missile defence architecture to protect the entire territory of the Alliance.

This step - the adoption of a program of “territorial defence” (concerning missile attacks) - has, of course, further strengthened the opposition of Russia to this program. Before these developments, the “issue” was essentially a bilateral problem, with Moscow trying to deal directly with Washington to delay or prevent the implementation of anti-missile site in Europe; now, the missile defence has also become the subject of contention between NATO and Russia. As a consequence, the NATO-Russia Council was in fact invested with this new responsibility: to try to reach a compromise solution that meets the needs of both partners.

From the beginning, however, the (at least apparently) genuine collaboration was met with a radical difference in approach as to the responsibility of the military defence on the European continent.

For NATO, especially after the already mentioned internal debate that has “renewed” commitment to collective defence, there can be no doubt that the Alliance remains primarily responsible for ensuring military security of all its members. So, having also introduced the

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“territorial missile defence” among the missions of the Alliance, the creation of a architecture able to provide even this defence capabilities cannot be delayed further.

The Russian proposal, subtly sophisticated in terms of strategic reasoning, was to create a single missile defence system, capable of defending the whole European continent. This joint system - hence under the joint control of NATO and Russia - would then be divided into two “sectors” of territorial responsibility, that is, two systems side-by-side, designed to protect two portions of Europe. NATO would have controlled the “western sector”, Russia the “eastern” one.

The particular sophistication of the Russian proposal was contained in the “detail” that, by virtue of mere questions of military effectiveness, a substantial proportion of Central and Eastern Europe, those countries already included in the Warsaw Pact and now part of NATO, was included in the sector under the control of Moscow. For reasons of geography, in fact, Russian territory, in particular the area of the North Caucasus is also ideal for hosting anti-missile systems capable of targeting missiles launched from the Middle East, and headed for the Central and Eastern Europe.

More specifically, the more the source of the threat is moved to the east, the greater the portion of the European territory optimally defended by anti-missile systems based in Russia (not surprisingly, Moscow has always maintained that the main threat comes from Pakistan and not Iran).

This Russian proposal, the so-called “sectoralisation” of missile defence in Europe, although strongly supported both at the official political level in the NATO-Russia Council and in all the informal contexts where Moscow has exerted tremendous pressures in terms of public diplomacy, has always been considered in fact “inadmissible” by the allied environments. NATO - to use an effective expression of its Secretary General - can not give in outsourcing its primary task, i.e. the military defence of its members.

The outcome of the last session of the NATO-Russia Council, held in June, probably frustrated the “politicians”, but didn’t sound as a surprise for the “technicians”.

After having discussed and approved - in the framework of the Alliance - the action plan for the development of missile capabilities in Europe, the Allied countries tried - in the NATO-Russia Council - to seek some form of compromise with Moscow. However, the task was virtually impossible to be achieved, and it has come to a substantial failure.

The outcome was predictable, and indeed widely expected, even in Moscow. Equally predictable was the immediate reaction of the “Muscovite environments” that have operated in recent months, in order to support Russian political and diplomatic efforts, especially exerted to those countries of the Alliance which, for political and economic reasons, are trying to maintain the best possible relationship with Russia.

Therefore, on the Russian press immediately reappeared articles and “analysis” where the need to balance the new, aggressive attitude of NATO with “asymmetric measures” is strongly recommended, like the deployment of “Iskander” missiles in the exclave of Kaliningrad or perhaps in Belarus.

This hypothesis has been already examined in technical terms on these pages; based on the alleged range and accuracy of the missile, the system would not really threaten U.S. installations in Poland. This, unless that Russia had not decided to break - or better denounce - the INF Treaty, thus deploying again missiles with range greater than 500 kilometres, or had decided to equip the “Iskander” with nuclear warheads.

The latter case leads directly to what, in all probability, will be the most important “issue” in the coming months and years in the West-Russia relationship: nuclear disarmament.

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Having finally secured the ratification of START, both in Moscow and in Washington there is an ongoing discussion about the need to establish some control regime, if not a limitation or reduction, for the category of non-strategic nuclear weapons. It is, in fact, a type of weaponry that has remained largely outside the legally binding negotiations and agreements (INF, START, CFE) that marked the stages of disarmament in Europe over the last twenty years.

Moreover, in several European countries there is a strong waiting for some signal on this issue, given the pressure of public opinion towards nuclear disarmament.

But the failure of the dialogue on missile defence suggests that even few steps forward on this issue will be hardly reached in the short term.

In addition to military-strategic considerations, with Russia “feeling” a marked inferiority vis-à-vis NATO, further increased by developments in missile-defence domain, purely political aspects must be taken into account. Russia is going to experience a difficult political season, for the likely beginning of a very strong competition between Medvedev and Putin in the upcoming presidential elections of 2012.

### **A new swing of the pendulum in the Ukrainian foreign policy**

In the coming years, therefore, the litigation on the missile defence in Europe will be basis for friction between Russia and the United States, involving, as seen, the Atlantic Alliance. It is, however, more than likely to imagine that such litigation will also determine effects on other countries of Eastern Europe, primarily Ukraine, “squeezed” between the Alliance and Russia, and not only in physical terms.

After a sharp change of direction in foreign policy in Kiev, the new President Yanukovich seemed to finally give up the process of integration with NATO, while instead re-joining on a better terms with Russia. However, in recent months an opposite trend emerged, as if Ukraine had embraced in fact the “multi-vector foreign policy” that had characterized the country until the advent of Yushchenko.

That is why the visit in the Black Sea of the U.S. Navy cruiser “Monterey” to conduct joint exercise “Sea Breeze 2011” with the Ukrainian Navy, besides causing a heated letter of protest from Moscow - which defined as “a threat” the presence of such units in Black Sea – ask for a new and deeper understanding of the domestic developments in Ukraine.

First, it couldn't be underestimated the fact that the Monterey is exactly the vessel chosen to provide, starting from next autumn, the first echelon of missile defence - under the first stage of the already mentioned EPAA -.

In addition, the Black Sea area lends itself well to position a missile defence system, if the threat - as officially described - comes “from the Gulf”. As seen, precisely because of technical-military reasons Russia has proposed, unsuccessfully, to base on its territory - the North Caucasus, the region that borders the Black Sea - part of missile defence systems for Europe. But if the United States will have access to the Black Sea with its naval units - something to be verified, by virtue of mandatory restrictions on crossing the Turkish Straits, the result of the Conferences of the first half of the twentieth century - then the “geostrategic value” of Russian territory would be further reduced.

However, the main factor that would explain the new attitude of Kiev is, probably, economic in nature.

The country is facing enormous difficulties following the deep financial and industrial crisis. It remains heavily dependent on imported energy - particularly gas - from Russia, a factor which always limits the potential for political emancipation from Moscow.

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With the agreement to an extension - virtually indefinitely – of the Russian military presence in Crimea, a compromise of mutual benefit seemed to have reached. Ukraine obtained energy supplies at significantly lower prices than those of the European market, while Russia has guaranteed - if not the alliance - at least the neutrality of Ukraine, which would no longer pursue the way of access to NATO.

In recent months, however, due to the formulation of the contracts on gas supply, prices have grown enormously, in fact returning to the same levels in existence before the agreement on the fate of the Black Sea Fleet. In practice, after ensured the strategic objective mentioned above, Russia has been able to reverse the economic burden implied in the agreement with Kiev.

Therefore, it seems likely that Ukraine seeks to regain room for manoeuvre to strengthen its negotiating position with Moscow. Sold, in fact, the military control of the Crimea, Kiev is still to play the card of a bilateral agreement with Washington, which in Moscow is certainly feared even more than an entry of Ukraine into NATO.

The exercise "Sea Breeze" 2011 is not necessarily the first step to such a bilateral agreement, but sends a clear message to Moscow.

The geo-strategic balance in Europe is not yet defined because the process of political reorganization following the Soviet collapse took place mostly in a phase of deep and "unhistorical" Russia's weakness. It was expected that, regained awareness of its potential, Moscow call into question what happened during the years of "strategic holiday" followed the collapse of the Wall. However, the two lost decades were also marked by progress in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, not only in the economic sphere, but also at political level. It is therefore unlikely a return to a situation similar to the one in effect in the early nineties, when "a large gray area" with undefined fate lied between NATO and Russia. This region, for the most part, has already chosen its own way.



## **The Obama Administration between Libya and Afghanistan**

*Lucio Martino*

*The speech which President Obama utilized to illustrate developments planned for the American involvement in Afghanistan was one that, despite its relative brevity, has taken on an importance above and beyond both the details of its contents and its particular repercussions. Thanks to its relative vagueness, the President's speech allows us to see how wide the divisions in the present American Administration regarding strategies to be implemented in the Afghani theatre really are, and how they remain a source of division. A failure to resolve these divisions, to solidify and present a commonly accepted strategy capable of inspiring confidence both domestically and internationally will be critical to the Administration's ability to project future American foreign policy.*

### **A number of compromises**

Just as predicted, President Obama announced the almost immediate withdrawal of approximately ten thousand men. This first step in the direction of a scaling down of the military intervention in Afghanistan will be followed by the return of another twenty thousand men to the United States. These are the rest of the additional forces sent by the White House in November 2009 as a result, and in truth, not without some hesitation, by the then Commander of the battle theatre, General McCrystal. All this will take place within a greater framework which foresees the continuing deployment of the remaining American armed forces in Afghanistan for an undefined and ambiguous transition period destined to drag on until 2014, with the handing over of all remaining responsibility to the Afghani security forces. Again, based on what it has been possible to deduce from President Obama's speech, there remains a strong probability that even after this passage of powers the American forces will have a presence in the theatre, at least in an auxiliary role.

Leaving aside these points, the President's speech abounds in a series of elements which are common to the rhetoric choices made by the occupants of the White House. Only the Jacksonian appeals typical of the younger of the two Bush presidents are missing. Included however were the classic Jeffersonian tone of the exceptionality of missions that the United States cannot avoid undertaking in the name of the improvement of the human condition, the exquisitely Wilsonian passages regarding the legitimacy of a military intervention in Libya in order to save an oppressed population and to support the aspirations of all Arabians of a free and democratic future, and the typically Hamiltonian argument of the need to respond urgently to the ever more urgent issues of a balanced budget, a recovery of production and technological innovation levels. These are objectives which are particularly difficult to reach when a large part of the national resources are employed overseas in long and complex military operations. The Obama

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Administration's foreign policy strategy planners appear to be approaching a crossroads which will force a decision regarding their own view of their international responsibilities. The consequences of this decision would not be limited to the domestic sphere.

Obviously, the message conveyed by the speech was the product of a hotchpotch of compromises made within an Administration whose mechanisms seem more muddled than usual, in particular regarding the role of the President and his Staff, who seem uncertain as to how to control, balance, and manage the natural didactic of a cabinet characterized as relevant as they are politically distant. The problem is due at least in part to the position of the National Security Advisor, in other words the person who more than anyone else must protect the President from his own cabinet and help him steer the machine which carries the entire Administration forward. In curious continuity with the preceding Bush Administration, this position, while remaining within competent hands, is not occupied by persons of the calibre of Kissinger, Brzezinski, and Scowcroft.

Regarding in particular the destiny of the U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, there are roughly two opposing fronts. The interaction of these has until now contributed to the in truth uncertain strategic format of this Administration. Vice-President Biden leads the first group, a group sporting various minor figures from the National Security Council. The second cluster is guided by Secretary of Defence Gates and is composed of members of the Intelligence and several high level exponents of the military system. The first group is pushing for a management strategy for what remains of a long war against terror, aiming to make drastic cuts in what appears to be a run-a-way military budget. The second fears the backlash of a too hasty withdrawal, because in their view the results of the operations in which the U.S. military forces are involved remain very uncertain.

The only certainty in the current situation is that the Obama Administration appears to be searching feverishly for a way out of a military involvement which has in ten years known better times, and which after an initial period of optimism seems lately to be on the brink of sliding into that series of American strategy elaboration difficulties known idiomatically as "mission creep". The search for an exit strategy would seem to be so overriding that it has produced a jumble of developments which would have sounded inconceivable initially. These include an always difficult and ambiguous dialogue with the Taliban community, within which it has not been possible to pinpoint an exact central directive. The uncertainty regarding the future of the Afghani theatre is such that the truly disparate theories are being voiced. Within the environment which traditionally contributes to the conceptualization of U.S. foreign policy and strategy, even the partition of the country into two States is being considered, one inspired by Western values, the other more typically Islamic in nature.

### **An increasingly complex international system**

To further complicate an already difficult international framework, exacerbating the debate within the Administration and reducing the White House's already narrow margin to manoeuvre, we now have the Libyan crisis of this last spring. It is impossible to ignore the contradictions involved in on one hand the decision, without regard to results already achieved, to downgrade the involvement in Afghanistan, and on the other the decision to open a new front in northern Africa. At least as far as it has been confirmed, this development was suggested, perhaps imposed, by a Secretary of State who, while the Libya decision was being discussed at the same time managed to float the idea of the possibility that she might abandon the Obama Administration.

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Another hint that the tensions inside the Obama Administration have increased the difficulty, maybe even made impossible, an American assumption of the guiding role in the Libyan crisis similar to the one played in Bosnia and Kosova was offered by the Italian Government through a recent proposal by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Frattini. This called for a ceasefire in order to bring relief to the civilian population involved in the conflict, and to allow a period of reflection for the Allies to define the objectives as well as the means of attaining them. The proposal was swiftly rejected by the English and French Governments and by NATO. The Obama Administration did not find it worthy of comment.

Moving between the equivocalness of a very long Arab Spring, the by now endemic complexities of the Middle East uncertainties, the uncomfortable aspects of the Libyan controversies, and with at least two military theatres inherited from the previous Administration not yet fully stabilized, the Presidency must face a largely hostile Congress. It is full of Democrats with pacifist tendencies who have begun to feel somewhat deceived by the candidate that so many of them helped to arrive in the White House, and of Republicans who contest the legitimacy of an intervention ordered, for the first time since the War Powers Resolution of 1973, by an Executive power who did not co-involve the legislative powers through formal passages.

On the other hand, in Europe there is a growing level of dissatisfaction with an involvement in a crisis in which, in any case, only four members of the NATO member States have seen fit to be actively involved in. At the head of the outsider group is the State which remains the principal European power, a Germany where the Minister of Foreign Affairs Westerelle, has from the first word in effect refused the involvement of his State in any new combat operations.

As much as it is certainly true that NATO, throughout its entire history, has always been subject to moments of extreme difficulty, in the present situation the risk of a progressive development of new and challenging centrifugal tendencies seems much higher than usual, at least on the part of States which have demonstrated reluctance to accept leadership from a relatively weak and uncertain U.S. The European allies seem to be increasingly less disposed to alleviate the burdens resulting from the global responsibilities taken on by the United States, and are not being particularly successful at hiding the concern with which they see the mission of the alliance being redefined in planetary terms, terms which might one day involve them in a containment strategy towards China.

A global alliance which unites the traditional Atlantic nucleus with new partners such as India, Japan, or, Australia could not credibly justify its existence for purely humanitarian motives. During the second half of the twentieth century, the European allies were more than happy to help the United States contain a Soviet Union which had hegemonic ambitions and which directly threatened their security. However, the potential existence of a China hegemonic over the entire East Asian space would be a development that would not necessarily be seen as threatening by many European powers. For this reason, the United States is apparently not able to design a strategy which would allow a satisfactory, from their point of view, reduction of costs in the present and foreseeable military theatres.

Building a constant rhetoric in the foreign affairs policies within the Democratic Party during the years of the Bush Administration was that, in contrast to the raw and clearly unilateral policies of the Republicans, the Democrats would have constructed a much better new international strategy, one able to produce an effective level of division of the tasks necessary to fulfil the international responsibilities that the United States had assumed during the period. The electoral campaign of 2004 of their candidate for President, John Kerry, was constructed

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around this principal. Four years later the victory of Democrat Obama seemed to open up a new era in the U.S. foreign affairs policy and strategy, an era in which thanks to the contribution of old and new allies the United States would be able to reduce its own involvement in international affairs and concentrate on the reconstruction of an economy in deep crisis, because the United States could no longer invest heavily in the government of the world, and at the same time assure a widening of its own markets.

Despite the very many efforts of the Obama Administration, these objectives so central to the agenda of the Democrats continue to remain pointedly elusive. It is true that the allies have increased their own share of the action in Afghanistan, but those increases have been relatively modest, and in any case, far from the expectations of the United States. It is also true that the re-balancing of relations with the Russian Federation has permitted the development of alternative routes for the refurbishing of military units in Afghanistan, allowing a reduction of dependence on Pakistan as supply route. But delusion reigns among the large number of Democrats who hoped that the new administration would be able to transform the coalition which was already in Afghanistan into something along the lines of the group which inaugurated the particularly brief New World Order by liberating Kuwait. Not even the current air operations over Libya form an exception to the rule, because the United States continues to play a central role, despite an apparent reduction in dimension.

### **The awareness of a shared failure**

The other important public move by the Obama Administration during the current period, the departure speech by Secretary of Defence Gates, seems almost the product of a clear awareness of the failure, a failure felt by both Democrats as well as Republicans, to transform the Atlantic Alliance into a security organization capable of a global reaction, dividing the cost of such a venture equally among the members. At the root of the American frustration is not only the wish that their allies carry a greater share of the financial costs, but also a dissatisfaction with the way the allies spend their money, investing the greater part in assets destined for the defence of territory rather than the organization of forces capable of effective deployment in remote theatres of action. On the other hand, the European allies have their reasons for not transferring an increasingly diminishing public wealth from social spending to military expenditures, and for continuing a certain emphasis on territorial defence in the face of cases which could develop as a result of the return of Russian power and from the endemic instability of the Balkans and North Africa.

The latest meeting of the Ministers of Defence within the NATO openly made this state of affairs one of their points of reflection, stressing above all the current difficulties involved in assuring a minimum level of political cohesion and sufficient financial capacity to maintain the present operational responsibilities. According to several leaks, the summit provided the Canadian Minister of Defence MacKay with an occasion to notify of the Canadian intention to terminate its participation in the AWACS programme, one of the most successful initiatives of the entire history of the alliance, and recently called on to participate in the Libyan crisis. At the same time, the Norwegian Government announced its intention, effective from early August, to withdraw their attack equipment from the air operations currently being conducted over Libya.

The Obama Administration would appear now to find itself in a situation not very far removed from that in which the previous Bush Administration found itself. They could continue to support a strategy of large-scale U.S. involvement in international matters, in line in particular with what has happened over the last ten years, in which case they will also have to support any



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costs alone. An alternative would be to begin a slow and constant withdrawal from their international responsibilities, gradually reducing their presence in theatres which may then fall to the responsibility of other protagonists involved internationally, beginning with the Middle East.



## **Towards negotiations with the Taliban?**

*Antonio Giustozzi*

*Abstract: contacts with the Taliban opposition have a long history, but have clearly been intensifying in recent months. The main drivers are President Karzai's and Pakistan's interest, with Washington and the Taliban themselves looking at this prospect in a much more tepid way. While the Pakistanis have been putting some pressure on the Taliban to negotiate, Karzai has been trying to entice them to the negotiating table by showing that there are areas of government where he is ready to make significant concessions. Paradoxically, what Washington thinks about negotiations remains much more mysterious.*

Rumours of contacts between the armed opposition of the Taliban and either the Afghan government or Western diplomats have been circulating since 2003. Although there was at least some truth in such rumours, little concrete progress was achieved until 2010. In 2003 it had been mainly a matter of the Afghan government trying to lure to its side some so-called 'moderate Taliban', although contacts might have gone further than that. Such a pattern was repeated from time to time in subsequent years, with occasional successes: some prominent Taliban figures accepted to reconcile with the government. Under the Peace Strengthening Commission, a reconciliation programme was launched to bring in field commanders and low-rank members of the opposition. The programme was marred by nepotism and corruption and its claim to have reconciled 8,000 insurgents until 2011 is not taken seriously by anybody anymore. Some genuine insurgents did join the programme, but in all likelihood their number never exceeded the low hundreds each year. Considering that the insurgency is now counting on tens of thousands of active fighters, such results are meagre indeed.

The attitude of the Afghan government towards negotiations started changing in late 2008, when the relationship with Washington began taking a negative turn. At this time, President Karzai still seemed to be thinking of reconciliation with the Taliban in terms of co-opting individuals and particular networks to shore up his weak position, rather than in terms of a comprehensive political settlement. This type of attitude continued to characterise Karzai's approach to the Taliban until spring 2010. In February 2010 evidence of this approach emerged dramatically in the public domain when the Pakistani authorities arrested Mullah Omar's deputy, Mullah Baradar, one of the most prominent leaders of the Taliban. Although the exact reasons for Mullah Baradar's arrest were never publicised, sources close to the Taliban hinted that Mullah Baradar was communicating with Karzai over reconciliation without the authorisation of the rest of the leadership. Karzai appears to have utilised tribal channels (both Karzai and Baradar are Popalzai) to establish communication with Baradar, again a fact hinting a desire to make separate deals with groups of Taliban, more than reaching an agreement with the movement as a

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whole.

After Baradar's arrest, which demonstrated to Karzai how there was little mileage in trying to bypass the Pakistani security services, there was something of a thaw between Karzai and the Pakistanis. The Pakistanis for the first time came up with their own 'peace plan' which was presented to Karzai, Washington and the Taliban. In its main lines, the plan featured a coalition government dominated by a close ally of Pakistan, Hizb-i Islami, with the Taliban only getting a couple of junior ministers, although at the same time several southern and south-eastern provinces were proposed to be handed over to Taliban governors. Karzai would stay on as little more than a figurehead transitional head of state and the remaining spoils to be distributed among other political and military players. The Tajik-dominated Jamiat-i Islami, in particular, was recognised by the Pakistanis as deserving some powerful positions in government, including at least one of the power ministries (probably defence). The Pakistanis also demanded a major role for themselves in the negotiating process and as guarantors of the settlement. Their future influence was in fact already built into the plan: Hizb-i Islami has a significant following inside Afghanistan, but its military weakness would make it dependent on Pakistani support, particularly because the political weight attributed to that faction within the coalition government would certainly attract the jealousy of other political and military players.

In late spring and early summer 2010, Karzai made a number of important concessions to the Pakistanis, at a time when even Washington was considering the Pakistani plan, encouraging the latter to entertain hopes that a negotiated solution of their liking was about to become reality. Karzai's concessions included the appointment of a Ministry of Defence Chief of Staff of Pakistani liking and the removal of the stubbornly anti-Pakistani head of Security (Amrullah Saleh) and Minister of Interior (Hanif Atmar). In exchange, the Pakistanis promised to keep Kabul city free of major terror incidents. Throughout the summer of 2010 the two sides tried to work out how to resolve the main points of contention left: Karzai's future role, which in the original Pakistani formulation he considered demeaning and that undoubtedly offered little incentive to him to agree to a negotiated solution, and Pakistan's role, which to many in Kabul sounded as a demand for a return to the pre-1919 status of the country handing over its foreign policy to a neighbouring power.<sup>1</sup> Despite the Pakistanis having approached several members of Jamiat-i Islami individually, this group as a whole remained strongly hostile to a political settlement sponsored by the Pakistanis, as were other smaller political groups based among the ethnic minorities (Hazaras, Uzbeks).

By the autumn the optimism which predominated among Pakistani diplomats and generals in the spring was already evaporating. Washington's interest in the Pakistani peace plan might have been misinterpreted by the Pakistanis, or Washington might have considered it seriously and then decided that either it did not suit its objectives or that the Pakistanis could not be trusted to deliver. The 'ceasefire' in Kabul failed to convincingly demonstrate that the Pakistanis could fully control the insurgency – Washington knows that one thing is terrorist attacks in Kabul, usually managed by Pakistani jihadist groups and the Haqqani network with support from the security services, and another is the mainstream insurgency, much more fluid and difficult to control for anybody.

Karzai's convergence with the Pakistanis also ground to a halt by the late autumn: probably both Karzai and the Pakistanis had thought that the counterpart could be lured to soften its position

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<sup>1</sup> Until the Third Anglo-Afghan war of 1919, Britain had control over Afghanistan's foreign police, in exchange for an annual subsidy to the Afghan government.

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concerning Karzai's and Pakistan's future post-agreement role, but realised after some months of negotiations that this was not likely to happen without some additional tug-of-war on the battlefield. Karzai was the first to send out signals that his concessions to the Pakistanis might be renegotiable: his circle circulated rumours that big changes were about to happen at the helm of the Ministry of Defence and that a key anti-Pakistani figure like Amrullah Saleh could be appointed as Minister there. Saleh was by then developing a strongly anti-Karzai platform and becoming actively involved in opposition politics, so such an appointment was probably never seriously planned, but the message to the Pakistanis was clear: the fresh pro-Pakistani appointees could easily be removed.

The impasse convinced the Pakistanis that Karzai needed to be shown that the ceasefire in Kabul was not the result of a weakened insurgency, as ISAF and the Ministry of Interior were arguing. In February the ceasefire broke down and a series of increasingly daring attacks took place in Kabul. This round of confrontation between Karzai and the Pakistanis resulted in negotiations moving forward. Both sides seem to have been motivated by the fact that pressure was growing on them to find some kind of settlement to the Afghan conflict. Karzai was aware that the Americans themselves had started contacting the Taliban leadership, raising the prospect of a direct deal between Americans and Taliban, which could make Karzai completely redundant. Karzai was therefore in a hurry to get serious negotiations started and to enshrine his own role in them, to avoid political marginalisation. The Pakistanis, realising that Washington was not going to settle for their peace plan, abandoned their earlier idea of using Washington against Karzai and in fact adopted the opposed idea of using Karzai against the Americans. They communicated to him that they were willing to accept him in power for a third term (technically impossible according to the existing constitution, which however could be amended) and that they were no longer demanding him to surrender virtually all his powers and stay on just as a transitional figurehead. In other words, the Pakistanis both saw an opportunity in the growing rift between Washington and Kabul and saw the lack of alternatives to dealing with Karzai, with whom they have long had bad relations.

Karzai from his side responded to the Pakistani concessions by appointing a pro-Pakistan member of his close circle, Chief of Staff Dawlatzai, as ambassador in Islamabad, a position where he would get deeply involved in the forthcoming negotiations. Dawlatzai was replaced in the important position of Karzai's Chief of Staff by Khurram, another pro-Pakistani figure. As the convergence between Pakistanis and Karzai resumed, the main problem standing before the effective start of a negotiating process was convincing the Taliban that the deal was in their interest.

From the beginning (2010) the leadership of the Taliban had shown little enthusiasm for the Pakistani peace plan, which assigned the most prestigious positions in government to the Taliban's competitor in the insurgency, the militarily much weaker Hizb-i Islami. The Pakistani position was likely motivated by the desire to come up with a peace plan acceptable by Washington. The granting of a handful of governorships (reportedly seven) could hardly offset the humiliation of being offered only a paltry representation within the government. Moreover, there were a number of issues related to how would the Taliban be rewarded in the distribution of patronage, if the central government was going to be dominated by rivals and competitors – the Taliban unsurprisingly had little trust in what an already ineffective and corrupt central government would redistribute to them in terms of financial 'peace dividends'. Moreover, the Taliban might have harboured doubts about the wisdom of disbanding their military organisation or in any case of creating conditions which would have made it more difficult to

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control it, for so little in return, when a return to civil war in the event of a failure of the peace process was a solid possibility. In such an occurrence, the Taliban would have been disadvantaged compared to for example the Jamiatis, solidly entrenched in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior.

The Pakistanis tried to apply pressure on the Taliban in a relatively soft way, for example encouraging components of the Taliban and other insurgent groups like Hizb-i Islami to start discussions with Kabul. Some leaders of the so-called Haqqani network and Hizb-i Islami communicated with Kabul, with the Pakistanis presumably hoping that this would have forced Mullah Omar and his circle to consider negotiations as inevitable in order to avoid isolation. In reality the Pakistanis probably never had a serious interest in splitting the resistance, because this would have reduced their leverage at the negotiating table and reinforced Karzai's. Another means of pressure was the strengthening of the direct control exercised by the Pakistanis over the insurgency, with direct logistical support being offered to commanders less inclined to follow the political leadership of the Taliban inside Afghanistan. Finally, the Pakistanis always had the possibility of arresting recalcitrant Taliban leaders, but could only use this capacity when dealing with individuals dissenting with Mullah Omar.

The Pakistanis also negotiated some concessions to appease the leaders of the Taliban. By late 2011, for example, the talk was no longer seven governorships for the Taliban, but 15, evidently an effort to make the virtual exclusion from the central government more palatable. The Taliban however resented the Pakistani desire to patronise them and to fully control any peace process. In this regard a major point of contention emerged at the beginning of 2011, when the Turkish government offered to allow the Taliban to open a political office in Ankara, hoping presumably to facilitate communication over the start of a negotiating process. The Taliban initially endorsed the idea, but were forced to retract almost immediately when the Pakistani reacted negatively to the idea, which implicitly would have made for them much more difficult to control the process. Later the Taliban emerged with a compromise position, which accepted the idea of opening a political office, but avoided discussing a specific location. The Taliban explained that they did not like being dictated where to open a political office. Undoubtedly, an acceptance of the principle that the Taliban had the right to open a political office somewhere would have had greater legitimising impact than simply being granted an office by some country. However, the Taliban were in all likelihood trying to engage in damage limitation after clashing with the Pakistanis over the issue. The Pakistanis too emerged with their own compromise solution, circulated at the diplomatic level: perhaps the Taliban could open an office in Turkey, but they would also open one in Pakistan. Since the Pakistanis would control the visas regimes of Taliban negotiators, they would be in a position to make sure that the Pakistani office was used more often than the Turkish one.

Despite this diffidence, the leadership of the Taliban as a whole does not seem to be prejudicially opposed to peace negotiations per se. The Taliban seem however to have little faith in the viability of a peace process and demand 'confidence building measures'. Their main demand in this regard is the stopping of ISAF's night raids, which are taking a heavy toll among Taliban commanders. They argue that it is not possible to even think of serious negotiations as long as ISAF is bent on exterminating their leadership. Karzai has no control over military operations and can do little to meet the Taliban's demands on this issue, although he has been raising the pressure on ISAF to comply with his demands that night raids be stopped (so far unsuccessfully). Karzai has therefore tried to get the Taliban to warm up to negotiations by taking other steps. Minister of Education Wardak, also closely involved in contacts with the



## ***Afghan Theater***

Pakistanis and with the armed opposition, has made major concessions to the Taliban in terms of their control over schools in areas where they are influential. Whether this will suffice to kick-start a negotiating process remains to be seen, particularly because although Washington now admits it has been contacting the Taliban, what kind of peace process the Americans have in mind is far from clear.



Marco Massoni

## **African crisis: internally and externally driven political paths**

*In 2010 GDP growth in Sub-Saharan Africa has averaged 4.5% and it is estimated between 5.2% and 6.2% for 2011. Expectations for 2012 prospect a 6.4%, which means a dramatic growth, if one thinks about the 2.5% rate of 2009, rather a moderate shrinking, mainly due to the economic and financial crisis. In addition, from an economic point of view, between 2010 and the beginning of 2011, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia have been the most performing countries so far. Moreover, although the course of events in Libya is still far from stabilization and Tunisia has experienced some delays for the Constituent Assembly elections put off to next October, however Ivory Coast is progressively recovering from the prolonged post-electoral crisis. Yet, the main problems that Africa as a whole is still to face up with remain basically the same: social injustice, inadequate governance, permeability of borders, illegal trafficking, abuse of human rights and failure to self-determination. Unfortunately, all these common phenomena are a conjunction of factors that could still easily forage terrorism, especially in Eastern, Western, and Northern Africa with an emphasis in the Sahel, more than ever a strategic location and a priority target for criminal and terrorist networks. In fact, in the northern regions of Mali, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has erected in recent years its headquarters, with the idea of establishing an Islamic Caliphate from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea, taking advantage of both the remoteness of Sahel and the vastness of Sahara.*

### **Northern Africa: Libya, Morocco and Tunisia**

Regarding Libya, the National Transitional Council (NTC) did not accept the African Union (AU) mediation proposal, put forward at the beginning of April, inasmuch, according to the NTC, it still considers Muammar Qaddafi as part of the solution and not the problem. On the other hand, it is likely for the NTC to accept an AU sponsored negotiation plan, provided that Qaddafi and his family are kept out of it. Actually, the 19<sup>th</sup> of March an AU High Level Ad Hoc Committee for Libya was established, composed of five African Presidents, Jacob Zuma (South Africa), Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz (Mauritania), Amadou Toumani Toure (Mali), Denis Sassou Nguessou (Republic of the Congo), Yoweri Museveni (Uganda) and the Chairman of the AU Commission, Jean Ping. In the meantime, during its first three meetings the International Contact Group (ICG) on Libya (Doha, April the 13<sup>th</sup>; Rome, May the 5<sup>th</sup>; Abu Dhabi, June the 9<sup>th</sup>) have announced the creation of a special fund to support the NTC, making use of the frozen funds abroad of the Libyan regime. Since the Nineties, Libya had been playing a unique role all over Africa, particularly financing – officially covering the 15% of member States contributions – the AU budget, which in 2011 amounts to 257 million dollars. In reality, some alternative

ways to finance AU budget should be envisaged, as it depends substantially both by foreign grants – European Union in particular – and those of the major African countries such as Angola and South Africa. Also, Qaddafi, in a somewhat indistinguishable way, had been enormously supporting and funding some targeted African governments, as to determine a great political influence on their sovereignty. Such Libyan continental and regional key player role has rendered possible a great deal of political mediations in different conflicts, for instance in Mali, Chad-Sudan, Mauritania and Darfur. At continental level, Qaddafi himself could get elected as President of the AU in 2009, precisely when the Italian Presidency of the G8 to the political engagement and to the intergovernmental dialogue with Africa had devoted so much effort. Furthermore, he was able to make a standpoint in the stalled relationships between the African block and the Arab one, by renewing them through the revitalization of the Arab-African Summit, the second edition of which, after 33 years of silence, was celebrated in Tripoli October the 10<sup>th</sup> 2010. At regional level, the Libyan leader was the mentor and sponsor for the establishment in 2000 of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), which, based in Tripoli, counts 28 member States; CEN-SAD is one of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the African sub-regional political organizations. In truth, it must be stressed that the underground geopolitical repositioning of external actors throughout Sahel, Western, Eastern and Northern Africa collides with the reckless financial autonomy and the political independence of the bulky Libyan regime, more and more ill suited to the hegemonic competitive claims of other international players over the rest of Africa. Not surprisingly, the ongoing stabilization of Libya, will be the result of a concerted international effort, whose dividends will be obviously split among those actors that will have made it happen. The International Commission of Inquiry created by the United Nations Human Rights Council was able to detect abuses by both belligerent sides in terms of crimes against humanity committed by the Libyan regime and war crimes by the rebels of Cyrenaica. In the ranks of loyalist there were several major defections, among which those of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mussa Kussa and of the Oil Minister, Shokri Ghanem. On June 6, the UN Special Envoy for Libya, Abdel-Ilah al-Khatib, travelled to Tripoli – for the second time in three weeks – with the intent to promote a cease-fire with the launch of a national dialogue for a democratic transition, in the broader framework of the roadmap advanced by the AU, according to which a truce is the precondition for negotiations. On the contrary, NATO, that from March 31 took command of all military operations over Libya by means of the “Unified Protector” mission, estimates that this position would rather strengthen the Libyan regime. At the same time, Moscow has sent a special envoy, Mikhail Barghelov, in Benghazi, Libya’s insurgent stronghold that four months after its outbreak appears to be deadlocked. On 21 June, in Beijing, the President of the TNC, Mahmoud Jbril, met with Chinese Foreign Minister, Yang Jiechi, who, though still indirectly, has recognized the TNC as a new interlocutor. Finally, Liberia has suspended diplomatic relations with Libya, meanwhile Qatar, Jordan, Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania and the United Arab Emirates have recognized the TNC too. In turns, the TNC has submitted a relevant document to the ICG, named “Road to Democratic Libya,” presenting the NTC leadership guidelines, grounded on the crucially owned principles of inclusiveness and representativeness. On 27 June, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued three arrest warrants for Muammar Qaddafi, his son, Seif al Islam, and Abdullah Senoussi, head of Libyan intelligence services, who must answer charges of crimes against humanity presumably committed between 15 and 28 February. For his part, on behalf of the AU, South African President, Jacob Zuma, who in recent weeks has already travelled twice to directly negotiate with Gaddafi, has accused

NATO of having overcome the purpose of United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1970 and 1973, which do not authorize a regime change in the country – Zuma said – but should solely be limited to protect Libyan people. By the way, it should be remembered that among BRICS<sup>1</sup> countries members of the Security Council, on March 17, only South Africa voted in favour of UNSCR 1973 on Libya perfectly in line with France. In addition, after the recent Turkish recognition of the TNC, as the sole interlocutor, Tripoli is getting increasingly isolated and, most probably, Qaddafi will shortly be ready for a shift of power, on condition that his son Seif al-Islam will succeed him and that ICC arrest warrants are cancelled together with a guarantee of immunity for him and his family. Secret negotiations between the parties seem to be in progress, in order to reach a turning point for a political solution to the conflict.

In Morocco, where the “February 20 Movement” is fighting for a constitutional monarchy, which guarantees the separation of powers, a referendum on the proposed constitutional amendment, announced by the sovereign, Mohammed VI, will be held in early July. A high turnout is expected. The amendment would lead to significant institutional changes: the Prime Minister would not be chosen by the king, but democratically elected and invested as an expression of the winning party of a given election. Moreover, the Premier not only would dissolve parliament and preside at government sessions even in the absence of the king, but will also appoint each and every apical position within the public administration, until now an exclusive Sovereign’s prerogative of the Alaouite dynasty. In addition, the principle of sacredness of the king would be replaced with that of his inviolability. The king, who is also the highest religious authority in Morocco, would remain the Head of State, the guarantor of the independence of the Judiciary and the Armed Forces Chief of Staff. With regard to the endless settlement of Western Sahara dispute, on 6 and 7 June in New York the representatives of Morocco and those of the Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro (Polisario), met for the seventh round of informal talks, with the aim to establish the status of the contested territories, where the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) is still deployed. Such talks for the very first time have covered the topics of minefields and exploitation of natural resources, essentially phosphates. It should be, however, noted that some States which had first recognized the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), in the last few years have suspended diplomatic relations with it: so, the new position of Morocco, which is in favour of a regional autonomy, is strengthening, whereas that of the SADR is weakening, inasmuch rigidly anchored to the referendum of self-determination for the Sahrawi people.

In Tunisia, at first scheduled for July 24, the Constituent Assembly elections have been postponed until October 23 for organizational reasons, said the Prime Minister of the Transitional Government, Beji Caid Essebsi, who on February 27 replaced Mohamed Ghannouchi, who had become unpopular, in that too linked to the past regime. For reasons related to the funding mechanisms of political parties and to the issue of relations with Israel, the Islamic party Ennahda – “Rebirth” – led by Rachid Ghannouchi, who returned to Tunis after twenty years of exile in London, has retired from the Reform Panel – the so called “High

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<sup>1</sup> On 14 April, BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) met in the Chinese city of Sanya, where they have discussed international issues such as the military intervention in Libya. Pretoria has joined the BRICS right this year. BRICS countries represent 40% of the world population and 18% of the world GDP.

Instance for the Objectives of the Revolution, Political Reform and Democratic Transition” – set up last February. Ennahda, which so far is leading the polls, claims to be inspired by the Turkish model, but is suspected of receiving secret funding from Iran or Saudi Arabia. Clearly, the inexperience of new political actors prolongs the time of transition, because there are over ninety small parties in the field, whose fragmentation cannot guarantee a stable majority yet: in fact, at the moment, the only two major competing political parties are Islamists and social democrats, that is to say Ennahda and the PDP led by Nejb Chebbi. Concerning the previous Tunisian regime, Qatar too has to be added to the list of countries that have decided to freeze property and assets belonging to the former Tunisian President, Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, and his wife, Leila Trabelsi, who both fled on January 14 to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. On 20 June, the couple were tried and sentenced in absentia to 35 years of imprisonment for embezzlement of public funds and to pay a fine of 45 million euros.

#### **Western Africa: Burkina Faso, Benin, Chad, Ivory Coast, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal**

In Burkina Faso, through a decree signed by President Blaise Compaoré, Mr. Luc-Adolphe Tiao was appointed Prime Minister, replacing Tertius Zongo who had just resigned, because of the turmoil occurred early this year throughout the country. As a matter of fact, since March a series of mutinies and protests, caused by wage demands among the military ranks of Burkinan Army took place several times in Bobo Dioulasso, the second largest city in the country, and in other municipalities such as Kaya, Dori, Tenkodogo and Dédougou. The lifting of the military seem to presage a distrust of President Blaise Compaoré, who recently assumed the post of Minister of Defence too. President Compaoré came to power in a coup in 1987 and was later confirmed in office in 1991, 1998, 2005 and 2010 elections.

In Benin, not only have the outcomes of the Presidential elections of March the 13<sup>th</sup> reconfirmed the outgoing President, Thomas Boni Yayi, but also have the legislative elections of April the 30<sup>th</sup> provided him with the majority at the national assembly.

In Chad, being in power since 1990, April the 25<sup>th</sup> President Idriss Deby Itno has been re-elected, notwithstanding the opposition's contestation. Particularly the North West area of Chad is in serious danger to soon become a source of instability in the Sahel, where religious extremism, insurgency and drug trafficking are more and more widespread, especially if N'Djamena continues to neglect such a sensitive region that has always played the pivotal role of hinge between the Arab-Islamic North and the Negro-African South, along the so called “African Belt”, ethnically separating the *Bilad al-Sudan* (literally The Land of the Blacks) from the “White Africa”.

In Ivory Coast, although the 26<sup>th</sup> of March the AU had eventually designated the former Cape Verdean Foreign Minister, Jose Brito, as AU High Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, his appointment was immediately challenged by Alassane Dramane Ouattara, because he considered Brito not impartial as allegedly too close to Laurent Gbagbo. Not only truth and national reconciliation, but also a rapid economic recovery are the challenges that lie ahead for the fresh Ivorian institutions. Shortly after the investiture of Ouattara as President of the Ivory Coast on May 21, the new Government, headed by Guillaume Soro, has held its first Council of Ministers on June 3. The new Executive has pledged to immediately establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the post-election violence, which had pitted the supporters of former President Gbagbo, who had refused to recognize his defeat in the elections of November 2010, with those of Ouattara, true winner of the polls. At the end of June, while the European Union (EU) has lifted the economic sanctions dating back to last January, the French Defence Minister,

Gerard Longuet, discussed with the Ivorian authorities the reduction by one-third of the “Operation Unicorn”, deployed since 2002 in the country, shortly after the outbreak of the civil war. While there is an ongoing mission of the ICC, in order to gather evidence on alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity having occurred in the country, the Prosecutor of Abidjan, has formalized some charges to the security of the State against a dozen people close to Gbagbo, who was arrested April 11. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) counts over 320 thousand internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 200 thousand Ivorian refugees, who, escaping the violence, fled in neighbouring countries, mostly in Liberia. The UN Mission in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) – stationed in the country since 2004 – is still reporting of violence and extrajudicial executions by the new Army, the Republican Forces in Côte d’Ivoire (RFCI), which avenges the abuses perpetrated by the Defence and Security Forces (FDS) of Gbagbo.

In Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, historic leader of the opposition and rival of the former President Mamadou Tandja, has been declared the winner of the presidential election, held March 2. For the new cabinet President Issoufou appointed a Tuareg as Prime Minister, Brigi Rafini, who recently announced the creation of a permanent institution in the fight against corruption, focusing the attention on good governance, sustainable development and security. Niamey, which shares the same problems of insecurity of other surrounding Sahelian States, such as Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad, has been undergoing a major political transition. Immediately after the restoration of the constitutional order, the EU has resumed its development cooperation with Niger, which had been unilaterally suspended by Brussels in 2009, when President Mamadou Tandja (in power between 1999 and 2010) gave rise to unconstitutional procedures, in order to further remain in office.

In Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, the candidate of the ruling party, People’s Democratic Party, was the winner of the presidential elections in April. Among other things, his political agenda seems to have a new top priority: Islamist sect of Boko Haram – the so called “Nigerian Taliban” – that is upholding and increasingly strengthening its positions, as demonstrated by making all sorts of deadly ambush, not only in its stronghold, Maiduguri – the capital of Borno State – but also in the capital, Abuja, where on June 16 the Federal Police Headquarters was targeted as the very first suicide terrorist attack in the history of Nigeria. Boko Haram is extremely alarming, for alleged links to Al-Qaeda, representing in this way, the coupling point between Shia and Sunni Islam in West Africa. The Governor of Borno State, elected on April 26, had proposed an amnesty for members of Boko Haram, who rejected it so far. Actually, Governor’s negotiating line is clearly supported by the new Nigerian President with the hope to put an end to terrorism from within the most relevant Western African State.

In Senegal, June 23 after a long standoff with the opposition, gathered under the umbrella named “June 23 movement,” the executive of Dakar has decided to withdraw a controversial bill. The draft in question involved the lowering from 50 percent to 25 percent of the minimum threshold of votes needed for the election in the first round of a presidential candidate and the institution of the Vice-Presidency. The incumbent President, Abdoulaye Wade, has been in office since 2000 and intends to stand for a third term, although not required by the present Constitution. It is suspected that President Wade is trying to create the conditions for his son, Karim – already Minister of International Cooperation, Regional Development, Air Transport, Infrastructure and Energy – to be elected, but the opposition, after several demonstrations in the streets of the capital, has called for his resignation.

**Eastern Africa: Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan**

As many international observers expected, April the 8<sup>th</sup>, Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guellah was elected for his third mandate.

As far as Somalia is concerned, the Kampala Agreement concluded in early June, laid between the President of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and the Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP), Sharif Hassan Sheik Aden, and facilitated by both the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), the Tanzanian diplomat Augustine Mahiga, and the Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni, provides for elections to be held by August 2012, one-year extension of the mandate of the current presidential term otherwise expiring August 2011, and the resignation of the Prime Minister, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohammed, better known as “Farmajo”, that was presented accordingly. June the 28<sup>th</sup>, the new interim Somali Prime Minister, Mohammed Ali Abdelwahi, has won the confidence of Parliament of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFI). It is worth mentioning an overwhelming role of Uganda within the fragile tenure of the Somali TFI. In fact, Kampala contributes to a large extent to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with seven thousand effective in terms of personnel employed in it, proving once again that the crisis in Somalia as well as any feasible solution to it need to be conceived in a regional framework. At last, the responsible of the massacres of 1998 to the U.S. Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, top coordinator of Al-Qaeda in East Africa, was killed at a checkpoint in Mogadishu.

**Sudan: open problems and unspoken issues**

Fighting between the South Sudanese Army and the rebel general George Athor’s militia resumed in March in the Jonglei State, while in the Unity State regular ranks of the SPLA were faced against the irregular ones of Peter Gadet. Another group of irregulars led by Philip Bepan conducted some attacks in the Warrap State. The emergence of some rebel army led by former army officers of the South is one of the most worrying factors of instability. Early May, in South Kordofan State, the controversial Sudan’s ruling National Congress Party (NCP) candidate Ahmed Haroun – wanted by the ICC for alleged crimes committed during the Darfur conflict – won the governorship vote.

Since independence, ethnicity was the main pretext for discriminatory management of political power in Sudan, having caused twenty-two years of civil war – from 1983 to 2005 – between the southern Sudanese people, Negro-African and Christians (i.e. Dinka, Nuer and Jur), and the northern Arab-Muslims, who in 2003 extended the conflict also against some other Negro-African Muslims of Darfur (i.e. Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit) too. At the end of May, in Doha, Qatar, the Government of Sudan and the delegates of some Darfur rebel movements signed a preliminary agreement for the forthcoming negotiations, which should lead to a final peace agreement, the closure of which was, however, postponed until next year. Should Darfur, now merely reduced to a domestic problem, come back again to be the background of regional tensions, the unification of the three Darfur States (Northern, Western and Southern) into a single administration should be considered the necessary countermeasure to prevent the secession from Khartoum of another part of the country. This referendum, scheduled for 1 to 2 July, has been postponed to 2012 anyway. The Sudanese authorities at the same time endorsed the appointment of a vice-president of Darfur, in order to see the actual asymmetrical power relations possibly more balanced. While the status of Darfur is still uncertain, more tensions rise along the border between Sudan and South Sudan. The Republic of South Sudan will be the 54<sup>th</sup>

African Union Member State, which is the 193<sup>rd</sup> UN component. Its independence will be proclaimed July the 9<sup>th</sup> as a result of the landslide victory of the “Yes” to the referendum of self-determination held in January, as provided for by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005. Yet, there are a number of open problems, but unspoken issues as well. Some minor topics are the South Sudan lack of access to the sea, which thus becomes a landlocked country; the lack of infrastructure and the limited management capacity of public administration of the new State; citizenship and nationality of Northerners living in the South and Southerners living in the North and the minting of new currency for both countries and the distribution of mutual debts and credits. Among the most difficult issues to be faced, it is worth mentioning the definitive demarcation of the borders between the two States; the exclusion from public consultations of South Kordofan State and Blue Nile State, despite SPLM/A having played in those territories a decisive role in the years of confrontation with Khartoum; the distribution of oil revenues, which sees the three-quarters of deposits concentrated in the South (Abyei, South Kordofan, Unity State and Upper Nile State), while the refineries are only in the North. Well, in full violation of the CPA, between 19 and 21 May, regular Armed Forces from Khartoum have occupied the region of Abyei, from which it is extracted about seventy per cent of all Sudanese oil. Actually, Abyei politically belongs to the North, though is claimed by the South, for the reason that the SPLM cadres are almost all from that area. The inhabitants of these border regions, who could not express themselves through a referendum, as the popular consultations have been postponed indefinitely, see their secessionist aspirations sacrificed to the wider goal of independence of the rest of southern Sudan.

Through military action on the one hand and by a kind embargo on the other, de facto logistically hampering the communication routes of food supplies towards the South, Khartoum is patently playing the game and trying to influence future negotiations about the ultimate definition of the disputed enclave of Abyei along with all the other questions left behind by the CPA. It is no coincidence that, on 28 June, President Omar Hassan al-Bashir has made an official visit to Beijing – the largest importer of Sudanese oil – with which Sudan has hitherto been able to boast a trade exchange amounting six billion euros. Given that, at the end of May, Khartoum had urged the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) the withdrawal by no later than July 9 from northern Sudan, from June 6 onwards, heavy fighting between Northerners and Southerners occurred at Kadugli, capital of South Kordofan State. Pretext of hostilities this time would have been an alleged non-compliance with the incoherent ultimatum launched by Khartoum, so that all Southern soldiers belonging to the SPLA withdrew from the Northern territories, above all from Blue Nile State and South Kordofan State borders, despite CPA envisage the possibility of joint units (i.e. Joint Integrated Units) of Northern and Southern soldiers. At the end of June, in Addis Ababa, negotiators from Khartoum and from Juba have reached an agreement for the cease-fire and mutual demobilization from Abyei. Then, June 27, the UN Security Council in New York unanimously approved the deployment of a peacekeeping mission – United Nations Interim Security Force being for Abyei (UNISFA) – which will consist of 4200 Ethiopian soldiers, with the purpose of organizing a “buffer zone”, a demilitarized land strip of more than twenty-two thousand kilometres wide along the uncertain boundaries between Sudan and South Sudan. In addition, it is worth underlining the remarkable success of the Ethiopian diplomacy, reflecting the growing role of Addis Ababa as an essential key regional player. The EU, which intends to open its Delegation in Juba as soon as possible, on the occasion of the Foreign Affairs Council Meeting of 20 June has openly acknowledged the notable negotiating role of either the former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, chief

mediator of the High Level Implementation Panel of the African Union (AUHIP) or the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, for their efforts to facilitate a cessation of hostilities in both Abyei and South Kordofan.

Last but not least, the vexed question of the right of exploitation of Nile River waters is in perspective a major unpredictable destabilizing factor for the whole Horn of Africa. Although this is often an underestimated hypothesis, a “hydric war” could occur precisely in this area, because the Nile is undoubtedly a political instrument for the relations between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. Indeed, Sahel-Saharan regions, the Great Lakes and the Nile Valley do form a strategic triangle for the security of Arab countries and the Middle East along the fault line that separates them from Tropical African countries as such. Cairo, always against the secession of South Sudan, is inevitably going to compromise with other stakeholders in the region, being no longer in a position to continue to expect to be the sole exploiter of the Nile waters, in compliance with the both obsolete Agreement with Sudan of 1929 and the Sudanese and Egyptian Treaty of 1959. After the numerous legal disputes emerged so far, a more modern tentative agreement would be the Nile Basin Initiative, launched in 1999, which aims to develop a better balanced cooperation for the Nile Basin water resources exploitation accessible to countries crossed from the Nile or involved from its suppliers, which in addition to Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan in reality also cover Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo. Equally important is the shift of regional centres of gravity in the Greater Horn of Africa as a direct consequence of the birth of South Sudan that is already generating two forms of opposing alliances: the first between Eritrea and Egypt in favour of Khartoum and the second between Ethiopia and Uganda in favour of Juba. In this sense, is understandable that South Sudan intends to join the East African Community (EAC), made of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, while Sudan continues to be part of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), constituted by Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda.

In conclusion, the division into two States of the former largest African country, Sudan, can be interpreted as the reflection of the international community need of containment, by stemming the extension of the level of instability in the Great Horn of Africa. As a matter of fact, the constant expansion of Near Eastern conflictual space has come to lick safe states such as Uganda or Kenya. In particular the latter, which until a few years ago was the cornerstone of stability in East Africa, now suffers irreparably its geographical proximity not only to the Somali epicentre, but also to the dividing rift between Africa and the Middle East, whose contradictions are increasingly polarized along the shaky borders of the two-sided Sudan.

#### **Central Africa: CAR and DRC**

In Central African Republic (CAR), April the 5<sup>th</sup> former President, Ange-Félix Patassé, died at 74. In 2003 the incumbent President François Bozizé, who has won the presidential elections of January the 23<sup>rd</sup>, had removed Patassé from power.

As per the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), meanwhile the cooling of relations between Kinshasa and Brazzaville in connection with the still mysterious attack at the palace of President Joseph Kabila on 27 February, the election timetable was finally fixed, setting out the single round of presidential and legislative elections to 28 November.

**Southern Africa: Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles, South Africa and SADC**

At the end of May in Moroni, Ikililou Dhoinine has sworn in as the seventh President-elect of the Union of Comoros, independent from France since 1975. The investiture comes seven months after his actual election, occurred December 28. At any rate, the long wait before assuming the presidency was the result of a political agreement, much criticized by the opposition.

Concerning Madagascar, June 12, in Johannesburg, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) at the end of an extraordinary summit has finally given its clearance for the return of the former President of Madagascar, Marc Ravalomanana, who, still exiled in South Africa since March 2009, when the coup of the current President of the Transitional Government of Madagascar, Andry Rajoelina, took place, would risk to be arrested, if crossed the boundaries, because an ordinary court sentenced him as responsible of the killing of some demonstrators in February 2009. The former President, on the other hand, rejects the verdict and has proposed that be the ICC to open an investigation into the facts. In Gaborone, the capital of Botswana and SADC headquarters, from 6 to 8 June a meeting dedicated to the delicate question of the transition in Madagascar was held. Even this time the summit, as in the case of previous high-level meetings in Maputo, Pretoria and Windhoek, is ended in a stalemate, which is why the European Parliament passed a resolution, stating that at present Rajoelina is not in the position to organize any free and fair election. The SADC, which has expelled Madagascar from the Organization, is operating a difficult mediation between the main political parties, with the aim of a preparatory agreement towards the upcoming elections.

In the Seychelles, incumbent President, James Michel, was re-elected at the first round in late May.

In South Africa, even if the African National Congress won with over 60 per cent of preferences the South African municipal elections in late May, the opposition presses forward.

June 5, in Beijing, his Chinese counterpart, Hu Jintao, has received Namibian President, Hifikepunye Pohamba, as from 2010 turning President of SADC. The two leaders also recalled the occasion of the “China-SADC Trade Fair and Investment Forum” held in May 28 to 20 in South Africa, to stress again the importance of the RECs, such as SADC, particularly in the domains of infrastructure, energy and water, fisheries and telecommunications. Last year, the volume of trade between SADC and China was over 60 billion dollars. SADC counts fifteen member states: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

*Conclusions*

From a commercial point of view, trade competition between China and India are a major factor within the economically more and more performing African context. The India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)-II was held in Addis Ababa (20-26 May 2011), while its first edition took place in 2008. In 2009-2010 the Afro-Indian bilateral agreements have reached 21.7 billion euros, still a lot less than the Chinese, whose presence is much more rooted, due to a smarter Beijing long-term Pan-African strategy, dating back to the early Nineties.

From a political point of view, from June 30 to July 1, the Seventeenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the AU will take place in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the country holding the turning presidency of the Union for 2011. The Summit will be dedicated to youth empowerment for sustainable development. As usual, the high-level meeting shall be preceded

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by the Twenty-second session of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (23-24 June), and by the Nineteenth session of the Executive Council (26-28 June). Apart from the official core team of the Summit, a special focus will undoubtedly be given to Libya.

Yet, the main African intergovernmental body, namely the AU, has tried to play its natural role in both Ivorian and Libyan crisis, without being able to be the major player, because of both lack of resources in the former case and its conflict of interests in the latter, but most importantly because of the interference of more powerful external actors.

## European Defence Initiatives



### **The Common Security and Defence Policy failures against the current upheavals in the Arab world**

*Lorenzo Striuli*

*Several European countries, in the last years, had adopted rapprochement policies towards Gheddafi's Libya, that can be considered to be at least questionable, because they were addressed to a man who represented, for forty years (with terrorism, military adventurism, "days of rage" against Italy, illegal immigration sponsorship or with all the typical satrap-like foolishness) an element of permanent instability in the southern Mediterranean. This point has never been argued in depth; quite the opposite, it has been accepted by many with unavailability or indifference.*

It is much more less widespread treated, however, that, in the course of the nowadays' general upheavals of the Arab world, there has been a general failure of several international partnership initiatives, and for a lot of them the European Union played a central role in their establishment, as in the case of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (the so-called Barcellona process) and the Mediterranean Union (whose too much high initial expectations had already become quite ambitious for some years).

In this situation, the blatant failure of any common security and defence policy among European countries, after a dozen years from the first attempts of this much-sought European ambition (dating back to the beginning of the 50s), hasn't been analyzed at all, even if it has been abruptly highlighted by the Libyan crisis.

Let us start with this last issue, so we may deal with the others above-mentioned.

#### **The Libyan affair**

During the last years, there have been several attempts to establish an ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy) at first and a CSDP (Common Security Defence Policy) later, following the Lisbon Treaty, and we heard many boasts on European armies (how can we forget the pathetic affair of European Rapid Reaction Force?), on NATO as an obsolete heritage from the Cold War and on outstanding new entities and decision-making processes able to guarantee the management of global and full spectrum missions. But the reality relies upon the fact that it is the political will of the member States to shape the institutional bodies of the international organizations and not the contrary.

Actually, most of the ESDP and CSDP missions completed since 2003 have been small-sized, with a limited impact and in some cases led by one country for its own interest. Other operations originated from former NATO missions, only by changing the coat of arm to the same troops. NATO, quite often described by some politicians and (many) commentators and scholars in a typical "relic of Cold War" crisis, actually continues to pose as one of the most successful

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military alliance of the history and, in the last years it has even happened that one of the main actors among the member states of the European Union, France, decided to re-join it with a full membership. And it is under NATO auspices that Paris has decided to get involved in operations over Libya, at the door of that European Union that in these last few years promoted global ambitions' hopes. Therefore, if in 1999 NATO led the operations in Kosovo, in this manner spreading a certain amount of disappointment among European countries that established in 2003 the ESDP, nowadays, in 2011, the "defunct" NATO is still the protagonist of the events.

We are not surprised at all of this outcome, because we did not belong to the above mentioned community of (many) "CSDP fanatics" commentators and scholars, and in several occasions we pointed out, in the last decade, the clear and simple truth that every country has a single military tool (the national armed forces) and, since nearly all the European states are both NATO members and European members, we cannot understand why they should make it available for two (expensive) supranational military institutions that very often share the same doctrines and, in nearly all the cases, are based on the same structures and capabilities, both the national ones as well as the shared ones.

In several circumstances analysts and observers highlighted how the American involvement is able to imprint such substantial European countries' orientation for NATO, thanks to the better capabilities United States can guarantee (and thus the better chances of success for every intervention). However, this statement can be considered, in our opinion, only partially true, because the military intervention in Libya has showed how the United States has been reluctant to pose as a protagonist in that situation, where they only played a certain role in the very first stages of the operations. Therefore, we can assist to the fact that the European countries, considered by "militant pro-Europe supporters" as too bound to NATO by the American pressure, nevertheless continue to rely on the supremacy of this organization for their common military affairs.

It is on the other hand true that, in the past, some of the above-mentioned pro-Europe supporters had understood all that well before the crisis in Libya, by observing the reality of the evolution, during the years, of CSDP missions. In this sense, some commentators as well as political decisions focused mainly on the importance of improving mechanisms of community foreign policies, common diplomacies, etc. For them, indeed, there was the hope that the strengthening of the role of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy followed the Lisbon Treaty as well as the establishment of the European External Action Service would be the prodrome for a real European common security and defence identity. But also in this case the Libyan crisis can be considered as a "cold shower". Indeed, the military intervention has been requested mainly by Great Britain and (especially) France, and a lot of other countries that, at the end, have chosen to join them have shown an at least "reluctant enthusiasm". Even the recognition of the Libyan opposition forces' provisional government (the so-called National Transitional Council) happened without a shared plan, and a lot of important diplomatic issues linked to this move were never approached in a genuine common European discussion until the last European Council (which addressed only a some of the most sensitive aspects of the situation). If these are the results of CFSP after the Lisbon Treaty, we wonder if all the efforts made for the EEAS establishment by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Lady Ashton are worthy.

The only CSDP initiative linked to the Libyan affair has been, at least till now, quite emblematic. Indeed, the Council of the European Union activated, on April 1<sup>st</sup>, the legal

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framework for the so-called “EUROFOR Libya”, a small-sized mission (provided with a budget of 7,9 million Euros) mainly charged with humanitarian assistance goals, located in the Operational Headquarters in Rome and placed under the responsibility of the Italian Rear Admiral Claudio Gaudiosi. The operation should be working for four months after the achievement of the Initial Operational Capability that, however, is still in doubt. “EUROFOR Libya”, indeed, should have been launched as soon the Council had approved the OPLAN (Operation Plan) and the ROE (Rules of Engagement), obviously a move for which it is necessary to set up a CONOPS (Concept of Operations). The latter, however, hasn’t been yet adopted, mainly because of the unexpected Swedish opposition, a member state of the European Union but not of NATO that prefers to join the operations related to the Libyan crisis with the NATO “Unified Protector” air mission, but not with... the EU sponsored humanitarian mission! The main reason for this outcome may be traced to the instability of the ground situation, that would jeopardize the safety of the personnel potentially deployed. Nevertheless, according to what has been leaked by the specialized press, the drafted CONOPS is mainly focused to a mere coordination with the United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the establishing of special humanitarian corridors. It is than be suggested that, likely, the Swedish position can be explained with some fears (actually not only Swedish) that with “EUFOR Libya” France would potentially find in future a way to justify the deployment of troops on the ground and, in defiance of any common security and defense policy, many member states have become quite tired to follow the recent French activism in the Libyan crisis. At the end, in the course of the meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers held in Luxembourg on April 12<sup>th</sup>, the mission’s CONOPS was not approved, and the French Foreign Affairs Minister Alain Juppe stated that there will not be a military role for any European Union operation regarding Libya, a declaration almost immediately endorsed by a similar statement of Lady Ashton. The CSDP irrelevance in such a serious crisis for Europe was thus sanctioned again.

For the above-mentioned pro-Europe supporters these failures might be seen as a victory for the American administration against the little loved EU-sponsored military policies. Such a point of view, in our opinion, cannot be shared. Indeed, the Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, during his last journey in Europe in his role, explained, in one of his speech (held in Brussels on June 10<sup>th</sup> at the “Security and Defence Agenda” think tank), his doubts about the future of NATO. If it is true that, in such a speech, he was mainly referring to the too much different perspectives experienced with the European allies in Afghanistan (especially with the Netherlands and Germany), on the Libyan affairs, on the other hand, he stated that “While every alliance member voted for the Libya mission, less than half have participated at all, and fewer than a third have been willing to participate in the strike mission. Frankly, many of those allies sitting on the sidelines do so not because they do not want to participate, but simply because they can’t. The military capabilities simply aren’t there”. The capabilities Gates mentioned are related to the operational intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance structures and, for the same considerations, the European allies often have already demanded the return of a USA military involvement in the operations against Gaddafi. At this moment (and maybe in the near future as well) it is highly unluckily that USA will adhere to such requests, but, nevertheless, some of their technical specialists continue to be committed in the operations over Libya in order to compensate for the European impossibility to completely make it by themselves.

Gates, impressively, stated also that “the mightiest military alliance in history is only 11 weeks into an operation against a poorly armed regime in a sparsely populated country – yet many allies are beginning to run short of munitions, requiring the US, once more, to make up the

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difference [...] The blunt reality is that there will be dwindling appetite and patience in the US Congress – and in the American body politic writ large – to expend increasingly precious funds on behalf of nations that are apparently unwilling to devote the necessary resources or make the necessary changes to be serious and capable partners in their own defence. Indeed, if current trends in the decline of European defense capabilities are not halted and reversed, future US political leaders – those for whom the Cold War was not the formative experience that it was for me – may not consider the return on America's investment in Nato worth the cost”.

### **The European Union position regarding the other upheavals in the Arab world**

For other pre-civil war situations hitting the Arab world, the European countries made both independent and common efforts, at least with a balanced tune. If on February the United Kingdom cancelled 156 military equipment export licenses for Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Bahrain (for the first two, however, at the time there had already been a change of government), and straight afterwards France did the same for Bahrain and Libya, a similar decision was taken on a communitarian level on May 13<sup>th</sup> by the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the European Union member states for Yemen and Bahrain.

Nevertheless, some clear contradictions can be registered. For example, when in the first days of June there were rumors of the flight of the Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh (actually in the Saudi Arabia for medical treatment after being wound during an RPG attack against the presidential palace), some of the protagonists of the above-mentioned quasi-embargo measures were all the same quite worried. For example, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs William Hague said in television that there were reasons to be afraid that the local terrorist organization “Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula” can rise to power in Sana'a; straight afterwards, in a public occasion, the President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek made a similar statement.

At any rate, regarding cooperation and recovery assistance measures, the European Union decided to add 250 million Euros per year, up to 2013, in addition to the 1,9 billion per year already in budget for the development aids for the sixteen European union neighbor states (among which there are six Eastern Europe states). Other funds will come from the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other bilateral commitments carried out by single member states. This strategy could be crucial for the mitigation of the problems of the Arab world, by considering that the figures show, that because of war and instabilities, there will be losses for 340 billion Euros for Libya (the number is likely to soar) and 4 billion Euros only considering the Egyptian tourist industry. Funds will be channeled mainly into the so-called Civil Society Facility and the European Endowment for Democracy project, aimed at promoting best practices with regard to unions, job empowerment, scholarships and local government and justice system reforms.



## ***The fifth modernization***

*Nunziante Mastrolia*

*How stable is the China model? This is a frequently asked question nowadays. So frequent that one may suspect that is another way to speak about the 1980s Kennedy declinism.*

*That question, in fact, is becoming the mirror of western fears, or more exactly, the fears that we western people, with our democratic and market economy systems, we are for the first time on the wrong side of the history, whilst “the balance of global power is shifting inexorably in China’s favour”. A winning and shining China model vis a vis the failure of liberal economies.*

This will be the future? Will China succeed in conciliating its authoritarian political system with the market economy? Let me anticipate the answer. No, China will not succeed. Because China is not a model, rather is an experiment, that has failed yet once. Let me better explain with the help of the great British historian Arnold Toynbee.

Spreading world-wide, the Western civilization puts constantly under siege the other cultures. In the *World and the West* Toynbee writes: “In the encounter between the world and the West that has been going on for four or five hundred years, the world, not the West, is the party that, up to now, has had the significant experience. It has not been the West that has been hit by the world; it is the world that has been hit - and hit hard - by the West”. It’s a real cultural aggression.

The civilization that is under attack has only two way to escape from the siege: can reject completely the western culture and close hermetically the door to the world; or they have to completely give up their cultures and accept every - cultural, political and technological – institution of the West. There is no third way; there is no chance of reaching a compromise.

However, this is a very dramatic choice. This is the reason why the closed societies that have met the West, have tried to follow a third path (with the exception of Mustafa Kemal). Even the Chinese Empire chose this third path, after the military defeat and the occupation imposed by Europeans and by the Japanese.

After the two Opium war “the British, and also other foreign power following at their heels, dominated but never quite subjugated the Chinese. China did manage to escape the utter ignominy of India, which was completely conquered and incorporated into the British empire”

The military defeat and occupation were a deep humiliation for an Empire that perceived itself as “the center of world civilization”. Because these cultural shock the bureaucratic elite became aware of the chinese weakness and of the compelling necessity of reforms in order to avoid to become a colony.

To escape this fate the Chinese Empire had to get the western weaponry to expel the invaders: this was, in fact, the core aim of the imperial reformers, also named the Self- Strengthening movement. “Zeng Guofan and especially Li Hongzhang, the two main heroes of the civili war



with the Taipings, emerged as enthusiastic advocates of Self-Strengthening and emphasized selective adaptation of Western technology, particularly military technology. Many Chinese during the Self-Strengthening period were convinced that China could retain all of its traditional heritage and needed only to learn how to make and use the superior weaponry of the West to overcome foreign domination (...) These modernization efforts appeared impressive but ultimately proved to be limited in scope and vision". Why? Because "The advocates of self-strengthening(...) did not understand that the key to West's great military power was not base on technological superiority alone but also on its social, political, and economic systems. Experience ultimately showed that equaling the West in military power would entail many more changes in China than the Self-Strengtheners were willing to contemplate".

Toynbee writes: "Technology operates on the surface of life, and therefore it seems practicable to adopt a foreign technology without putting oneself in danger of ceasing to be able to call one's soul one's own. This notion, that, in adopting a foreign technology, one is incurring only a limited liability may, of course, be a miscalculation. The truth seems to be that all the different elements of a culture-pattern have an inner connexion with each other, so that, if one abandons one's own traditional technology and adopts a foreign technology instead, the effect of this change on the technological surface of life will not remain confined to the surface, but will gradually work its way down to the depths till the whole of one's traditional culture has been undermined and the whole of the foreign culture has been given entry, bit by bit, through the gap made in the outer ring of one's cultural defences by the foreign technology's entering wedge". This is a true transfusion process that will end "only when all the essential elements of radioactivity society have been implanted in the body of the society attacked, because Western society only then can function perfectly"

This is the reason why China will not have "guns and sails" but the republican revolution of Sun Yat-sen. Briefly, the cultural and institutional modernization always follows as a shadow economic and technological modernization. Then the Mao reaction will close the doors of China to the world refusing any touch with the Western world.

Forgetting this failed experiment Deng puts China on the same path. Interviewed by Oriana Fallaci Deng said: "No matter to what degree we open up to the outside world and admit foreign capital, its relative magnitude will be small and it can't affect our system of socialist public ownership of the means of production. Absorbing foreign capital and technology and even allowing foreigners to construct plants in China can only play a complementary role to our effort to develop the productive forces in a socialist society". And then "we cannot say that everything developed in capitalist countries is of a capitalist nature. For instance, technology, science -- even advanced production management is also a sort of science -- will be useful in any society or country. We intend to acquire advanced technology, science and management skills to serve our socialist production".

Deng was wrong. Opening the doors of a closed society, as was the maoist China, he started the transfusion process, that will end only when the fifth modernization will be accomplished. The attempt to graft an open society within a closed society cannot succeed without to be overwhelmed. Most recent side-effect of this merging attempt is the schizophrenia between the social aspirations and political system.

Just take a look at what is happening now in China to have a confirmation: while the Communist party is in the middle of a Maoist revival, more and more people are demanding political and social rights. However, even from within the political elite mixed messages arrive.

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Bo Xilai is transforming Chongqing, the huge metropolitan area where is Secretary of the party, in a political model that appeals to the highest echelons of the party. Just come to power, Bo launched a tough fight against crime and at the same time began a massive revival of Maoism and revolutionary slogans from the 1960s.

On the opposite the premier Wen Jiabao quite openly supports the cause of political reforms, arguing that if China does not proceed in this way the future could be very dull.

The position of Wen does not convince all observers. Many argues that Wen attends a precise task: heighten the expectations of those who hope in a country's political evolution, hold so high the hope, and to avoid uprisings. Nothing but a decoy or, as others write, the greatest Chinese actor.

However few recall that Wen Jiabao on the night of 19 May 1989 was in Tiananmen Square next to Zhao Ziyang, then General Secretary of the party, which was conducive to the start of democratic reforms. Zhao was among the demonstrators to get them to leave the square, in order to avoid a bloodbath. Things then went differently. Zhao was placed under house arrest, died in 2005; the Politburo decreed martial law. Deng did deploy tanks against the students. The political sensitivity of Wen Jiabao pressing for political reforms perhaps has never changed since then.

These contradictions cannot be explained only as a struggle between factions ahead of the XVIII Communist Party Congress. These contradictions tell us that the transfusion process is continuing. This means that tensions will increase.

Opening to capitalism and world trade has given China a spectacular economic development. However, opening China to the West, means also to start the transfusion. A process that will stop only when will arrive the fifth modernization. This natural evolution in 1989 was stopped by force.

The fifth modernization is becoming increasingly required not only for the worsening of the social conditions within the country; not only because of the echo of the jasmine revolution arriving from North Africa; and not only because authorities are closing every space of dissent with more fury. Rather because if the transfusion process will not be total and complete, the Chinese economic machine may collapse. A Western-style political and institutional reform is even an economic necessity if China does not want to take the path of economic stagnation. Briefly "peace and prosperity may depend on the very sort of political reform the party has tried so hard to avoid".

Such signals are multiplying. An example for all: recently the Global Times reflected on the fact that more and more students, especially those who have achieved excellent results, choose to study in the United States: "It was hard to imagine a few years ago that a top high school student would choose to directly go and study abroad, instead of opting for top domestic universities." And the reason is – as the Party's newspaper writes - that "genuine intellectual property and critical thinking are the two most important basics for a world-class university, but these are largely absent among universities in China". Briefly, Chinese universities lack "critical thinking". An element that is the essence of the West and that is heresy in a political system like that of China. Therefore, if China wants to continue on the development needs of all other elements characteristic of open societies. It is a natural and necessary process.

This means that experiments of mediation fail. Secondly it means that the fundamental question – close and react harshly to instances of change or incorporate also the political institutions of the West – occurs continually to those regimes that have tried the mediation path.



Hence, when the party will be faced with this old dilemma – liberalise or step up repression - which will the answer? First, let's consider some elements. After the experiment of Self-Strengthening there was the attempt of SunYat-sen to add at the technological and economical modernization, a political and institutional modernization. The Mao Long March then was the answer. Mao tightly shut doors of China to the outside world and the West.

Secondly, today's revival Maoist is neither folk nor temporary. Now that the tide rises, the Mao reaction regains a sense for a political leadership that realizes that the alternative is the loss of the primacy of the Communist Party of China. Bo Xilai is not isolated. For example, Li Changchun, the head of the Propaganda, recently ordered to the mass media of the Communist party to reinforce the "patriotic education". Last 16 June vice President Xi said that it is necessary that anyone should read the classics of the Chinese Communist party.

This means that the party will choose repression. The current leadership, and most certainly also the one that will emerge from the XVIII Congress, will respond with force and will stifle any instance that threatens to weaken the absolute role of the party. One thing that they are already doing, if we consider that, as *The Economist* writes, "In the past few months the police have launched an all-out assault on civil society, arresting dozens of lawyers, NGO activists, bloggers and even artists. The Arab revolutions have spooked the leadership. From its perspective, the system looks vulnerable".

We have to take in account an other element. The transfusion process can be accelerated or delayed by unexpected factors. This year, tens of thousands of elected bodies will be renewed at every level, from village councils to the National People's Congress. In recent years the leadership in Beijing has much emphasized these elections as "grass root democracy". But these elections have never been democratic, because candidates were imposed by the party. However, the rhetoric is sometimes useful and someone begun taking literally the slogan of Beijing and many people have started to stand for election without the approval of the Party.

### **A single spark can start a prairie fire**

In recent weeks, in fact, the most debated issue in the Chinese blogosphere was the participation of "ordinary people" in the elections at the local level: real independent candidates. It seems that everything is started in late april, when the 24-year-old Liu Ping, a laid-off worker of a State-owned enterprise, announced her candidacy for the local People's Congress elections in her city in Jiangxi. After Liu, a number of bloggers began on social media to do the same, including a popular author and a former soccer commentator, Li Chengpeng, who in May announced on his blog his candidacy in the city of Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province.

Liu will be that single spark? It is very difficult to say. But there is an interesting thing: these independent candidates formally invoke the rights guaranteed by the Constitution of China. In this case, the article 34: "All citizens of the People's Republic of China who have reached the age of 18 have the right to vote and stand for election". Many candidates, in fact, aim to make the Chinese aware of their political and civil rights formally recognized by the Constitution.

In the Constitution of China, indeed, 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

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“Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the right to criticize and make suggestions to any state organ or functionary”.

Therefore, the party has not yet communicated an official position on the issue of independent candidates, but the Global Times, on 30 May, writes: “Just like opposition parties in the West, independent candidates in China represent different opinions on the political scene. Since China's political system is based on the cooperation of multiple parties under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, it would not suit the participation of candidates who choose an opposing attitude toward the current system”. Quite clear.

No official position, therefore, Liu Ping on 13 May was arrested because his campaign was illegal. Liu remained in prison until 18 May; on 15 May, meanwhile, elections were held. After the release she said "no matter what the outcome of the election, I've already won".

There is one last item that should be noted: the political vision of Wen Jiabao is almost identical to that of independent candidates: social justice and political and civil rights.

In conclusion it is conceivable a worsening of the internal stability in China, due to the clash of two different political needs: a hunger for political and civil rights that comes from below and the hardening of the position of the party, which is in no willing to abandon its role of absolute dominance.



## **Stability and Development in Afghanistan: a Role for India**

*Claudia Astarita*

*Nobody can be surprised noticing the “ambiguous relationship” between New Delhi and Beijing or New Delhi and Washington. Even in the 1950s, following the emergence of the second Communist threat in Asia (China), while the United States immediately recognized India as a potential important ally in its anti-Communist fight, New Delhi has always been aware that the consequences of openly supporting the United States would have been losing all chances to compromise with China.*

During the following decades, despite the frequent ups and downs in terms of temporary realignments, New Delhi has always been faithful to its policy of non-alignment for one main reason: India could not afford to remain close to the United States neglecting the impact of Chinese rise in the region where it was geographically located. Even American analysts recognize that if India were not in Asia, it would have surely adopted a more pro-Western position. In 1953, the Department of State openly admitted that the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had understandable reasons to pursue what the US called a “middle-of-the-road policy”. During a private conversation in Washington, American diplomats explained to their Italian counterparts that “Indian foreign policy, despite being impossible to follow, is totally understandable. New Delhi’s government did not choose its strategy because its understanding of contemporary international situation led it to a different conclusion from the one reached by the United States. On the contrary, India has chosen its path following national interest. Despite being a big and densely populated nation, India is also a poor and weak country. Accordingly, since it is not in the position of assuming the responsibilities of any strong action, it prefers maintaining its middle-of-the-road policy, although this implies bearing the costs of generous concessions”. (Telespresso n. 14128/4728, Italian Embassy in Washington, 28 October 1953)

The same is happening today in South Asia, where different interests are pushing New Delhi to keep an ambiguous position. India appears as continuously changing her interest in strengthening its relations with the United States, China, sometimes Europe, and recently Afghanistan. It is a matter of fact that New Delhi’s government swings depends on its interests in focusing on its current priorities: keep South Asia as a stable region; avoid any direct contrast with the main antagonists in the area, China and United States; avoid any local repercussion linked to the Afghan conflict and post-war stabilization; assure the country a continuous supply of energy resources, raw materials, and export markets to push national growth; and avoid losing power and influence in the Indian Ocean. To reach these aims, India needs to structure a more independent foreign policy.



To show its determination in gaining autonomy in the region, at a strategic-military level New Delhi decided last April to exclude two American companies, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, from its estimated \$11 billion 126 fighter jet deal, confirming the level of deterioration in India-US relations from the nuclear liability law onwards. With this unexpected move India showed the United States that their connection is not exclusive as New Delhi can decide any time to strengthen its strategic as well as economic or political connections with several other countries. Following this path, Indian has not only shortlisted two European competitors, Rafale and Eurofighter, for the \$11 billion deal, but is has also decided at the end of May to resume defense dialogue with China after a gap of one year when New Delhi suspended military exchanges with Beijing in the wake of the latter's refusal to grant permissions to the chief of the northern army command Lt Gen B S Jaswal, which controls the region of Indian Kashmir, for an official trip to China. Both countries realized that their economic and political relations are too important to be hampered by a "misunderstanding".

Finally, and partially counterbalancing April exclusion of Boeing and Lockheed from the appealing bid, in early June the Indian government approved a plan to buy ten C-17 Globemaster III aircraft from Boeing Co. for \$4.1 billion, in the nation's largest military transaction with the US.

According to New Delhi, showing its determination in strengthening ties with different countries, India will be able to introduce itself as a reliable and strong country pursuing an autonomous, although ambiguous, policy in the region.

During the last few weeks, another important announcement intervened in partially modifying South Asian equilibrium: United States troops withdrawal from Afghanistan. Before focusing on the implication of Washington decision, it is useful to review Indian involvement in Afghanistan.

It goes without saying that New Delhi is particularly interested in playing a significant role in Afghanistan for several reasons: first, to fight terrorism; second, to prevent either the US or China/Pakistan from becoming too powerful in the area; third, to secure itself more stable energy supplies.

During the last few years India has progressively enlarged its contribute to Afghanistan reconstruction, focusing on sustaining local economy and internal development with the aim of gaining popularity and trust among local people. Aware of the limited role New Delhi could play in terms of influencing military and political circles, the country wisely decided to build infrastructure such as roads, hospitals and educational centers, as well as to engage itself in capacity-building like training the civil bureaucracy and security forces, providing scholarship for Afghan students and assistance to women's groups through self-employment generation schemes, strengthening its positive image in the neighboring country.

India's soft power approach, with emphasis on capacity building, has been well received and appreciated by the Afghans. Unlike other international donors, who have relied on their own agencies and subcontracting (thereby creating parallel structures of governance), most of India's aid is currently channeled through the Afghan government and works in conjunction with local needs and priorities. By directing most of its aid through the official Afghan authorities, India succeeded in consolidating its legitimacy and credibility.

Today, in view of the just started American withdrawal that is supposed to be completed by July 2012, it becomes even more important for New Delhi to better structure its Afghan policy. It cannot be underestimated that during the Taliban period Afghan territory has been used by Pakistan against India's interests. Accordingly, while remaining faithful to its basic idea of

rebuilding Afghanistan as a stable democracy in order to avoid the country from re-emerging as a hotbed of terrorism, India cannot lose this chance for strengthening its position in the area. Building on India's historical and cultural ties with Afghanistan, New Delhi should continue investing in reconstruction works while reinforcing bilateral and multilateral cooperation with regional powers to fulfill its strategic goals and contemporary contribute to the consolidation of a stable Afghanistan "that cannot be too dependent on Pakistan".

A critical analysis of Indo-Pakistan relations is crucial to understand India's position in Afghanistan. Islamabad is scared by any initiative New Delhi takes in the area, as the Indian presence there is valued as detrimental to Pakistan national interest. In order to reassure Pakistan, India has recently resumed their bilateral dialogue and the country even agreed to further discuss the detail of the implementation of the TAPI project, which involves the creation of a 1.680 kilometers long pipeline to transport Caspian Sea natural gas (3,2 billion cubic meters per day) from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan into Pakistan and then to India. Even though an agreement has not been reached yet, the Asian Development Bank, the institution that framed the project and that is involved in its funding, remains optimistic arguing that the construction of the pipeline would be finished in time to deliver gas in early 2016. Its impact in terms of both regional stabilization and local countries energy security is evident: Afghan is expected to receive 8% of the project's revenues, an extra that will surely boost the development of the country; India will be able to secure some new routes for energy sources at a time in which it is fundamental for New Delhi to diversify its supplying countries, due to the current instability of North Africa and Middle East. However, although Pakistan has already highlighted the importance of TAPI pipeline in terms of strengthening regional cooperation as well as South Asian economic development, it remains uncertain whether New Delhi and Islamabad will decide to implement this project focusing on the advantages that it might bring or because of their long-term conflicting relations they will take a step back just to avoid their neighboring "enemy" to gain from the agreement.

Going back to India's best strategy in Afghanistan, it is argued that the country's role in Kabul has to be of minimal political engagement and expansion of the existing relationship. New Delhi should try to strengthen its presence through economic and capacity building initiatives.

Following this path, it is consistent to assume that the visit of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Afghanistan in May this year, together with his emphatic statement before the Afghan parliament that he supports a national reconciliation process in the country, testify the qualitative change in the country's policy toward the region.

This visit, which has been anticipated right after the announcement that al-Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden was killed by US commandos in the Pakistani town of Abbottabad, confirms Indian concern for the consequences of the rapid reduction of US presence in Afghanistan (it is not a coincidence that India signed the pro-Washington military agreement previously mentioned in early June), which might leave more room for a country dominated by a Taliban-influenced government friendly towards its arch-rival Pakistan.

The fact that Indian PM first visit to Kabul in six years has been welcomed by President Hamid Karzai shows that with Pakistan's international reputation damaged after the killing of Osama Bin Laden, Delhi may see an opportunity to nudge Kabul closer to its side, even though this option will force Delhi to abandon its long-term position regarding the opening of a potential dialogue with the Taliban's leadership. Actually, Indian negativity to any dialogue with the Taliban stemmed from past experience, when some India-centric militant outfits took support from the Taliban leadership in 1990s in advancing their aims and objectives. For instance, an



Indian Airlines plane was hijacked by Pakistan-based militants and landed in Taliban-controlled Kandahar in 1999, forcing India to eventually free five militants (including reporter Daniel Pearl's future killer Omar Sheikh) in exchange for the passengers.

Aware that the rapid reduction of the US presence in Afghanistan would cause them concern, as the country might become dominated by a Taliban-influenced government friendly towards Pakistan, Manmohan Singh might have accepted that the Taliban has to be part of any political resolution to the war in Afghanistan (a policy Pakistan heavily favors), hoping that thanks to a direct involvement of India in this process might guarantee a less pro-Pakistan development of Afghanistan.

In order to reach this aim, New Delhi, which is already the biggest regional donor to the country and the sixth in the international ranking, has pledged a further \$500m aids to the \$1.5bn already promised to support the country's development building new schools, roads, and boosting local agriculture.

It is obvious that the growing closeness between these two countries has infuriated Islamabad, which also wants to increase its influence in Afghanistan. At the same time, it cannot be neglected that in order to consolidate a stable country President Karzai will have to strike a balance in dealing with his demanding neighbors, as he needs Pakistan's help in reconciling with the Taliban although this rapprochement is opposed by India. However, while Singh's statement supporting the reconciliation process with the Taliban implicitly guarantees a role for Pakistan in determining Afghanistan's political future, in return Indian Prime Minister expects assurances on the security front, as well as Islamabad's acceptance of India's ties with Afghanistan, ties based on linkages of culture and history, and grounded in India's desire to grow as an Asian political and economic power by expanding its economic and political influence across the region.

Despite recent evolution and even though it is widely recognized that any chance of success in Afghanistan will eventually require détente between India and Pakistan, as the games both countries play in the country will directly impact its political stability in the coming years, Hamid Karzai's nation has represented an alternative playground for the rivalry between India and Pakistan for the last three decades, and it might remain a source of mutual distrust difficult to be cleared. Pakistan claims India is using Afghan territory and Indian consulates in the country to foment trouble in Pakistan, especially in Baluchistan. India disputes this allegation and insists that its assistance to Afghanistan is purely developmental in nature. However, the new road built with \$136m of Indian aid money from the Iranian border to the Afghan heartland will enable India to ship goods by sea to Afghanistan, strengthening an important trading relationship while weakening Pakistan's. Further, there have been attacks against Indian assets in Afghanistan, which according to the Indian government were the handiwork of Pakistani-supported militant groups.

Today, these nations have just a few options to promote realistic progress in Afghanistan. They might form a joint working group of the three countries to look into possibilities of cooperation in areas such as trade and development work to be carried out jointly in Afghanistan, or they might cooperate in securing Pashtun support on both sides of the Durand line, a vital task in bringing security to Afghanistan.

Generally speaking, India and Pakistan should both reflect on their own past actions in Afghanistan, as well as their own limitations and strengths, in framing their future Afghan policy. Although it is unlikely that the two nuclear powers can fully resolve their problems in

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the near future, they could certainly take steps towards decreasing the accumulated mistrust which continuously plays itself out in Afghanistan, often to the detriment of ordinary Afghans. Even though both countries are aware that peace and stability in Afghanistan is paramount to extinguish the flames of extremism in Pakistan, and it can also promote reconciliation and regional integration in South Asia, it remains too difficult for New Delhi and Islamabad to put aside their strategic interests and promote regional stability. Confirming this point of view, while Indian Prime Minister rushed to Afghanistan in order to strengthen its connection with Afghanistan (May 12), the Pakistani Premier Yasouf Raza Gilani announced an unexpected (and strategically-oriented) visit to China (May 17).

Officially in Beijing to commemorate 60 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries, PM Gilani visit came at a time when Pakistan was (and remains) under immense pressure from the international community on the issue of Osama Bin Laden, with the US strongly questioning the economic and technologic support they gave to Islamabad for combating terrorism.

According to President Hu Jintao, Pakistan-China relationship has always been “as deep as ocean and as high as mountains”. China already has a long history of helping Pakistan gaining military hardware -in early May Pakistan opened a new nuclear reactor in Punjab built with Chinese help and two more have already been planned. Today, Beijing is winning over Washington as the main ally of Islamabad. Indeed, even when Pakistan has been recently put in danger of isolation from the international world regarding the issue of War against Terrorism, China has not left its hand.

Despite that, it cannot be underestimated that Chinese officials worry about the fragility of the government in Islamabad and the prospects for long-term stability in a country wracked by religiously charged violence. For Beijing it is very important to see whether Islamabad will be able to surmount its security problems, particularly regarding militant Islam, a threat that China fears in its western regions. Although it is actually difficult to forecast how far China will go along with a Pakistan which shows limited or no signs of dealing with its challenge, in order to keep on counting on China’s help, at the end of May Pakistan asked Beijing to build a naval base at its southwestern port of Gawdar, expecting the Chinese navy to maintain a regular presence there, a plan that inevitably alarmed both India and the US.

In early July, in a move further straining the US-Pakistan relationship, the Obama administration announced it is going to suspend and, in some cases, to cancel millions of dollars of military aid to Islamabad. Clarifying that the cutoffs do not affect any immediate deliveries of military sales to Pakistan, like F-16 fighter jets, or non-military aid, American officials added that they would probably resume equipment deliveries and aid if relations improve and Pakistan pursues terrorists more aggressively.

Although several analysts consider this choice as short-sighted and likely to produce greater distance between the two countries, it is evident that the regional equilibrium is rapidly changing. With India struggling to gain a prominent position in South Asian affairs after the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan and Pakistan’s need to consolidate its relationship with China since US announced their partial disengagement from the country, the connections Washington and Beijing will maintain in the region will play a crucial role in Afghan transition. While it is realistic to imagine that Washington cannot risk leaving Islamabad to autonomously shape its own destiny, it is also true that in view of New Delhi-Kabul rapprochement, Pakistan will be pushed into Chinese arms. However, while Beijing is interested in consolidating its position in the area to US detriment, Beijing knows that Pakistan can be a problematic country and, further, it cannot afford to risk for Islamabad to damage its (economic



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more than political) relation and connections with India. Finally, despite the military withdrawal, Afghanistan transition remains crucial for the United States as well. Aware that it is too early to judge what is described as “China’s tremendously fast-growing involvement in the area”, Washington needs to strengthen its connections with an India struggling to play an important role in South Asia. As confirmed by the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s visit in New Delhi in late July, “in a neighborhood of failing and fragile states, a democratic and stable India with tremendous economic growth trajectory is surely a country the US would like to partner with”. Even though India needs to keep its economic links with China and is aware that regional stabilization will be impossible without the involvement of Pakistan, to feel safer in a context in which the connection between Beijing and Islamabad becomes stronger and stronger it might decide to reinforce its ties with the United States, therefore modifying the scenario of a more autonomous and less American-oriented India that appeared as dominant just a few months ago.



## **The Brazilian and Venezuelan power system and the election in Peru**

Alessandro Politi

*During the second quarter of 2011 two structural changes have taken place regarding WTO and green policies.*

*Brazil has gained in importance at global level by inducing, through a WTO arbitration on orange juice exports, the USA to change long standing and controversial antidumping regulations and, implicitly, to abandon in part the idea that American exceptionalism is a practicable policy.*

*Bolivia has set a remarkable precedent in the field of green policies by approving in parliament the Mother Earth Law: defining nature as a juridical subject, with specific rights and bodies to enforce these rights, may have in future an impact at United Nations level.*

*In the same period, a serious illness of the actual president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, has exposed the lack of credible successors or replacements for the government of the country. Practical solutions need at least some temporary and partial delegation of powers, otherwise the government could risk instability.*

*The current narco-wars in Latin America have revealed two major developments: the Mexican organised crime war could end with two major victors (Sinaloa and Los Zetas cartels), while at continental level there is a governmental and criminal interaction between Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela. The recent effective collaboration between these two countries against Colombian narco-guerrillas could be jeopardised by the destabilising influence of Mr. Chavez's illness.*

*The election of Peruvian president, Humala Ollanta, has a significance that goes beyond the usual debate if this politician will be in favour or against so called free-market policies. The most important characteristics of this leader are: economic policies that put together growth and social development; programmes of technological modernisation and the effort to build wider continental alliances around a link with Brazil.*

### **Brazil is changing the rules of the trade game**

June has seen a historical change of the US attitude regarding antidumping rules and Brazil was responsible for the breakthrough. For the first time Washington, after having lost a World Trade Organisation arbitration against Brazil, has renounced its right to appeal and has promised corrective actions in order to right the wrong.

The controversy between the two countries, which was duly brought before the WTO in order to solve the issue, regarded anti-dumping tariffs imposed by the USA on Brazilian orange juice imports. Both Brazil and the US are major world producers and competitors and, moreover, the United States are the most important market for Brazilian producers.

At first sight one might imagine that the tariffs were imposed after significant pressures by the farmers' lobby on Congress, but in reality the Department of Commerce (DoC) used since more than a decade a standard method of calculation for evaluating if an imported good was sold at a fair price. This method is called “zeroing”.

*“In a typical antidumping investigation, DOC calculates weighted-average net prices for each product sold in the United States. It then compares each of those U.S. prices to the product’s normal value, which can be calculated a number of different ways but is ideally the weighted-average net price of the most similar product sold in the home market.<sup>3</sup> Zeroing is introduced after the comparison of the U.S. price and normal value. When normal value is higher than the U.S. price, the difference is treated as the dumping amount for that sale or that comparison. When, however, the U.S. price is higher, the dumping amount is set to zero rather than its calculated negative value. All dumping amounts are then added and divided by the aggregate export sales amount to yield the company’s overall dumping margin. Zeroing thus eliminates “negative dumping margins” from the dumping calculation. In so doing, it can create dumping margins out of thin air.”<sup>1</sup>*

**Table 1: Zeroing**

| Product Code   | Net U.S. Price | Net H.M.* Price | Unit Margin | U.S. Quantity | Total Margin | Total PUDD | Total Value |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| 1              | \$1.00         | \$0.50          | -\$0.50     | 100           | -\$50        | \$0        | \$100       |
| 2              | \$1.00         | \$1.00          | \$0.00      | 100           | \$0          | \$0        | \$100       |
| 3              | \$1.00         | \$1.00          | \$0.00      | 100           | \$0          | \$0        | \$100       |
| 4              | \$1.00         | \$1.00          | \$0.00      | 100           | \$0          | \$0        | \$100       |
| 5              | \$1.00         | \$1.50          | \$0.50      | 100           | \$50         | \$50       | \$100       |
| Total Margin   |                |                 |             |               | \$0          |            |             |
| Total PUDD     |                |                 |             |               |              | \$50       |             |
| Total Value    |                |                 |             |               |              |            | \$500       |
| Percent Margin |                |                 |             |               |              |            | 10.00%      |

\*Home Market

The practice goes back as far as 1996 and it has been consistently condemned in any litigation brought before the WTO Appellate Body, the first important loser being the EU in a case involving Indian imported bed linens (1998). Since then the EU has constantly tracked the use of zeroing by the US DoC, regularly raising the issue in the WTO Appellate Body and winning the arbitrations.

The event signals different trends:

- ▲ Brazil is becoming more important not only regionally, but also globally;
- ▲ The USA has changed attitude due to the different political vision of the Obama administration and to the need of closing unproductive confrontations, in order to facilitate the reorganization of their own economy;
- ▲ It is a significant retreat from the old position of American exceptionalism.

<sup>1</sup>Cfr. [http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=10677](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=10677), for the quote and the table. PUDD (Potential Uncollected Dumping Duties).

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Less resolved is another trade problem that is surfacing between Brazil and China. In April president Dilma Rousseff met her Chinese colleague Hu Jin Tao in Beijing, signing more than 20 bilateral agreements together with 16 agreements between companies. Nevertheless she started also broaching problems that are known also to China's other major business partners.

Most of the bilateral trade is based on Chinese imports of commodities and raw materials (iron ore, soya in all its forms and oil) and on Brazilian imports of cheap Chinese products. This creates a profitable but unfavourable situation for Brasilia: on one hand the economy has problems in diversifying its exports, a negative conditions for a healthy economic growth, and on the other Brazilian industries are exposed to a formidable price-based competition.

Apparently the thorny subject of an overvalued real vis-à-vis an undervalued renminbi was not mentioned, but a diplomatic silence does not imply that Brazil is not acutely aware about the issue. China, in her usual preventive negotiating way, has already agreed about the acquisition 35 Embraer E-190 regional jets, while favouring a deal to assemble the Embraer Legacy 600 executive jets at a plant in Harbin, but Hu understands that this is just a useful move, but not a solution in the eyes of the counterpart.

Brazil and China have still enough interests in common to allow manoeuvring space for these inconveniences, but, if the problem is not tackled, China could witness three negative evolutions:

- ▲ Brazil would join the US and the EU position regarding the structural trade imbalances that Beijing is de facto defending;
- ▲ China would risk to lose connections and positions in the most important Latin American market;
- ▲ The actual convergence of interests among the BRIC (Brazil Russia India China) would be undermined.

### **Ecology and law: the Bolivian precedent**

In April the legislative bodies in La Paz passed a bill on the Rights of the Mother Earth (Ley de los derechos de la Madre Tierra), detailing why and how the Earth has to be considered a juridical subject, to which rights she is entitled and through which bodies and means these rights can be protected.

The bill has undergone a rather long debate because a project of the law was presented in 2009, the bill was voted twice in 2010 and only in 2011 it has been passed. The final law is a compromise between fundamental visions of the indigenous constituency of the actual government and the requirements of a formal piece of legislation.

Nevertheless the law establishes some important and complex principles that could be supported also in wider fora like the United Nations: nature must not be killed, devastated by development, genetically altered and polluted.

To believe that this is just an Indio extravaganza without future because development imperatives are much more important, means to seriously underestimate both the pressure that indigenous movements can bring to bear on Latin American governments, especially when they are part of the majority, and the world wide concerns on environment and global sustainability. Much of the credibility of the law will depend on how the Bolivian government puts it in practice, but a first evaluation can be done by the end of this year.

### **The cracks in the Bolivarian Venezuelan system**

June has been dominated by the speculations on the health of its president, Hugo Chavez, hurriedly and rather discretely flown to Cuba and operated by trusted surgeons. Initially it was said it was a knee problem, then a pelvic abscess and finally a prostate cancer was confirmed.

For two weeks the opposition was particularly aggressive regarding the circumstance that the president was formally governing abroad, but that practically there was a power vacuum in the country. This perception was confirmed by an interesting declaration of Adan Chavez, the older brother of the president, sat that saying that Bolivarian movement had to rely not only on the electoral process, but also on armed struggle. This means that the fear of losing power was particularly strong during this period.

Eventually Mr. Chavez was able to return to Caracas and to show to the public that, if he was not completely cured, he was healthy enough to carry on his tasks. Nevertheless the crisis has shown that nothing was ready for the succession or even the temporary substitution of the Venezuelan leader. The reasons for this state of affairs are rather simple:

- △ even in democratic countries major leaders tend to create a vacuum around themselves in order to avoid competitors, although institutions assure in any case a replacement;
- △ Chavez is the charismatic leader of the government and all his possible substitutes lack the unique personality and set of allegiances necessary to govern effectively and without significant problems;
- △ As every revolution, also the Bolivarian revolution is plagued by fragmented and multiple lines of command, whose function is precisely to assure the supremacy of the charismatic leader.

△

If succession mechanisms will not be set up, the next crisis could be fatal for a government that has already serious energy and financial problems. Non programmed and programmed electric black-outs are rather frequent also in the capital and, despite the high oil prices, surpluses are systematically absorbed by special funds (like the FONDEN) and are not used to invest in furthering oil extraction and energy production, two sectors that require rapid and substantial investments.

By end June it was still unclear if a joint Brazilian-Venezuelan refinery project, carried out by Petrobras and PDVSA (Abreu Lima), would have continued to remain binationally funded or not, while the development fund FONDEN (Fondo de Desarrollo Nacional) is qualified by insiders of the oil industry as a bottomless cost centre, probably more used for political patronage operations than for profitable projects.

The repercussions of an unsecured succession are evidently also international: without a stable government in Venezuela, it will be very difficult to keep together the regional alliances set up around the ALBA-ALCA system. Basically oil money helps in consolidating common political goals for Cuba, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru around the Venezuelan leadership and in trying to establish a common market area.

Politically it has been a success but commercially the exchanges are burdened by excessive bureaucracy and are still, in the case Bolivia, rather insignificant, compared with other free trade treaties.

### **Mexico and the strategic consequences of a narco-war**

The war of the big criminal cartels in Mexico has reached levels of extension and intensity never seen before also in the past century: with a toll of 11.000 estimated dead, this internal war has all the characteristics of a Low Intensity Conflict.

Even countries with a considerable experience in the evolution of local mafias, like Italy, have never seen such a violent and quick evolution in the competition and in the changes of balance between criminal organisations. At a strategic national level the areas of influence and the main actors change at an impressive pace every six months

In the similar conflict between organised crime and governmental forces (including military units) in Colombia several years were needed to dismantle the two cartels of Medellin and Cali and the predatory militias of the AUC ( Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia - United Self Defense Forces of Colombia). While the cartels changed into more flexible networks and the AUC became the looser BACRIM (Bandas Criminales), the two narco-guerrillas (FARC and ELN) have kept their usual structure.

In Mexico most of the territory is under the influence of the main cartels (Sinaloa, Pacifico Sur, los Zetas and the imploded LFM-Templarios) and the government is having success in capturing and killing the criminal bosses, without cleaning the infiltrated zones.

At continental level during these months a significant interrelation between the events in Colombia-Venezuela-Mexico emerged: the Mexican organised crime is ready to assume a continental leadership at the expense of Colombian groups, but internal and bilateral political dynamics have brought Colombia and Venezuela to a level of collaboration against narco-guerrillas that was once unthinkable.

Within the Colombia-Venezuela-Mexico triangle there are three possible scenarios in the second half of the year:

1. The collaboration between Bogotá and Caracas diminishes the flows of cocaine towards Mexico, provoking an intensification of the fight in Mexico with the possible result that a temporary bipolar balance could emerge between the Sinaloa alliance and the Los Zetas;<sup>2</sup>
2. The political crisis in Venezuela could deepen, damaging the collaboration with Colombia. Narco-guerrillas could create another Triple Border Area this time around the city of Caballococha, at the junction of the borders among Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil, where radar coverage is low or non existent;
3. The political crisis in Venezuela could be so serious that it could affect the stability of allied governments (Cuba and Nicaragua for instance), following the dynamics observed in the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf and giving rise to a “Latin Spring”, with the drawback that organised crime could reinforce its logistics in the Caribbean basin at the expense of USA and Europe.

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<sup>2</sup> In this case the flows would be reduced also towards Europe. This would lead in turn to the exploitation of the West African route using countries like Suriname, Guyana, Brazil, etc. to send drugs to Western African destinations. A South African route could also be considered by the narco-traffickers. Moreover the bipolar balance between these two organizations could increase the role of Guatemala as an important logistic platform and contested territory.

### **Peru on the verge of a modernization**

The 5<sup>th</sup> of June, Ollanta Humala Tasso, won the presidential elections of Peru, opening another country to the wave of leftist or populist governments in Latin America, according to the different inclinations of political observers.

Most market/political analysts put the new president in the “friendly-unfriendly to markets” axis and try already to forecast which side he will take. The political co-ordinates of Ollanta are instead the following ones:

- ▲ inclusive growth,
- ▲ modernisation,
- ▲ strengthening of the institutions,
- ▲ wider nationalism,
- ▲ Brazil and different shades of like-minded governments.

This means in practice that first of all so called free-market policies have to pass the test of social cohesion before being implemented, knowing fairly well that without a healthy budget it is impossible to fund social programmes and to modernise the country.

Modernisation is the hallmark of several militaries turned into politicians and this implies the will to foster important S&T programmes. The same military background, by historical experience, could (on the negative side) entail that there could be a risk of excessive concentration of power. The way Humala acted in defence of democracy against the then president Alberto Fujimori bears interesting similarities with Colonel Charles De Gaulle behaviour in 1940. On the other hand, accepting to be judged by a military tribunal for his uprising can hint that institutional integrity matters to the new president.

Wider nationalism means, as it happened in the Middle East during the Sixties of the past century, trying to overcome post-colonial divisions in Latin America, starting with Bolivia. Unifying Bolivia and Peru, as it happened in the Nineteenth century with Marshal Andres de Santa Cruz is a fascinating project, usually associated with substantial delusions, as it was shown with the United Arab Republic experience between Egypt and Syria.

The idea instead of using Peru's central position and strategic link with Brazil in forging a chain of very roughly like minded governments from Colombia to Uruguay, thus cutting out simultaneously Chile, Argentina and Venezuela is ambitious, but relatively more feasible. This goal is viable especially if it is carried out with diplomatic, political and economic means without excessive media emphasis.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Here the role of the Foro de São Paulo (FSP; English: São Paulo Forum), a conference of left-leaning political parties and other organizations from Latin America and the Caribbean could be useful. The FSP was launched by the Brazilian PT (Workers' Party – Portuguese, Partido dos Trabalhadores) in 1990 in the city of São Paulo in order to devise political alternatives to neo-liberal policies.

## **International Organizations and Central Asia Cooperation**



### **Shanghai Cooperation Organization at ten: what's going on?**

*Lorena Di Placido*

*On 14 and 15 June 2011, in Astana was celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization foundation. The annual summit of Heads of State and Government has taken a deeper meaning, due to the considerations recalled by the achievements of a ten years activity. Anyway, many regional issues are still open while the SCO is still not able to address them.*

#### **The summit of the decade**

As usual, the presidents and top government member countries (Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan), observers (Mongolia, India, Iran, Pakistan), dialogue partners (Belarus and Sri Lanka), together with the leaders of International Organizations who have partnership with the SCO<sup>1</sup> took part in the summit.

A special role was played by Kazakhstan, the current chairman and organizer of the celebrations. For the most advanced among the Central Asian countries, the just concluded presidency came together with a series of similar experiences for other organizations such as OSCE and OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference). In this way, Kazakhstan achieved once again the international projection as recognition of the strategic value it represents, thanks to natural resources, a geographical position close to key regional actors (Russia and China), as well as the capacity to express a successful model of the post-Soviet Central Asian scenario.

The Summit final declaration contains and summarizes what has been discussed, debated and agreed by the leaders. In the document of the decade, many considerations emphasize the mechanisms of institutional interaction that enable the various areas of cooperation, such as: the fight against the three evils of extremism, terrorism and separatism, and also the action against narcotics, arms trafficking and transnational organized crime. Among the Organizations present, the United Nations has been particularly emphasized for the partnership launched with the SCO, especially as regards the trafficking of narcotics, which has Afghanistan as a source. This issue is so important for SCO that it will implement a strategy to combat drugs trafficking in the years 2011 - 2016.

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<sup>1</sup> Such as: the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Independent States – CIS, the Collective Security Treaty Organization – CSTO, the Central Asian Economic Organization - ECO, the Association of Asia and the Pacific Countries' - ASEAN, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific - ESCAP, the Eurasian Economic Organization – EurAsEC.



## ***International Organizations and Central Asia Cooperation***

The SCO members signed also a Protocol for the establishment of a Nuclear Free Zone in Central Asia, due to the sensitivity demonstrated at regional level for the use of nuclear energy only for non-military purposes.

In the document, the member states declare "The member states believe that a unilateral and unlimited build-up of missile defense in a particular Country or by a narrow group of Countries can damage the strategic stability and international security". This assumption is particularly meaningful in light of the determinations of NATO in Europe. The SCO has often been used by Russia to reaffirm its opposition to certain Western positions. In fact, at the 2008 summit in Dushanbe, held during the crisis between Russia and Georgia, in the final declaration SCO member states stressed the role of peacemaker played by Russia in the Caucasus.

The issue of membership remains in the background. The sign of a protocol containing the SCO standards to be achieved by the potential new members currently does not mean taking any decision on the enlargement. In fact, it would implicate the need of a new balance of interests and positions. The ill-concealed China veto for membership applications submitted by the observers for years continues to be effective and to allow the Organization to continue in the direction desired only by the founders.

The Declaration refers to several aspects of cooperation among the member countries: cultural, agricultural, health, finance, banking, sporting, scientific, technological, cyber threats ... In any mentioned case, the focus is always Central Asia.

### **The success and the myth**

The SCO has as "first among equals" members two countries with a specific gravity such as Russia and China. Even though they are characterized to have particularly large territories, the geographical horizon of the SCO has not been expanded and the core business of the Organization is only Central Asia, the Heartland. The Organization purpose is to coordinate and harmonize Central Asia related activities and interests of the main regional powers. From being a mere result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the heart of the Eurasian space has found new and autonomous importance, and this requires an appropriate architecture to regulate relationships and expectations of regional powers.

Ten years of the SCO activities are only a part of history that began well before the Russian-Chinese negotiations for the settlement of border issues in the early '90s, or perhaps even earlier, with a better climate for relations between the two Powers initiated by Gorbachev. Considering the history and evolution of the Organization, which has become first a forum for the promotion of CBM and then a real international legal entity, it's clear that this successful evolution has been possible thanks to the harmonization of Russian and Chinese interests towards Central Asia. What could be a pure competition for resources and space has been transformed into a pragmatic and recognized environment for meetings and negotiations, regulated by the "Shanghai spirit". The SCO has never tried to be a supranational and binding organization which could interfere in internal affairs of States. Rather, it has been characterized for dialogue and cooperation, including opening up to outside, as evidenced by the many partnerships concluded with other IOs. In those cases where the SCO itself has failed (or it was unwilling) to act decisively (as in the case of the uprising in Kyrgyzstan in April 2010), each member has taken action individually, becoming interpreter of the need of the moment. This is mainly due to the fact that the only purpose of the Organization shall be to confirm the maintenance of peace and regional stability. This is the essential precondition for the multifaceted cooperation of its

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protagonists, even at the cost of ignoring the most difficult and angular arrangements of the current leaderships.

The balance of ten years of the SCO can be said to be positive. All that has been put at the center of cooperation has been enhanced and supported, even if sometimes the “myth” has prevailed in the respect of what have been really achieved. The fight against three evils (separatism, terrorism, extremism) remains the cornerstone of unity among the SCO members, to ensure the current leadership against every immediate threat to its existence. In the background stand out, however, the most hard and urgent threats, emerging here and there from the lines of speeches and statements. The first is Afghanistan, whose crisis is so difficult to solve that the SCO cannot afford it alone and is forced to accept that Western powers deal with it. The second are cyber threats posed by computer networks, which are possible channels for the organization of subversive and destabilizing activities by both international groups and domestic political opponents.

### **Kazakh Senate vote against participation in the ISAF mission**

The stalling of the crisis in Afghanistan, exacerbated by terrorism, drug trafficking and transnational criminal activities, represents a serious source of instability for the entire Central Asian region and, therefore, one of the main issues debated among SCO members. On several occasions, the Organization has indicated its willingness to do more, but so far no effective action followed. In the Final Declaration of 2010 Tashkent Summit was written that: "... the Summit participants express their readiness to cooperate with other international and regional structures, call upon the International Security Assistance Force to cooperate in the sphere of anti-drug with the SCO Member States". This reminder of the willingness to cooperate with ISAF, expression of the NATO engagement in the Eurasian space, represented an element of novelty, which could stop the frost and mistrust between the two organizations. The steps already taken in 2009, inviting a NATO representative to the Moscow Conference on Afghanistan was a sign of real maturity, even though that invitation was not returned by NATO that just three days later in The Hague held a similar conference on the same issue. Making a project together to combat drug trafficking from Afghanistan, following the experience of the Pilot Project of the NATO-Russia Council, on the one hand would have marked the passing of an ideological bias between the two organizations and on the other would have implied a real involvement of the SCO in addressing a serious issue of regional security as an organization and not on the initiative of individual members as part of the Northern Distribution Network. It would be an important step for the SCO, which eventually would take a real commitment to regional security issues through the direct involvement in Afghanistan, overcoming the ineffective initiative of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group, launched by President Putin in 2002.

In 2011 there were no specific initiative in support of Afghanistan and statements for cooperation with ISAF have given way to hard comments about the NATO commitment in the Libyan crisis. Anyway, even a direct involvement of single Central Asian countries seems hard to achieve: in addition to the inadequacy of human and material resources, history plays a role not to be overlooked, as taught by the case of Kazakhstan.

In fact, on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2011, the Kazakh Senate voted against ratification of an agreement with NATO on military participation in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, while the lower house of Parliament (Majlis) already ruled favorably on the previous May 18<sup>th</sup>. This decision differs from what was decided about the war in Iraq, in which the Kazakh peacekeeping battalion



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(KAZBAT) participated by sending engineers engaged in demining operations. The Afghan issue, in fact, touches the deepest sensitivity that go beyond the purely military intervention in an Islamic country, because it evokes the outstanding issues by the end of a decade of Soviet occupation (1979-1989), which Kazakhstan paid with 14 thousand deaths. It is still alive the debate on social issues remained open since then, burdened by the fact that a possible involvement of Astana would throw it directly into a conflict of difficult solution that continues to threaten the whole regional balance. Although the terms of participation in the mission would not implicate for Kazakhstan a concrete military commitment on the field in terms of men or means (limited, instead, to sending 4 officers to the ISAF headquarters in Kabul, two intelligence officers, an officer in the logistic sector and a medical doctor), it was enough to create alarm and agitate the most sensitive segments of civil society, first of all veterans. The possibility that Kazakhstan would have been deployed in Afghanistan alongside ISAF was early proposed in 2008, in Valencia, by Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabaev, during a plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of NATO. Even President Nursultan Nazarbayev also supported this proposal at the NATO Summit in Lisbon (November 2010). If it went through, Kazakh participation in ISAF would be the culmination of a fruitful bilateral cooperation with NATO, also marked by the establishment of a interoperable brigade (KAZBRIG) and periodic joint exercises named "Steppe Eagle".

### **One year after the Osh violence**

Between 10 and 14 June 2010, just when in Tashkent the SCO's annual summit was in progress, in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan, in particular in the city of Osh, violent clashes between the Kyrgyz majority and the minority ethnic Uzbeks occurred. Just two months earlier Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiev fled and an interim government was established. The work of the SCO summit went as planned. The leaders just made a special declaration condemning the violence and encouraging for national reconciliation. On that occasion, the SCO did not act as a security Organization: the logic of non-interference in internal affairs of the member states prevailed once again and support to Kyrgyzstan by SCO members there was only on a bilateral level.

A year since then, 10 inquiries were completed, both national and international. Most of them agree on the rough data of what happened: the number of dead vary between 450 and 500, while the refugees (Uzbeks living in the region fled to Uzbekistan) were about 400 thousands. The results contradicted some conspiracy theories that circulated in the immediacy of events, which accused the fugitive president (who was born in Osh) to have inspired the violence. Instead, according to some inquiries, the causes of clashes were rather old and dormant contrasts between the two ethnic groups involved. In some reports, there are also direct accusations to the interim government, whose weakness has not been able to act decisively and groped at least, to stop the ongoing violence. The Finnish MP Kimmo Kiljunen, head of an International Commission, has been declared "persona non grata" by the Kyrgyz Parliament, for having considered the real possibility that elements of the interim government might have been complicit in what was happening. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, however, reported the inefficiency of the judicial system of the country, unable, in their view, to adequately punish the main proponents of the violence, the majority belonging to the Kyrgyz. Both organizations conclude in their report that, despite the greater number of victims have been ethnic Uzbeks, the number of Uzbeks brought to justice has been disproportionately high: out of a total of 271, 230 were Uzbeks and 29 were Kyrgyz. According to some statements of

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government representatives, to celebrate trials against Kyrgyz people just after the days of violence would be further destabilizing, while after the presidential elections there would be more favorable conditions. Meanwhile, from November 2010 is being held in Bishkek the trial against Bakiyev and 27 his allies, on charges that he ordered to open fire or to have personally fired on anti-government crowd of protesters in April 2010. The work is proceeding in fits and starts, including suspension due to continuous replacement of interpreters, difficulty in stopping or detention of the accused, some of which tried in absentia. Many of the relatives of Bakiyev and his loyalists are abroad, he himself is in Belarus, Lukashenko's guest, while his son Maksim took refuge in England. In this situation, the interim president, Roza Otunbaeva took moral responsibility for the events of June 2010 and decided on several measures aimed at restoring a climate of reconciliation. She established a Department of Political and Ethnic and Religious Interaction, which will work together with civil society, police and judges moving from north to south of the country, promoting local media debates on what happened, even by broadcasting parliamentary proceedings. Although the interim government is undoubtedly stronger than a year ago and Kyrgyzstan have shown the ability to recover from the destabilization suffered, brilliantly passing through the constitutional referendum in June 2010 and parliamentary elections next October, the issue of national reconciliation remains still open and the concerns for the stabilization of the southern provinces does not seem destined to dissolve in the short term. The same presidential elections on October 30th 2011, the third act of the process agreed for the renewal of democratic institutions, are presented as a game that might hold unexpected outcomes.



### ***From the Arab Spring to Fukushima: a troubled trimester for the global energy sector***

*Nicolò Sartori*

*The effects of the upheavals in North Africa and Middle East, and the consequences of the Fukushima nuclear disaster have highly conditioned the energy sector in the last trimester. Some of the dynamics put into effects by these events are likely to modify the international energy scenario for the months, and possibly years, to come.*

In the oil sector, the collapse of the Libyan export capacity and the raising concerns about the political stability in key producing countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait drove crude prices towards a new peak since the onset of the financial crisis. In April front month Western Texas Intermediate (WTI) and Brent contracts averaged, respectively, 110.4 and 123.1 dollars per barrel (\$/b). Tight conditions on the supply side put pressure on OPEC members to increase their output: however, although exporting countries repeatedly announced their intention to raise production in order to ease off market tensions and high-prices tendencies, the 159<sup>th</sup> OPEC meeting failed to reach an agreement on this issue. Scarcity and high-revenues led non-OPEC countries and international oil companies to push towards new exploration and drilling. The development of Arctic resources, also because of the bitter dispute among TNK-BP's shareholders for the BP-Rosneft deal, is rapidly becoming a hot issue; at the same time, one year after the Deepwater Horizon spill, the US President Barack Obama is encouraging new explorations in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska. Finally, in mid-June, the decision of the International Energy Agency (IEA) to release 60 million barrels of oil from its strategic reserves (2 Mb/d in the following 30 day) shocked again the international markets. The controversial choice immediately eased off the tensions sending crude prices tumbling, but it risks to fuel greater tightness in the oil markets in the months to come.

The disaster at the Fukushima nuclear plant, after the terrible earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan in March, is producing its first effects in different fields on the energy sector. On the one hand, a rapid growth of public distrust towards nuclear power has forced governments, especially in Europe, to reconsider their strategies towards atomic energy. Longstanding nuclear countries such as Germany and Switzerland have promptly announced their intention to phase-out their nuclear power assets, while Italy, through a popular referendum, decided to halt the plans to build new reactors. On the other hand, this situation will necessarily require those countries that are abandoning, freezing, or reducing their nuclear commitments to identify (and then develop) new resources perceived as less dangerous and more sustainable, such as natural gas and renewable energies.

Considering the dynamics characterizing both the oil and the nuclear sectors, the centre of the attention has shifted to natural gas. Relatively cheap and abundant, and definitely more

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environment-friendly (compared either to oil or nuclear), gas is rapidly emerging as the source of the future. This has been clearly stressed by Fatih Birol, Chief Economist of the International Energy Agency (IEA), presenting the Special Report Are we entering a golden age of gas?. Particular attention has been paid to developments in the field of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and shale gas. At the end of May Royal Dutch Shell decided to start the construction of the Prelude floating facility, a massive terminal capable of extracting, cooling and offloading into tankers 110,000 barrels of oil equivalent (Boe) of LNG per day. At the same time, plans to develop shale gas resources provoked several protests around Europe, with France's environmental militants on the frontline lamenting the devastating environmental impacts of the drillings.

### **The Big Oil between geopolitical concerns and industrial strategies**

In the last trimester the consequences of the Arab Spring upheavals heavily hit the global oil sector. The crude prices started rising at the end of 2010, as a result of the popular protests in Tunisia which led to the ousting of President Ben Ali on mid-January. Then, concerns about the progress and the outcomes of the war in Libya, which at the end resulted in the collapse of the country's extraction and export capacities, pushed prices to peak at the end of April. WTI and Brent reached 113 \$/b and 126 \$/b respectively. Concerns about a possible domino-effect in the region, possibly spreading violent revolutions to key oil exporters such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Algeria and Iraq, contributed to keep prices high.

At the beginning of April the European Union has imposed a full oil and gas embargo on Libya in order to deprive the Quaddafi's regime of all revenues derived from hydrocarbons exports. At the same time, Libyan rebels of the National Transitional Council (NTC) attempted to resume production and exports from the Cyrenaica fields to get money and fund the resistance against the central government. In the attempt to reach global oil markets, NTC signed an agreement with Qatar, confidently announcing that production in Eastern Libya could easily reach 300,000 barrels per day (b/d). Unfortunately, NTC's bright prospects have not fully materialized during this trimester. The Arabian Gulf Oil Company (Agoco), which joined the rebel forces during the conflict, has not seemed capable of carrying out extraction activities. Agoco's crude production has remained frozen, with only a few oil tankers leaving the Cyrenaica's shores during these months.

The assistance provided by Qatar to NTC provoked tough reactions among Libyan government's officials. The chairman of Libya's National Oil Company (NOC) heavily blamed the small Arab emirate, an OPEC fellow, which alongside the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has supported the NATO-led military intervention against the Quaddafi regime, for its unfair conduct against a member of the organization. The consequences of OPEC's internal tensions visibly emerged during the organization's 159<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Vienna at the beginning of June. Defined by the veteran Saudi oil Minister Ali Naimi as "one of the worst meetings we ever had", the summit implicitly ratified a clear break within the club. OPEC failed to find agreement over the Saudi proposal, aimed at favouring lower prices and at helping the global economic recovery, to add 1.5 million b/d to its output. The quarrel sanctioned the success of price-hawks members led by Iran and Venezuela.<sup>1</sup> The results of the meeting, which did not

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<sup>1</sup> Only pro-Western Kuwait, Qatar and UAE backed Saudi Arabia's proposal. Algeria, Libya, Angola, and Iraq supported the radical position of the Iran-Venezuela duo.

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discuss the developments in Libya and maintained unaltered the country's official production quota at 1.47 million b/d, immediately affected the markets boosting crude prices.

However, the main outcome of the OPEC summit has probably been the public recognition of internal struggle for power between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Riyadh, which together with Kuwait and UAE controls large part of the OPEC's 4 million b/d spare capacity, immediately reacted showing to rivals its capacity to act autonomously: it announced the intention to raise its July production up to 10 million b/d, this immediately calmed down markets and prices. Crude prices further drop after the decision of the IEA to release, for the third time since the agency was founded in 1974<sup>2</sup>, 60 Mb of its strategic reserves. The release, led by the US supported by European countries (Germany, France, Spain and Italy) and Japan, sent a clear signal to OPEC's hawks: in absence of any official action from the oil cartel, western countries are ready to intervene in order to alleviate global markets' tightness.

As an answer to tight market conditions, caused by the troubled political situation in Middle East and North Africa and by OPEC's leadership fights, in the last months non-OPEC countries and international oil companies' increased their exploration and production efforts. Pushed by high prices and record revenues registered in the first quarter of the year, private oil companies intensified their investments in new exploration and extraction activities. In fact, at the end of April four out of the "Big Five" international companies, namely ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Chevron and Royal Dutch Shell reported record first-quarter profit increases (69%, 43%, 34% and 30% respectively).<sup>3</sup>

Thanks to new liquidity and prospects of huge earnings, one year after the BP's Deepwater Horizon disaster, the situation in the Gulf of Mexico registered a significant revival in exploration activities and first signs of industrial recovery. At the beginning of May the US Congress passed the *Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act*, containing measures to expand offshore oil drilling in the Gulf and off the coasts of Virginia that had been delayed or cancelled by the Obama Administration. Then, in June, ExxonMobil announced three huge discoveries in the Gulf in drilling its first deep-water exploration after the BP's disaster: according to company's forecasts, resources at the Keathley Canyon well, 400 km southwest of New Orleans, could reach more than 700 million barrels of recoverable oil and gas equivalent. At the same time, the Royal Dutch Shell made public the intention to invest billion of dollars in the development of the 800 meters-deep Cardamon oil and gas field, approximately 362 km southwest of New Orleans. The company believes that the development of the Cardamons' resources will allow a production of 50,000 Boe per day, for a total of 140 million Boe over the field's life.

In the last trimester also the Arctic has been a target of massive industrial competition. At the centre of the attention of companies and marketers, of course, are the legal developments of the BP-Rosneft deal to exploit Russian resources in the South Kara Sea. The agreement, which included stock swaps between the two companies for a value of \$7.8 billion (5% of BP's shares against 9.5% of Rosneft), had been suspended at the beginning of February after the Russian Alfa-Access-Renova (AAR) consortium, BP's shareholder in the existing TNK-BP joint venture

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<sup>2</sup> The first was during the 1991 Persian Gulf War and the second was after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

<sup>3</sup> BP was the only one among the international majors the registered a decrease in terms of profits. In fact, BP's first quarter earnings dipped \$5.48 billion compared with \$5.60 billion during the first quarter a year ago as a result of the charge of \$384 million and of subsequent industrial and commercial difficulties related to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

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began legal action against the deal. According to AAR, the BP-Rosneft deal contradicts BP's existing partnership arrangements in Russia, which give TNK-BP exclusive rights to pursue opportunities for BP in Russia. After months of negotiations between the parts aimed at satisfying AAR financial exigencies and allowing BP to pursue the Rosneft alliance, in mid-May the deadline for reaching a deal expired and the alliance eventually fell apart. Although doors for a new agreement are not ultimately closed, new pretenders, Royal Dutch Shell *in primis*, started courting Moscow to take the place of BP in the Arctic venture. At the end of the month Peter Voser, Shell's Chief Executive, flew to Moscow to meet Russian energy elite, Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin and Rosneft's Chief Executive in order to discuss an extension of the extraction project off Sakhalin Island as well as the joint development of Russian Arctic resources in the South Kara Sea. Although Prime Minister Vladimir Putin endorsed Rosneft's partnership with Shell, in the last weeks the Russian giant is likely to evaluate proposals of other candidates such as Exxon Mobil, Chevron, China's CNPC, Malaysia's Petronas and Brazil's Petrobras.

At the same time, oil explorations in the Arctic waters triggered environmentalists' protests. In order to sensitize public awareness on the risks of deepwater exploration in Arctic waters, the crew of the Greenpeace ship *Esperanza* tried to halt Cairns Energy's drilling activity off the Arctic coast of Greenland. The Danish Navy had to intervene in order to prevent Greenpeace activists interfering with the company's exploration activities. Such asymmetrical confrontation shows how the development of energy resources in the region will not exclusively entail geopolitical struggles, but as it is, it will have to take into account rising concerns of environmentalist lobbies and the world's public opinion.

### A nuclear setback?

The last trimester has also been characterized by the consequences of the disaster at the Fukushima's nuclear plant in Japan. Reports and images of the accident immediately reached the world's public opinion, raising concerns about nuclear energy and its safety for human development. In some cases, public distrust towards atomic energy forced governments to evaluate, and in some cases reconsider, their national energy policies.

Surprisingly, the Fukushima crisis seems to have more effects on energy policies in Europe than in Japan. Calling for a an atomic power reform, Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kano announced the government will abandon previous target of relying on nuclear power for half of electricity generation by 2030. The aim of the reform, however, does not seem to be the dismantlement of the country's nuclear power industry but, conversely, to rebuild domestic and international confidence in Japan's atomic power sector. In fact, while announcing the intention to promote renewable energy, the government stressed the importance of nuclear power, described as one of the "four pillars" of the country's energy policy.

In Europe the situation has evolved differently. At the end of May Angela Merkel announced that Germany, currently the world's fourth country in terms of nuclear power generation capacity, will phase out by 2022 all its nuclear power plants. The government decided that seven of the oldest reactors, taken offline for safety reasons immediately after the Japanese crisis, would never be used again.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, by the end of 2022, the nine remaining plants would be shut down. Although strongly supported by public opinion and environmentalist groups, the decision triggered the heated reaction of German power companies. Some of them,

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<sup>4</sup> An eighth plant, which was already offline for technical problems, would also be shut down.

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such as RWE and E.On, which already in March (after the first temporary shutdown) expressed their criticism towards the choice, have started preparing legal actions against the government's decision to phase out their nuclear power plants. As a partial compensation to the progressive withdrawal from nuclear power, Germany has decided to heavily invest in renewable energy. The government's 90 billion euros investment plan in renewables has been positively evaluated by the European Investment Bank (EIB), which could decide to fund a part (15%) of the budget proposed. In the same days the Swiss federal government decided to halt the construction of two new nuclear plants. It also announced the plan to phase out between 2019 and 2034 its five active reactors, which currently supply about 38% of the country's electricity. In mid-June the post-Fukushima effects reached Italy: in a popular referendum a large majority of Italian citizens (95% of voting people) decided to abrogate the government's plan that aimed at reintroducing nuclear power plants on the Italian soil.

The strengthening of France's energy position in Europe is likely to be a possible consequence of this anti-nuclear trend affecting European governments. Contrarily to its neighbours, France, which relies on nuclear power plants for roughly 80% of its electricity generation and is a major exporter of nuclear technology, strongly reaffirmed its commitment to atomic energy even after the Fukushima tragic events. The country, therefore, will continue both the construction of its Flamanville plant and the building of a new reactor at the Penly facilities. With Germany and Switzerland are expected to lose (though gradually) their shares of nuclear-generated electricity, and Italy is likely to decrease its imports from Switzerland, France (and with it national energy champion Électricité de France, Edf) is likely to become the key electricity supplier over the continent.

In the meanwhile, the European Union tried to react to the raising popular distrust towards nuclear power safety by proposing stringent stress tests on all nuclear facilities (operating, under construction, and planned) in Europe. The safety criteria, developed in May jointly by the Commission and the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG), raised protests from major nuclear power producers. France, for instance, promptly complained about the possible inclusion of man-made failure and actions, such as air plane crashes and explosions, to the EU stress tests. Paris in fact, according to the 25<sup>th</sup> March EU summit conclusions, has always considered safety review to be aimed at evaluating only dangers from earthquakes and flooding. As France looks forward to become Europe's key electricity player, the risk of too stringent controls on its nuclear power industry may limit the country's electricity generation capacity. However, disputes over safety controls showed the limited role of the European authorities in this field. In fact, the final competence for enforcement of nuclear safety remains in the national governments' hands, whose main challenge, in case of negative results of the stress tests, would be explaining to the public opinion any decision to continue operating plants considered unsafe. The controls, implemented according to France's requests, have finally started on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Nuclear safety measures have been at the centre of the attention also in the US, the world's leading country in terms of nuclear-generated electricity. As reported by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), more than a quarter of US nuclear plant operators have failed to properly inform regulators about equipment defects that could imperil reactor safety. In addition, it has been discovered and made public that five active nuclear plants are situated in seismic activity-prone zones. Despite such (minor) elements of concern, the Obama administration showed no sign of backing away from atomic energy. Confident in the efficiency of safety controls performed by NRC, the US remains strongly committed to nuclear energy as a key part of its national energy strategy.

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### The natural gas momentum

Evolutions in both the oil and the nuclear sectors are likely to pave the way to the affirmation of natural gas as the energy source of the future. Together with coal, gas is the natural alternative to oil and nuclear power generation. The two (coal and gas), cheaper and abundant, are already largely in use in the electricity-generation sector: they currently account, respectively, for 27% and 21% of the world's power production. Natural gas, however, due to its low level of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, is highly environment-friendly and socially acceptable than its rival. This is why the IEA, at the beginning of June, released a scenario-based report hypothesising the incoming golden age of gas.

Events in the last trimester substantially confirmed the rising relevance of natural gas, though some setbacks could risk to jeopardize the quick development of the sector as foreseen by the agency. Although discussions over pipeline projects have always been the centre of political and industrial discourses, in these months developments in the LNG and shale gas sectors have been placed at the top of the global energy agenda.

In the immediate aftermath of the Fukushima disaster, LNG has emerged as a key factor to ensure Japan's energy security. According to reasonable forecasts, the country would be forced to substantially boost LNG imports to help ease the massive energy shortage. Several industrial and commercial LNG initiatives have taken place in the last month to face such situation. Malaysia, Japan's biggest LNG supplier (14 million tonnes shipped to Japan in 2010), promptly announced its availability to provide extra supplies to Tokyo. As well, major LNG exporters as Qatar, Indonesia and Russia pledged to ramp up LNG deliveries to meet the country's increasing demand. At the same time Gazprom, the world's largest gas company, promptly took the opportunity to invest in the profitable Japanese LNG market. At the end of April, in fact, the Russian giant joined a Japanese consortium to build a liquefaction plant near Vladivostok that aims at producing 10 million tonnes a year of LNG.

Huge LNG investments, however, are not confined to the Japanese market: Royal Dutch Shell confirmed the construction of Prelude, its first floating liquefied natural gas project (FLNG) in the Browse Basin, and announced the possibility of a second FLNG terminal at the disputed Greater Sunrise field in the Indian Ocean. According to Shell statements Prelude will be able to produce 3.6 million tonnes per year of LNG, with a storing capacity of 160,000 tonnes of fuel. Also the Italian energy giant ENI, at the beginning of June, announced its increasing commitment in LNG projects, both in a consolidated export market, like Japan, and in an emerging one as South Africa.

At the same time, the race for new natural gas supplies led governments and energy companies to largely invest in the shale sector. After the success in shale gas production experienced by the US in the past few years, R&D and exploration activities have intensified also in Europe: energy majors such as Exxon Mobil, Royal Dutch Shell, ENI, Chevron and Total lead industrial efforts in this sector. In the last trimester, however, great production expectation had to face raising environmentalists' concerns over the negative consequences of hydraulic fracturing processes.<sup>5</sup> On May 12<sup>th</sup> the French National Assembly voted a ban to the recourse to such extraction techniques, followed by the European Commission which, though recognizing the potential benefits of shale gas developments on Europe's security of supply, took the opportunity to

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<sup>5</sup> Hydraulic fracturing is the technique used to extract natural gas and oil trapped in underground rock formations, and it is performed injecting a mixture of water, sand and toxic chemicals at high pressure to crack open the rock and release the fossil fuels.

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highlight the necessity to balance resources exploitation with possible environmental impacts. Furthermore, Brussels highlighted the intention to review the existing European legislation in order to evaluate whether it adequately discipline the utilization of such new extraction technology.

The debate over the issue triggered Poland's harsh reaction, which immediately warned the EU to avoid any major interference on shale resources development. Poland in fact, with estimated shale gas reserves amounting to roughly 5 Trillion cubic meters (the biggest in Europe), would be eager to exploit its newly discovered energy potential in order to reduce its dependence on Russian imports. Warsaw, who clearly took the leads as EU's shale gas promoter, is not alone in this new energy quest: the UK, Germany, Sweden, Hungary, the Netherlands and Austria have also taken initial steps into shale gas exploration by issuing licences or drilling test wells.

Although the EU would not have real coercive power over Member States' domestic subsoil resources policies, the debate over shale gas development is likely to affect the success of Europe's energy security policies, as well as the future of the EU political cohesion. In the last months Poland has taken a clear path on the issue, and expects to see shale gas as a common European project, therefore it will be a priority for the Polish presidency of the EU. All this considered, it is rather unlikely to imagine Warsaw making a U-turn on a national security priority in order to go along with environmentalists' wishes.

In the meanwhile, the European Union is continuing its efforts to ensure alternative conventional gas supplies to the European markets. In this context, the Southern Gas Corridor represents the EU most important initiative. However, much uncertainty still surrounds the development of the corridor. At the end of May the European public opinion has welcomed as a big diplomatic success the signature of a Strategic energy declaration between the EU Commissioner for energy, Gunter Oettinger, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq Hussain al-Shahristan.<sup>6</sup> With the declaration Iraq commits to supplying gas over the long term to the EU. Despite these efforts Nabucco, the EU-sponsored gas pipeline project, finds hard to get off the ground. In mid-June the projects' operating companies and the transit countries have signed an agreement which, according to the European Commission's expectations, will pave the way to the realization of the pipeline. However, it is not yet clear whether the signature of the agreement will convince the Shah Deniz consortium, which is expected to sign a contract to sell 10 Bcm of its Caspian gas production by the end of the year. Competition to accede to the Azeri resources is still high: not only the two European alternative projects, ITGI and TAP, are pushing strong to win the Shah Deniz Consortium support, but also Russia is competing to put the signature on the contract.

### *Conclusions*

The international events of the last trimester have shown the high levels of vulnerability and interdependence which characterize the global energy sector. The different energy sub-sectors (oil, natural gas, nuclear, renewables) proved to be strongly interconnected among themselves. Single episodes, such as the tsunami in Japan, can produce domino-effects which do not only affect a specific energy sub-sector (in this case, the world nuclear industry), but have significant consequences also on related domains. Such interdependence, both sectorial and geographical,

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<sup>6</sup> For the official text of the declaration see:

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/bilateral\\_cooperation/doc/iraq/20110527\\_iraq\\_joint\\_declaration.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/bilateral_cooperation/doc/iraq/20110527_iraq_joint_declaration.pdf)

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forces public and private actors to adopt comprehensive approaches in the energy domain: diversification, together with efficiency, is probably emerging as the *leitmotif* of the current energy debate. On the one hand, national governments increasingly act worldwide to diversify their energy mixes and their supply sources and routes; on the other hand, energy companies pursue aggressive diversification policies in terms of investments and technologies. This strategy, today perceived as a necessary step to enhance energy security and to reduce tensions on the global markets, in the long term could however produce undesired effects both in terms of geopolitical competition and environmental sustainability.

## International Organizations



### **The UNSG Appointment process: a second term for Ban Ki-moon**

Valerio Bosco

*Despite being marked by the continuing disagreements within the United Nations Membership membership over several crisis situations, such as Libya, Cote d'Ivoire, Syria and Yemen, the first semester of the United Nations agenda ended with the joint UN Security Council and General Assembly's endorsement of Ban Ki-Moon's second term as Secretary General of the Organization. As anticipated during the previous months, the confirmation of Ban Ki-Moon came as a result of a stalled dialectic within the UN system - accompanied by the absence of other credible candidates – and did not represent the outcome of an open and transparent debate over the performance of the incumbent. The upcoming weeks and months of Ban Ki-Moon's second term will be populated by as set of old and new challenges to international peace and security which will require both stronger leadership and action by the Chief Administrator of the United Nations.*

#### **The most difficult job in the world?**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations (UNSG) is a unique figure in world politics. At once civil servant and the world's diplomat, lackey of the UN Security Council and commander-in-chief of up to 100,000 UN peacekeepers, he/she heavily relies and depends on Member States for both legitimacy and resources that enable the UN system to function. It might be recalled that the UN Charter defined the position of the SG as “*chief administration officer*” of the United Nations Organization, a capacity in which he/she is expected to serve the UN Security Council, the General Assembly (ga) and the Economic and Social Council. Furthermore, the Charter provided him/her with significant institutional and personal independence: the SG leads the UN Secretariat- the main organ of the United Nations – and has wide ranging discretion to bring to the attention of the Security Council “*any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security*” (art. 97-98 UN Charter). It is widely acknowledged that while the Cold War generally prevented the UNSG from playing an active and independent role in addressing peace and security issues, the end of superpowers rivalry created larger possibilities for the United Nations and the SG diplomacy to carry out informal and low profile mediation and conflict prevention efforts and therefore amending the traditional job description and political space for the Chief Administrator of the UN. Combined with the increasing in role played by past Secretary Generals – in particular Dag Hammarskjold and Kofi Annan - in leading normative changes, ranging from development of a legal basis for peacekeeping to the embrace of a responsibility to protect vulnerable populations and in mobilizing international support for global causes – such as the Millennium Development

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Goals – the good offices functions have reshaped the original dimension of the SG’s mandate<sup>1</sup>. Considering the above and in light of the competencies and diplomatic skills required to carry out the SG functions, the debate on the appointment process of the Secretary General has increasingly drawn specific attention from observers and analysts of the UN system.

### **The appointment of the UN Secretary General: an old procedure...**

The Secretary-General is elected by member states under a process outlined in Article 97 of the UN Charter and in rule 141 of the [Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly](#) and rule 48 of the [Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council](#). Article 97 of the [UN Charter](#) states that the Secretary-General “*shall be appointed by the General Assembly*”. In practice, this is formalized through the adoption of a General Assembly resolution. Under rule 83 of the General Assembly Rules of Procedure this decision is an important question which requires a two-thirds majority. Article 97 also requires that the General Assembly act “on the recommendation of the Security Council”. Rule 48 of the Security Council’s Provisional Rules of Procedure requires that the recommendation “*be discussed and decided at a private meeting*”. The decision of the Security Council to recommend a candidate to the General Assembly is traditionally adopted by resolution: furthermore, as indicated by Article 27 paragraph 3 of the Charter, it requires “*an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of permanent members*”. Rule 141 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly states that, “*When the Security Council has submitted its recommendation on the appointment of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly shall consider the recommendation and vote upon it by secret ballot in private meeting.*” However, in practice the General Assembly often decided, by general consent, to waive balloting and adopt the resolution by acclamation. This is what happened in the recent confirmation of Ban Ki-Moon for his second term. With the exception of 1950, when, after a series of unproductive consultations within the Security Council, the GA voted to extend the mandate of the Secretary General in charge, the Norwegian Trygve Lie, the role of the Security Council and especially the P5, in the appointment process of the SG has always been central. Nevertheless, the only other case where the designation of the SG was controversial was related to the re-appointment of the Egyptian Boutros-Ghali, whose disagreements with the US administration over the crises in Somalia and Bosnia prevented him from undertaking a second term as UN Chief.

### **The UNSC and GA endorsement of Ban Ki-Moon’s second term**

As already mentioned above, the procedure that led to the re-appointment of Ban Ki-Moon confirmed the lack of transparency and the secrecy that had traditionally accompanied the appointment process of the UN Secretary General. On 17 June, following a closed meeting, the Security Council issued a short statement announcing its decision to recommend to the General Assembly to re-appoint Ban Ki-Moon as UN Secretary General (SG) for a second term, starting from January 1, 2012, until December 31, 2016. All of the five permanent council members - the so-called P5, United States, China, Russia, France and Britain – and the ten non-permanent members - Germany, Brazil, India, Gabon, Colombia, Portugal, Nigeria, South Africa, and Bosnia and Herzegovina - reached an agreement on the confirmation of Ban Ki-Moon. Just four days later, the General Assembly finally approved the resolution that

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<sup>1</sup> *Secretary or General. The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*, edited by Simon Chesterman, Cambridge University Press 2007.

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unanimously upheld the recommendation by the Council. Following the announcement of the reappointment of the SG, the president of the GA, Joseph Deiss (Switzerland) stressed the importance of the leadership shown by the SG in promoting the principle of responsibility to protect civilian populations from atrocity crimes, in the fight against climate change, the intensification of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals - MDG (halving poverty, improving health care and access to education, against HIV) - and, finally, in the reform of UN peacekeeping and conflict prevention capacities of the Organization. The United States Permanent Representative at the UN, Susan Rice, expressed the Host Country's readiness to keep working with Ban Ki-Moon whose role of "*champion of peace and security, an advocate of development and a voice for universal human rights*", was highlighted. Furthermore, Ambassador Rice lauded the Secretary-General "*for speaking out with compassion for Haiti, democracy in Côte d'Ivoire and the responsibility to protect in Libya*" and deeply commended Ban Ki Moon's initiatives aimed at promoting the most relevant reduction for the United Nations budget in decades, and merging four disparate bodies dealing with gender issues into the new UN Women.

The extension of Ban Ki-Moon's appointment highlighted, once again, the need to address the lack of transparency of the selection process of the SG and suggested the idea to re-launch the debate on the issue by reviving some past reform proposals aimed at amending the traditional procedure established by the UN Charter.

### **A new debate on the reform of the UNSG appointment procedure**

A first attempt to review and amend the procedure for appointment of SG was made by the AG in July 1997. Resolution 51/241 endorsed conclusions by its High-Level Working Group which stated that, "*in the course of the identification and appointment of the best candidate for the post of Secretary-General, due regard shall continue to be given to regional rotation and shall also be given to gender equality*". Nevertheless, even today, analysts, observers, non-governmental organizations continue criticizing the selection of the SG, noting in particular the lack of transparency and the fact that UN procedures do not match with senior positions appointments procedures followed by several international organizations. Among the latest initiatives to reform the appointment process of the SG, it is worth recalling the Delphi Symposium which took place in May 2011 and the study conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations. Both initiatives were built upon General Assembly resolution [60/286](#) of 8 September 2006 which described the criteria by which a Secretary-General and referred in particular to commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, extensive leadership, and administrative and diplomatic experience". Participants in the Delphi Symposium – which include experts, members of the diplomatic community, former national representative at the United Nations, former UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar - agreed that there was an urgent need to consider the role and qualities of the Secretary-General in relation to the enormous challenges of the 21st century. Members of the group agreed that the most important qualities in a Secretary-General included: integrity, independence, moral courage and impartiality; capacity for moral and intellectual as well as political leadership; the sophisticated diplomatic skills essential for a mediator and crisis manager; capacity to manage the organization effectively and provide leadership to the wider UN system; strong problem-solving capacity and political instincts; and charisma and contemporary media skills of a global communicator. Whilst providing clear criteria for the designation of the Secretary-General, the Symposium also suggested the idea of promoting greater transparency of the selection process,



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through increased and more active involvement of the AG. In particular, the group recommended that prior to the search for a new Secretary-General, and in an effort to select the most effective candidate, the General Assembly might commission a small group to study the challenges likely to be faced in the near future. Furthermore, the JIU conducted an in depth-study of the views of the entire UN membership on the issue and found the majority of member states supported the call for increased transparency. The majority of the membership was interested in making the process more inclusive of all members at an earlier phase. This option could be achieved through the promotion of a more active role by the General Assembly - which represents the whole UN membership - based on the identification of candidates at an early phase and the conduct of formal hearings or meetings with them. By reducing the strict secrecy of the Council's discussion on the selection of the SG such reforms could somehow encourage the Security Council to send to the GA accurate information and updates on the status of discussions over the appointment/reappointment of the Secretary General. The provision of an exploratory mandate to the President of the General Assembly, tasked to carry out informal surveys on the satisfaction of the entire membership with respect to a shortlist of potential candidates has been also suggested. Even more effective in terms of promoting maximum transparency of the selection process was the idea of encouraging the nomination of several candidates whose programs and skills could be publicly debated by the entire membership. On the same line of the recommendations proposed by the Delphi Symposium and the JIU study were the reforms presented by the Canadian delegation at the UN in 2006. An informal paper presented at the GA called upon the UN membership to increase the transparency and inclusiveness of the selection process and raised the question of a possible role for the wider membership of the UN, including some significant participation in the selection process prior to receiving the Security Council recommendation. Many of the Canadian proposals were echoed by the Delphi Symposium and the JIU report. The main recommendations of the Canadian paper were that there should be opportunities for candidates to meet with all members of the General Assembly—perhaps through regional group meetings and that the presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council should organize some informal events, under their joint auspices to permit an “*exploration of the perspectives and positions of the candidates*”<sup>2</sup>. To date, the opposition of the P5 against the above-mentioned reform proposals continues preventing the General Assembly of States from playing an active participation in the selection process of the SG and therefore perpetuating the current old-fashioned selection process of the UN Chief. Furthermore, another important issue within the appointment process is the one related to the duration of the assignment of the SG and whether or not to ensure the possibility of re-election or confirmation of the incumbent for an additional five-year term. Both the Delphi Symposium and the JIU suggested the idea of providing the SG with a single term. Both initiatives found that there was a relevant support among the UN membership for a single term of office, perhaps of seven years duration, “*on the grounds that such an arrangement would strengthen the position and independence of the Secretary-General and give the incumbent a clear run to achieve long term goals*”. Unfortunately the reappointment process of Ban Ki Moon did not include any informal amendments to the traditional procedures; moreover, the

<sup>2</sup> *Canadian Non-Paper on the process for the Selection of the Next Secretary-General, 15 February 2006, Appendix 6, in Secretary or General. The UN Secretary-General in World Politics*, edited by Simon Chesterman, Cambridge University Press 2007.

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second mandate given to the SG was not the outcome of an overall and comprehensive debate of his performance during the past five years. As already reviewed in the previous issues of the Quarterly the first term of Ban Ki-Moon was populated by both lights and shadows, success and failures, with the latter not being always related to his poor performance or mistake but also to the very complicated dynamics emerging within the UN membership.

### **Ban Ki-Moon's second term: old and new challenges**

The upcoming months that will bring to end the first term of Ban Ki Moon are expected to mark the agenda of the UN in the next five years. In particular, in relation to major global issues, the SG will step up preparations for the high-level conference on Nuclear Safety to be held in New York in September 2011: Ban Ki-Moon's thinking is to launch a comprehensive advocacy and communication strategy aimed at keeping the international attention on the issue – following the tragic consequences of the Japanese earthquake - and organizing regular events for the reduction of nuclear dangers in cooperation with the entire UN disarmament machinery ( UN Conference on Disarmament; UN Disarmament Commission; 1<sup>st</sup> Committee of the UN General Assembly). The SG is also expected to lead the negotiations for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro - scheduled for June 2012 – and whose aim is to create a new global regulatory framework for the promotion of the green economy. The issue of the MDGs will also undoubtedly be one of the core activities of the SG, since the deadline of 2015 – when the International Community is expected to review the progress achieved in the fight against the extreme poverty, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the promotion of universal primary education - will overlap with the first half of Ban Ki-Moon's second term. Nevertheless, the Secretary General will be asked by the UN membership to keep momentum on the reform and consolidation of the UN peacekeeping, whose budget for the period 1 July to 30 June 2012 - despite the massive reductions or liquidation of some peacekeeping forces (Sudan, Republic Democratic of Congo) – has reached, once again, the amount of seven billion dollars. Furthermore, in relation to the restructuring and strengthening of the UN Secretariat, the SG will intensify his efforts aimed at strengthening the UN mediation capacities and consolidating the Mediation Support Unit and Department of Political Affairs, the UN focal points in the field of conflict prevention organization. This initiative will be carried out along the lines of a new General Assembly resolution (A/65/L.68/Rev.1) which called upon the SG to strengthen the UN's capacities for mediation in peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution, and continue offering his good offices as mediation support. With regard to most pressing political issues, the SG will lead the transition process of the UN presence in Sudan in the aftermath of the proclamation of independence of the south of the country.

After encouraging both the North and South Sudan to accept the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force in demilitarized area of Abyei, as well as facilitating the admission process of the State of South Sudan as a new member of the United Nations – on 14 July a General Assembly resolution adopted by acclamation upon the recommendation of the Security Council admitted South Sudan as the 193<sup>rd</sup> Member of the United Nations - the SG is expected to speed up the implementation of resolution 1996 (2011) – adopted by the UNSC on 8 July 2011 – which established, for an initial period of one year, the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), composed of 7,000 military personnel, 900 police and appropriate civilian support.

“*The wind of change*” that has been affecting North Africa and the Middle East will also require further attention and low profile mediation efforts by the SG. In particular, Russian and Chinese



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positions have so far prevented the Council from including in its own agenda the situations in Yemen and Syria. Both countries underlined the internal nature of the crises by therefore denying the need of intervention by the UNSC and reaffirming the non-interference principle. With regard to the massive popular protests in Syria and the repressive reaction carried out by the government authorities, the SG pressures on the P5 to carefully consider the implications of the country situations for the international peace and security will be crucial in order to increase the level of international engagement aimed at putting an end to the undergoing violence in the country.

In particular, the Libya crisis will require the SG to act as a mediator of different views over the means aimed at ending the conflict Libya, an issue that keeps fostering divisions within the international community. While the African Group at the UN - backed by China, Russia, Brazil and India – asked for the African leadership of the mediation process by also calling for the immediate interruption of NATO air raids, the United States, Britain and France still seemingly oppose any new decision by the Council upon the unconditional withdrawal of Gaddafi from the political scene. Meanwhile, the UN Secretariat, under the leadership of Ban Ki-moon and his Special Envoy Abdel-Elah Al-Khatib, is also expected to step up preparations for a UN post-conflict stabilization plan, which should be based on six areas, namely “*the definition of an open political process, security sector reform, respect for human rights, economic recovery, reform of public administration and the start of a new plan infrastructure*”. Clearly linked to the Libya crisis, but also to the controversial United Nations intervention in Côte d’Ivoire, is the new debate on the “*responsibility to protect*” which was somehow reopened by the SG by the statement delivered by Ban Ki-Moon in a recent meeting which took place in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 6 May 2011. Whilst commenting on resolutions 1970, and 1973 on Libya – the latter established the no-fly zone in Libya – and also resolution 1975 – authorizing the UN forces to attack the troops of Laurent Gbagbo in order to prevent further violence and massacres against the civilian population – the SG described the above-mentioned decisions adopted by the UNSC as “*watershed moment historic affirmation of the principle of the emerging responsibility to protect*”<sup>3</sup>. Despite the original consensus emerged within the UNSC on the situations of Libya and Cote d’Ivoire, the international community – which agreed in 2005 on the principle of the responsibility to protect – seems now to be deeply divided over the implications and methodology of the above-mentioned principle.

Apart from the almost isolated position taken by President of Rwanda Paul Kagame, the majority of African Union Member States, supported by the emerging powers - China, Brazil and India in particular - continue condemning the military interpretation of R2P promoted by Western powers in the cases of Libya and Ivory Coast. This position – explained in-depth by former South African President Thabo Mbeki in a long article in Foreign Policy<sup>4</sup> - accuses in particular France, Britain and the United States of having manipulate the decisions taken by the Security Council and trying to neutralize the attempts of the African Union to maintain the leadership of the two crisis management processes. The Secretary General will be therefore be

<sup>3</sup> United Nations- Department of Public Information: *Libya, Côte d’Ivoire Events Mark Historic Precedent, Secretary General Tells – Sofia Platform, Citing Watershed in Responsibility to Protect Doctrine, 6 May 2011*

<sup>4</sup> T. Mbeki, *What the World Got Wrong in Côte d’Ivoire – Why is the United Nations Entrenching Former Colonial Powers on Our Continent? Africans Should Take the Lead in Resolving their Own Disputes*, Foreign Policy, 29 April 2011



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required to carry out the very difficult task of rebuilding the international consensus on the principle of R2P and possibly finding a new balance between the positions expressed by both the African countries and the emerging powers and the interests of the Western powers.