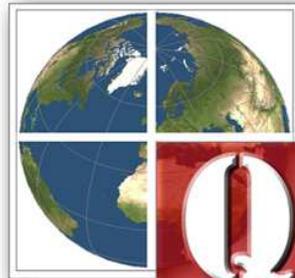


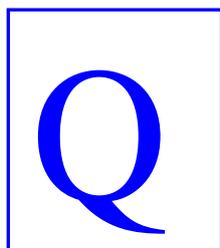


CENTRO MILITARE DI STUDI STRATEGICI



QUARTERLY

AUTUMN 2009



QUARTERLY

YEAR VII AUTUMN 2009



**Centro Militare
di Studi Strategici**

CeMiSS Quarterly is a review supervised by CeMiSS director, Major General Giacomo Guarnera

It provides a forum to promote the knowledge and understanding of international security affairs, military strategy and other topics of significant interest.

The opinions and conclusions expressed in the articles are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Italian Ministry of Defence.

*Military Center for Strategic Studies
Department of International Relations
Palazzo Salviati
Piazza della Rovere, 83 00165 –
ROME - ITALY
tel. 00 39 06 4691 3204
fax 00 39 06 6879779
e-mail relintern.cemiss@casd.difesa.it*

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Middle East**THE FUTURE LOOKS GLOOMY FOR
THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS***Diego Baliani*

After the failure of the Annapolis' peace process and the subsequent war in Gaza in 2008, Peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians have been suspended. In January 2009, the new US Administration led by Barack Obama declared that the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as the signing of an overall peace agreement in the Middle East were a priority for the US Middle East policy. However, the Middle East peace process has been stalling between August and October 2009 and there are signals of worsening relations between Israelis and Palestinians. Such an outcome has been determined by the same, longstanding factors that led to the Annapolis' failure, which are progressively pushing the Obama Administration toward a more pro-Israeli stance and leaving the Iranian issue alone on the top of the US Middle Eastern agenda.

The obstacles to peace on the Israeli side

A first obstacle is Israel's settlement policy. The issue of Jerusalem is a major point of controversy: The majority of the Israeli population and the Israeli right-wing parties – particularly Likud and Shas, who are members of the ruling coalition – view Jerusalem as Israel's undivided capital and are not willing to negotiate with the Palestinians on this issue. The intransigence of Israel's stance is shown by its refusal to consider "settlers" the roughly 200.000 Jews that settled in East Jerusalem since the 1967 occupation. Moreover, there are indications of an ongoing Israeli "eviction" policy against the Palestinians in East Jerusalem. On August 2nd, the Israeli police evicted two Palestinian families (the 17 member-strong Hanoun family and the 29 member-strong Alghawi family) living in the Sheikh Jarah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem to give room to about 20 Jewish families, in compliance with a May 17th Israeli court ruling. This move seems to be part of broader plan approved by the Jerusalem municipality to build 350 new houses for Jewish families in East part of the city.

As for its overall stance on settlements, Benjamin Netanyahu's government refuses to satisfy the requests for a freeze in settlement activity raised by the Palestinians and the international community. Moreover, since the Israeli government excludes East Jerusalem from the settlement issues, any possible Israeli concession will be limited to some of the roughly 300.000 settlers living in the West Bank. Mr. Netanyahu asserted Israel's right to allow the "natural growth" in settlements already established, but it seems that Israel's overall settlement activity is continuing unabated. From the Palestinian standpoint, Israel's stance is not acceptable, particularly on Jerusalem, for any Palestinian leadership willing either to surrender Jerusalem or

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to accept the Israeli settlement in West Bank will lose the support of the Palestinians living in the Territories.

A second obstacle is the inner fragility of Israel's political system, which is fragmented and deeply polarized. The Israeli governments tend to be supported by broad coalitions made of several relatively small parties. As a consequence, the ruling party is always hostage of the veto power of those smaller parties who are opposed to the peace process. Netanyahu's ruling coalition is made of 5 parties in which the leading Likud party has only 27 seats out of the 61 required to enjoy a ruling majority in the Knesset. Even if Likud would be willing to negotiate with the Palestinians on the core issues of the conflict – but this does not seem the case here –, it would fall victim to those parties, which like Shas are opposed to give East Jerusalem to the Palestinians. That was exactly the fate of the Kadima-led government of Ehud Olmert, whose ruling coalition started dissolving immediately after Olmert had hinted about the possibility of negotiating on Jerusalem with the Palestinians. Prime Minister Netanyahu seems aware of the fragility of his government and is keeping either by choice or necessity (or maybe both) an intransigent stance vis-à-vis the Palestinians. Moreover, the persistence of the current situation is more favourable to Israel than to the Palestinians, given Israel's position of relative strength.

The obstacles to peace on the Palestinian side

The main obstacle to the peace process on the Palestinian side is the rivalry between Hamas and Fatah, which has been exacerbated by both Hamas' 2006 electoral victory and the 2007 Hamas' takeover of the Gaza Strip. Since then, there has been a power struggle between Hamas and Fatah in order to rule on the Palestinians inside the Territories.

From Hamas' standpoint, it is politically advantageous to keep promoting the resistance against Israel and stalling the peace process, given its current exclusion from the peace talks. Indeed, the League of the Arab States has been recognizing the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people since 1974, while Israel and the international community have been recognizing the PLO's Fatah leadership as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinians in the Oslo peace process since 1993.

Thus, if Hamas accepts the peace negotiations it will also have to accept Fatah's leadership of the peace talks in a moment in which Hamas feels itself stronger than Fatah, since it has defeated the latter both politically and militarily. Hamas' gains vis-à-vis Fatah on the political and military level are further strengthened in the light of the fact that Hamas has been boycotted by both Israel and the international community while Fatah has been cooperating with the "Zionist enemy".

All this explain why Hamas is not willing to accept the three pre-conditions for dialogue set by Israel and the Middle East Quartet, i.e. the cessation of the anti-Israeli violence, the recognition of Israel's right to exist and the acceptance of agreements signed in the past between the state of Israel and the PLO.

The main assets of Hamas' policy are its militia and its the control on the Gaza Strip since they provide a veto power on the peace process: First, they give Hamas the power to decide on the fate of roughly 1.5 million Palestinians, thus preventing the Fatah's leader Abu Mazen (who is also Chairman of the Palestinian Authority) from signing and implementing a peace agreement involving the Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. Second, they prevents Abu Mazen from

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implementing the Palestinian commitments undertaken under the 2003 *Roadmap* on ceasing the anti-Israeli violence, given that Hamas and the other Palestinian groups are free to carry out attacks on Israeli territory from Gaza. If this assessment is correct, the logical conclusion is that Hamas has not interest in handing Gaza back to Fatah as long as Israel and the international community do not recognize his right to rule the Palestinians (either alone or together with Fatah).

Hamas' behaviour has partially changed after operation "Cast Lead", which was carried out by the IDF between December 2008 and January 2009, killing over 1,400 Palestinians and further crippling Gaza's economy. The devastating effects of Israel's military intervention have forced the Hamas leadership into adopting a more cautious approach toward Israel. Indeed, since January 2009 Hamas has been refraining from attacking Israel and it seems to have compelled the other Palestinian group in Gaza to stick to the ceasefire. Since then, The Arab countries (including the pro-Hamas Syrian regime) have been pressuring both Hamas and Fatah to reconcile during last summer with no results.

In August, Hamas has confirmed its hold on the Gaza Strip by cracking down on *Jund Ansar Allah* (The Soldiers of the Companions of Allah) in the same fashion as it did with the clans Dughmush and Hillis in 2008 (according to *al-Jazeera*, the group was called "*al-Jamaa al-Salafiya al-Jihadiya in Palestine*"). On August 14th, after Friday's prayers at the *Bin Taymiyya* mosque in Rafah, Sheikh Abdul Latif Musa – the leader of the Salafi group *Jund Ansar Allah* and the imam of the mosque – had declared the establishment of an Islamic Emirate in the Gaza Strip, with the backing of a hundred of his armed followers. Hamas quickly reacted by sending its security force to confront the Salafis; the armed clashes lasted from August 14th to August 15th and ended with 22 people killed (the leader Abdul Latif Musa, 8 Salafi militiamen, 7 Hamas' policemen and 6 civilians) and more than 150 injured. *Jund Ansar Allah* was a Salafi group inspired by al-Qaeda whose formation had been announced in November 2008; according to media reports, Sheikh Abdul Latif Musa had accused Hamas of abandoning the *jihad* and of being too soft in applying the *sharia* in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas' crackdown was motivated by the challenge posed by the Islamist group, which was threatening both the ceasefire with Israel and Hamas' rule in Gaza. Hamas is adhering to the ceasefire in order to recover from the damages suffered in the last war, and also because a second Israeli military intervention may topple its Gaza government; moreover, Hamas does not seem willing to apply the *sharia* in Gaza because it is aware that many Palestinians will not agree to it. *Jund Ansar Allah* had threatened the ceasefire on June 8th, when the IDF had prevented an attack being organized by a commando of 8-10 of its fighters in the area of Nahal Oz, killing 5 to 6 of them. In August, the Salafi group directly threatened Hamas rule in Gaza by announcing the Islamic Emirate, thus forcing Hamas to reaffirm its supremacy.

As a conclusion, Hamas maintains the intention and the ability of sabotaging the Fatah-led peace negotiations with Israel.

As for Fatah, its leadership never accepted the defeat suffered at the 2006 political elections and since the beginning had been sabotaging the first Hamas' government in the Palestinian history (formed on 29 March 2006) with the aim of regaining full control on the Palestinian National Authority. It is noteworthy that after the 2007 Hamas' takeover of Gaza, Fatah preferred to cooperate with Israel and the international community instead of working to heal the Palestinian rift. Given its temporary disadvantage on the military level, Fatah has sought support from its

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foreign sponsors in order to restore the balance of power with Hamas. As a consequence, Fatah is not strong enough to retake Gaza while Hamas cannot take the West Bank; the net result is the continuation of the Palestinian division to Israel's advantage, since the latter can argue that there is not a reliable peace partner on the Palestinian side while maintaining its settlement policy.

Several factors are contributing to the weakening of Abu Mazen's leadership, such as the failure of the Annapolis peace process, the continuation of Hamas' government in Gaza and Hamas' resistance against the "Zionist enemy". Indeed, Fatah formally abandoned the anti-Israel resistance in 1993 to receive in return 16 years of inconclusive peace negotiations with the former enemy. In spite of this, the results of Fatah's cooperation with Israel are that the peace agreement has not been signed yet, the Israeli settlement in the West Bank have been increasing, the Palestinian refugees probably will never go back to their former houses and, finally, Israel is asserting its full control on East Jerusalem. All this is obviously damaging Fatah's credibility in front of the Palestinians. On the contrary, the Hamas leadership is ruling Gaza regardless the international boycott, it is promoting the anti-Israeli resistance, it is challenging the legitimacy of Fatah's leadership for his cooperation with the "Zionist enemy", and it managed to survive to the last Israeli military intervention (even if it is not clear if this was the due to Hamas' resilience or to a deliberate decision of the Israeli government).

In this context, Abu Mazen reacted to the intransigence of Netanyahu's government by hardening Fatah's stance vis-à-vis Israel. On August 4th, Fatah held its Sixth General Conference in Bethlehem during which it decided its new overall strategy toward Israel and it also reshuffled the ruling bodies of the movement.

With regard to the new Fatah's strategy, even if Abu Mazen has clarified that Fatah's priority is the continuation of peace talks with Israel, the Conference also has reasserted (for the first time in 16 years) the Palestinian "right of resistance", after formally abandoning it in 1993 with the Oslo agreements. The hardening of Fatah's stance probably has the aim to compete with Hamas' resistance rhetoric for the consensus of the Palestinians. In addition, after the beginning of Operation "Cast Lead" (27 December 2008) Abu Mazen has suspended peace negotiations with Israel, saying that he will not restart it as long as Israel continues its settlement activities in West Bank and East Jerusalem.

As for the "new" leadership, the General Conference finally satisfied the demands of the so called Fatah's "new guard" by electing some of its members in the ruling bodies of the movement, electing 18 new members of the 23-member strong Central Committee as well as 80 new members of the 130-member strong Revolutionary Council. The "new guard" is made of militant leaders like Marwan al-Barghuthi who were raised inside the Territories, and who have been shaped by the *intifada*. Barghuthi together with Mohammad Dahlan (the former chief of the Preventive Security Agency in Gaza), Jibril Rajoub (the former chief of the Preventive Security Agency in the West Bank) and others have been elected in the Central Committee of the movement, while some members of the "old guard" (like Ahmed Qurei) have been excluded. The leaders of the "new guard" are popular among the Palestinians and have a reputation of strongmen; Marwan Barghuthi was the leader of the Tanzim while the then PSA chief in Gaza, Mohammad Dahlan, cracked down on Hamas in 1995.

In order to understand the importance of the Sixth General Conference, which saw the participation of over 2,000 Fatah's delegates, one has to bear in mind that the Fifth one had been

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held in 1989, 20 years ago. That means that, in the last 20 years, Fatah has been led by the same leadership, the so called “old guard” which has managed the transition from the resistance to the Oslo peace talks, until today’s failure of the peace process.

The outcomes of the General Conference signal that the failure of the Annapolis peace process as well as the rise of Hamas are forcing Fatah to harden its stance toward Israel in order to maintain power and consensus among the Palestinians. This trend, together with the policies pursued by Hamas and Israel, is running against a restart of the peace negotiations in the near future. Abu Mazen has confirmed its stance on October 31st, saying that he will restart peace negotiations only after the cessation of Israel’s settlement activities.

The refocusing of the US Middle East policy toward Iran

The then presidential candidate Barack Obama enthusiastically promised a “change” in US policies during the electoral campaign, including the US Middle East policy. He asserted that the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was going to be a key point of the new US Middle East policy. After taking office in January 2009, the Obama Administration launched a vigorous and comprehensive diplomatic initiative to restart the Middle East peace process with enthusiasm and energy; this is typical of newly installed governments who enjoy strong popular support, particularly in the United States. Since then, the Obama Administration has been promoting a comprehensive approach involving all the main actors of the Arab-Israeli conflict (such as Israel, the Palestinians, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia) in order to reach a comprehensive and lasting peace accord. That meant reversing the bilateral approach, which had been prevailing since 1993, in favour of a simultaneous dialogue with all the States involved. Moreover, the US Administration also reversed the Israeli approach. Since March 2009, Israel’s top priority under the new Likud-led government has been stopping the Iranian nuclear program: Israel maintains that the solution of the Iranian controversy will help solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Obama Administration was asserting just the opposite, since it wanted to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict first, and then dealing with the Iranian nuclear program.

The “new” US approach found a hostile environment: the war between Israel and Hamas had boosted the extremists on both sides while marginalizing Abu Mazen. Moreover, the Likud-led, pro-settlers Netanyahu’s government, which took office on March 31st, was reluctant to engage in peace negotiations with the Palestinians. As a consequence, there were indications that the US and Israeli policies were on a collision course with regard to the Palestinians. The rift emerged during the first meeting between President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu on May 17th. Prior to the meeting, President Obama had been declaring his intention to exert strong pressure on Prime Minister Netanyahu in order to obtain Israel’s commitment to both accept the “two-state solution” and to freeze settlement activities as foreseen in the Quartet-sponsored *Roadmap* adopted in 2003. Mr. Netanyahu has resisted the US pressure on settlements and vaguely accepted the idea of a demilitarized Palestinian “state” subject to several limitations to its sovereignty. On the contrary, Mr. Netanyahu pressured President Obama to put the Iranian dossier on the top of its Middle East agenda and since then Israel’s stance has been slowly but steadily gaining ground in the US Administration.

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In spite of its failure to convince Mr. Netanyahu at their first meeting, President Obama tenaciously continued to pursue its approach on Middle East, which he better elaborated during its speech held in Cairo (Egypt) on June 4th. The key point of the “new” US approach were that (1) the “strong bonds” between the United States and Israel “are unbreakable”, (2) the United States supports the “two-state solution”, (3) the Israelis must stop settlement activities, (4) Hamas must renounce to the anti-Israeli violence, recognize Israel’s right to exist and accept past agreements between Israel and PLO and (5) the Arab states should start normalizing relations with Israel without waiting for the signing of the peace accord. After a careful reading of President Obama’s speech in Cairo, the “new” US approach differs from the previous one on two points: First, it promotes simultaneous negotiations with all parties in order to achieve a comprehensive peace agreement in the Middle East, while in the past the bilateral approach was prevailing. Second, it calls the Arab states to recognize Israel *before* the signing of the peace agreement – and this is the true novelty.

After the Cairo speech, the enthusiasm initially engendered worldwide by the US initiative for peace in the Middle East has progressively evaporated and the US Middle East policy started moving back on its traditional pro-Israeli track. With regard to the Israeli settlements, on May 17th, President Obama had said that Israel must stop settlement activities and reasserted the statement in the Cairo speech. On August 6th, the US special envoy for the Middle East George Mitchell scaled down the US requests and asked Israel for one-year freeze on construction in West Bank settlements. Finally, on October 31st, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has reversed the US stance and has asked Abu Mazen to restart peace negotiations without waiting for a freeze in Israel’s settlement activities, thus accepting the Israeli point of view and casting aside the *Roadmap*. All this while the Palestinian violence has almost ceased thanks to the ceasefire Hamas’ has been adhering to since January 2009. As for Arab countries, they have rejected President Obama demand to normalize relations with Israel before the peace accord. Broadly speaking, the US diplomatic initiative toward the Arab countries – particularly Syria – is colliding with the long-established interests of the Middle Eastern leaderships. Since Syria’s participation to the Annapolis conferences on 27 November 2007, there has been a lot of speculation about the possibility to engage Syria in order to loosen its alliance with Iran, Hamas and Hizbullah. Indeed, the Syrian regime accepted the US offer for dialogue and – after the Obama Administration took office on 20 January 2009 – has held several meeting with the US Middle East special envoy George Mitchell, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman and the NSC Middle East expert Daniel Shapiro. However, it seems that Syria is not abandoning its alliance with Iran; rather it is trying to act as a Middle East mediator “within” its alliance with Iran.

It seems that the initial enthusiasm of the Obama Administration has collided with the reality and the long-established interests of the Middle Eastern leaderships as well as with the US long-established interests in the region. From Israel’s standpoint, the settlement issue is a vital one while it does not seem the same for the United States; moreover, the US diplomatic initiative to achieve peace in Middle East will never question the US strategic alliance with Israel. From the Arab leaderships’ point of view, if they normalize relations with Israel before the peace accord they will suffer a double damage: First, they will lose an effective tool of influence vis-à-vis Israel as well as the Western countries. Second, they will further anger those Arab and Islamic masses who are already upset because of the pro-West policy of their respective regimes, while

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obtaining nothing in return. As for Syria, the Syrian regime seems interested in ending its isolation and improving relations with both the United States and the European Union; some Western analysts speculated that Syria could be lured into abandoning Iran (thus further isolating the latter), but it seems that the Syrian regime has concluded that it is more advantageous to dialogue with the West without renouncing to the benefits coming from its alliance with Iran, Hizbullah and Hamas.

As a conclusion, the US Middle East policy is progressively shifting its focus toward Iran, thus getting closer to Israel's foreign policy priorities in the Middle East.

The reaction of the Arab world to the President Obama's Cairo speech

As already noted, a key point of President Obama's Cairo speech was his call to the Arab world to recognize Israel without waiting for the signing of the peace accord. Saudi foreign minister Prince Saud al-Faisal replied on July 31st, when he rejected the US call to recognize Israel and reasserted the long-standing Saudi position that the normalization of relations will come *after* the signing of the peace agreement and the Israeli withdrawal from *all* the lands seized in 1967 – a position expressed in the 2002 Saudi peace initiative.

The rest of the Arab world – including the pro-Western Arab countries – supported the Saudi position, thus rejecting the US call to recognize Israel: such has been the case of Jordan (on August 3rd), Kuwait (August 3rd) and Egypt (August 18th). It is remarkable that the US request has been rejected even by those Arab countries that has already signed a peace agreement with Israel, i.e. Egypt and Jordan. Moreover, on October 27th the parliament of Bahrain has approved a law that punishes with a fine or a 5-year prison term the Bahraini agents who have contacts with Israel: the law has not received final parliamentary approval, but it looks like a clear answer to the US call for normalization.

Conclusions

The events occurred between August and October 2009 signal worsening relations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, while the intra-Palestinian rift is far from over. The peace process is colliding against long-established obstacles, which are progressively eroding the chances for peace.

A first obstacle relates to Israel. Israel's settlement policy is running against the peace process. The Likud-led government supports the settlers in West Bank, it does not want to hand East Jerusalem to the Palestinians and, broadly speaking, it is reluctant to continue peace talks with the Palestinians. Moreover, Israel's politics is characterized by a fragmentation and a strong polarization among the political parties. As a consequence, Israel has been ruled by weak governments supported by fractious coalitions, which are continuously blackmailed by those of its members who are against the peace process.

A second obstacle relate to the Palestinians. The rivalry among Hamas and Fatah is running deep and it is weakening the Palestinians vis-à-vis Israel, preventing the signing of a peace agreement with the latter. Hamas wants to rule the Palestinians at the expense of Fatah, and vice versa, and this because the current conditions make politically more profitable the conflict than the cooperation among them.

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A final obstacle relates to the United States. The initial enthusiasm for peace of the newly installed Obama Administration has been vanishing and the long-standing national interests of the actors involved are slowly re-emerging on the surface. Despite President Obama's initial strong criticism of Israel's settlement policy, the US Middle East policy is progressively returning to its traditional pro-Israeli stance and it is focusing its efforts on building an international coalition aimed at stopping the Iranian nuclear program.

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Europe between old and new Balkans

Paolo Quercia

More than ten years after Dayton the Balkans are still there. They didn't "move" towards Europe and they didn't step back in the direction of century old ethnical conflicts. They are frozen and unsolved, like Dayton architecture, the independence of Kosovo or the future of Macedonian identity. But new elements of political dynamism do exist in the region and they are mostly related to the role that Russia is playing in setting new political and economical loyalties among the countries of the Balkan region that are mostly disappointed of the present geopolitical situation.

The Balkans remain the crux of Europe's unresolved security problem

Despite repeated calls by analysts and diplomats during the last months not to underestimate the Balkans' unresolved situation, there seems to be really nobody who at this time has a way out of the new and old conflicts which have survived for some years now, hidden beneath the ashes of a seemingly pacified region. Almost a year ago, key actors of political and diplomatic events such as Ashdown and Holbrooke alerted the international community from the columns of *The Guardian* about the possibility, in their opinion, that the Balkans were slowly but surely slipping into another serious critical phase, getting closer and closer to becoming a new tinderbox. The Dayton agreement mastermind and the former US envoy to the Balkans and former UN High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina were referring above all to the worsening Bosnian political situation in the face of Kosovo's Independence declaration. This situation has not bettered to date, following a general trend of chronic worsening of regional stability, such as in Kosovo, Macedonia, and parts of Montenegro and Serbia. Ten years into the massive international intervention in the Western Balkans, there are still regions lacking an autonomous model of economic and political development, compounded by a very low governance capability, and coupled with deep ethnic fragmentation and a perilous, apparently incurable historical rupture between victors and vanquished in the war of dissolution of what once was Yugoslavia. This instability is being aggravated by the effects of the economic crises which have hit the Balkans and might bring to the fore the fragility of the region's security architecture. The crises hit the region in two ways. They slowdown local economic development (mostly produced by a combination of external financial and investment interventions, which were beginning to grow weaker). In the meantime, the European economic crisis keeps away prospects for further EU enlargement, even though such enlargement would have ensured – according to a certain vision of regional security – a definitive security arrangement for the

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Western Balkans the bill for which would have been footed by the EU. The extreme indebtedness toward European banks in the Balkans represents a relevant factor of vulnerability. According to estimates, Austrian Banks' active loans in the region amount to 70% of their GDP. The region's economic problems end up serving as further stimulus for corruption, which is already widespread in many of the area's countries to alarming degrees.

The region's economic difficulties know no borders, state or ethnic, beginning with the countries closest to EU accession. Croatia's economy, for instance, seems to be going through a really rough patch because of the effects of the crisis which put under pressure the capabilities of the country to repay its high foreign debt (almost 40 billion dollars). Certain quarters would have it that the government is most certainly on the edge of bankruptcy, not being able even to pay civil service salaries. The bad economic situation might have contributed to the mysterious resignation of Sanader. In Montenegro, the government must face an incandescent situation with protests by aluminium combinats workers who have not been paid for a long time. In Serbia tens of thousands of local businesses have had their current accounts frozen by banks because of excessive overdrafts.

The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina keeps on worsening and the power of the international community too seems to be weakening. EU High Representative Inzko has expressly spoken of further deterioration in the domestic political situation in these last few months, particularly with regard to the control of the authority on energy networks divided between those on an entity level and those on a (theoretically, at least) federal level. The energy system of the RS tends to centrifuge and integrate with Belgrade, and this, out of necessity, brings the opposition of the High Representative – whose mandate is to integrate Bosnia's energy network with the European system – to Serbia's political leaders. Relations with the EU have stalled, and the news has made the rounds that the next Commission country progress report on Bosnia-Herzegovina will not be positive. No other outcome could be expected considering that the Directorate-General for European Integration of the Foreign Affairs has remained vacant for more than nine months.

The difficult situation in Kosovo remains the principal challenge to regional security. Although Kosovo has celebrated its first year of independence with a certain degree of tranquillity and without any serious episodes of instability, the country's international situation is still completely *sui generis* and open to changes, even far-reaching ones in the medium term. The very presence of international entities is based on different legal bases and highlights differing visions for Kosovo's future. The ICO, whose legal basis is the post-independence Kosovar Constitution, aims at Kosovo's EU accession. Although EULEX, UNMIK and KFOR are all based on the still-valid Resolution 1244, they have differing political objectives. Little by little on its way out but still largely responsible for the country's security, KFOR represents the military instrument of last resort whose function is preventive and aimed at controlling the territory. UNMIK, though reduced to the bare minimum, still retains an important role, albeit opposed by the Albanian government. Lastly, despite representing the EU rule of law mission launched upon Independence, EULEX has to keep a status neutral profile on account of the lack of consensus among all EU countries on Kosovar independence. It therefore has to base its

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legitimacy on Resolution 1244 which calls for the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia.

The Kosovar authorities keep on boycotting the UN mission with which they do not even entertain relations and which actually operates only in the northern part of the country, in the Serb-controlled area. In this respect, UNMIK provides an interface with Interpol where Kosovo is not recognized. UN mission administrative functions in northern Kosovo cannot however directly interact with Pristina because of the latter's recent refusal to recognize the UN mission. In the northern territories, UNMIK carries out the same administrative and control duties as before Kosovo's independence, with the sole difference that before it could carry them out on all the territory whereas now it is limited to the Serbian areas, in which the inhabitants see in UNMIK's presence a renewed guarantee of Serbian territorial integrity. EULEX's functions are in the judicial and policing fields, and only in the Albanian areas, whereas its presence is not accepted in Serbian areas. The only existent form of collaboration with EULEX in Serb territories is linked to the fact that Serbian officials of the Kosovo Protection Service refuse to carry out their duties in line with the Ministry of Interior's line of command and have therefore decided to report directly to EULEX. This is not the only paradox. The communication lines between the Serbian minority and the Albanian government manifest the same characteristic. Boycotting EULEX, the Serbs collaborate with UNMIK on numerous cases. Since UNMIK cannot collaborate directly with the Kosovar government on account of the Pristina boycott, UNMIK has to hold relations with EULEX, which is viewed with some sort of legitimacy by Pristina and maintains administrative collaboration with it. The administrative operational chain is therefore Serbian Enclaves–UNMIK–EULEX–Pristina. In other words, the Balkanization of the international community in Kosovo is such that independent Albanians can count on the presence of EULEX to make up for their sovereignty deficit whereas the Serbs are upheld by the UN missions. But EULEX's popularity is diminishing among Albanians, particularly when it is called upon to create stronger forms of collaboration with the Serbian part in order to finalize its rule of law mission. This came to the surface because of the collaboration between EULEX and Belgrade on police matters, despite increasing protests on the part of Kosovar Albanians voiced by both government and population. The tension rose such that traditionally demonstrative attacks on EULEX vehicles (as was the case before with UNMIK vehicles) have increased significantly over the past few months. The role of ICO (the civilian mission of the international community contemplated by the Athissari plan) has to date always been that of a marginal international presence. One of the main weaknesses of this mission lies in the difficulty to collaborate with the other two international missions. Not having been approved by the Security Council, the Athissari plan does not afford any meaningful collaboration between missions based on Resolution 1244 and missions deriving from Independence.

In sum, international political and diplomatic presence in Kosovo is based on three different missions. First, UNMIK is entirely based on Resolution 1244 and is irreconcilable with Independence. Second, EULEX is a hybrid form because it was born out of support for Independence but owes its legal legitimacy to Resolution 1244 and is thereby bound – against its will – to assume a status neutral profile. Third, conceived within a non-UN approved plan for the Independence of Kosovo (launched by the Finnish diplomat Athissari), ICO's presence, legitimacy, and operational limitations on Kosovar territory derive from the Constitutional of

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independent Kosovo and, in the ultimate analysis, from Pristina's political will.

It is rather evident that international presence in Kosovo is at one and the same time confused, at odds with itself, and hardly efficacious. It represents the difficulty of reconciling Kosovo's independence with a divided international community, both on the European plane and the global plane of the United Nations. Thus shattered, international presence in Kosovo, with its conflicting and incomplete legitimacy, ended up substantially losing its own real mission, namely completing and subrogating the building of a Kosovar State with focussed and incisive actions in the fields of security, justice and human rights. The international presence's failure will naturally increase the possibility that the state-building project will be abandoned. The idea had been to build a Kosovar State with the same standards of governance as the European Union. Or at least, compatible ones.

Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Russia: a new Balkan Triangle?

Russian President Medvedev has paid an official visit to Serbia at the same time of the 65th anniversary celebrations of Belgrade's liberation during World War II. This is his second visit to Serbia during 2009, following his February visit which finalized the sale agreement of Serbian company NIS to Gazprom. The Serbs welcomed very warmly the Russian President who delivered a speech to the Serbian Parliament. All political parties passed positive remarks on this visit, from the radicals to the pro-West liberals of the G17+. Across-the-spectrum consensus on the relationship with Moscow is a very important factor due to the weaknesses of the political system, notably its volatility caused by endless squabbles which could lead to early elections. The Serbian press, too, has been all out for the Russian President's visit and covered positively the issues discussed. Certain issues have now been settled, among which Russian support against Kosovar independence and the strengthening of cooperation in energy matters. But there are other issues which have opened or significantly strengthened certain matters. For instance, Serbo-Russian relations have been strengthened further on the financial front, with Moscow undertaking fresh commitments to help economically Belgrade's finances. This has been received favourably due to the increasing financial difficulties Belgrade had to face in the last years due to the economic and financial crises. The details of the new Russian line of credit to Serbia have not been clarified as yet, although the Serbian press speaks of a loan of between one and one-and-a-half billion dollars. The terms of the loan, the repayment conditions and the investment sectors will be decided in the coming weeks during technical meetings held in Moscow. Meanwhile, it has already been announced that the Bank of Moscow, the Serbian subsidiary of the Russian bank formed to finance Russian investments in Serbia, has opened a line of credit to the tune of 200 million dollars to be used by the Serbian company NIS, recently acquired by Gazprom, which has a 51% controlling power.

The Serbian Parliament has been particularly pleased with that part of Medvedev's speech in which he referred to the necessity of developing a regional security agreement between the EU and Russia. This view is to the Serbs' liking as it would allow Belgrade to reconcile its privileged relations with Moscow and future EU accession without having to face the problem of relations with NATO. It is common knowledge that the link between these two situations (Belgrade's accession to the EU and the commencement of a bilateral Russo-European security

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dialogue) lies with the attempt to arrive to a (highly improbable) reduction of the Americans' role both in Europe and in the Western Balkan region.

The visit was accentuated by a novelty. The two governments decided to establish a joint "Emergency situation center" close to the southern Serbian town of Nis, on the border with Kosovo. News about this new centre are still coming in, but so far it would seem that it will be a Serbian logistic base created thanks to Russian financial help (and possibly know-how) with the aim of building a structure to carry out emergency interventions in the entire Balkan region, in the case of natural catastrophes (mostly fires, earthquakes, floods, etc.). According to sources, the structure should be able to carry out de-mining operations. The decision to create such a base represents a small but important novelty for the Russian presence in the region. Such a structure, in fact, is meant to operate outside Serbian territory. It is conceivable that a possible future use on a regional level can only be limited to the Republic of Srpska and Serb-controlled northern Kosovo. The use in the Serb Republic of Bosnia of such a unit – dealing mainly with de-mining operations – would have a mostly political and symbolical meaning, but very little practical or operational consequences. This unit will be operational within two years, and its use would raise problems if aimed at Kosovar territory as it would affect a frozen conflict zone with an ongoing delicate question of disputed borders and sovereignty, and delicate political balances. The entry into Kosovo of an emergency intervention unit of humanitarian civil protection, on the invitation not of the government of Pristina but, say, of a Northern Serbo-Kosovar local council, would constitute a potentially perilous situation best eschewed. Such an operational scenario would doubtlessly bring about high risks of potential accidents or provocations between humanitarian intervention units, Kosovar frontier police, EULES, KFOR, or any other of the numerous Kosovar pro-independence organizations who lie outside a precise control framework. Succinctly put, there would be the potential for the evolution of a Georgia-like situation on the field. Interventions would be fuelled by the fact that the Kosovo Serbs' continued refusal to allow the entry of central or international bodies with civil duties would create an intervention vacuum for emergency situations to which the newly-founded "emergency situation center" might respond.

Meantime, EU and American efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina are failing to reduce the political tension stirred up in the last months and years. A meeting held in Butmir between all political forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina which should have brought about the levelling of differences ended up with the irreconcilability of stances and a return to the Dayton document. In other words, to the situation of not proceeding with political changes unless there is the consent of the three Bosnian constitutional nationalities. This necessary and possibly temporary change in the international community's position was confirmed by EU High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina Inzko himself, who at the end of the Butmir meeting admitted that "changes in Bih can take place only with the consent of the representatives" of the three peoples. It is a victory for Dodik's policy, followed in the last three years with Belgrade's – and partially Moscow's – support. More importantly, it represents the simultaneous failure of efforts, begun in 2005, to create a functioning State able to move ahead with EU and NATO integration.

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MILITARY MIGHT AND POLITICAL MANOEUVRES

Andrea Grazioso

From June 29 onwards, throughout the North Caucasus Military District and in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Caucasus 2009 large scale military manoeuvre was carried out, an exercise defined as "one of the largest exercises since the times of Soviet Union", officially aimed at simulating the response to an aggression under an enemy described as "terrorist".

According to the Moscow authorities, 8,500 soldiers took part in the Caucasus 2009, with about 1,000 major weapons systems, including armoured vehicles, artillery, combat aircraft and naval units. The list of units involved in the exercise suggests that in fact the number of troops involved was substantially higher. The importance of this exercise is linked both to the ongoing state of high tension with Georgia and to the transformation process of the Russian armed forces. About the first point, as well known, the previous "Caucasus 2008" preceded by a few days the invasion of Georgia in August 2008 and allowed that gathering of forces on the borders of that country which passed almost unnoticed thanks to the exercise.

In Georgia existed, and there still is a very strong concern about Russian intentions. With the presence of thousands of Russian soldiers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the chances for a new phase of conflict are very high, and the holding of periodic, major exercises further fuels Georgian's fears.

In purely military terms, the most critical point is probably represented by the deployment of Russian forces in the district of Akhgori, South Ossetia; the Russians could advance from there a few tens of kilometres and reach the corridors - highway, railroad, pipelines - crossing Georgia, cutting off Tbilisi (but also Azerbaijan) from the ports on the Black Sea.

In other words, even without having to reach Tbilisi, and without occupying the whole country, the Russians might block the "jugular" of Georgia, bringing the country to collapse in a few weeks.

The brief visit of Medvedev to the military units stationed in the Caucasus, immediately after the holding of the exercise has aroused great concern. During his visit, carried out between 13 and 14 July, Medvedev has touched both military installations in the Black Sea and the Russian Caucasus, and also bases in South Ossetia, and finally reached their outpost of Akhgori, the "spearhead" of military and political Russian strategy in the Caucasus.

During his visit, the Russian president has also announced the acceleration of work on building a new military base for the Black Sea Fleet, to be implemented at the port of Novorossiysk by

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2016, a base that would accommodate up to 90 naval units, including new submarines. Near Temryuk, a port town in the Sea of Azov, will also be built a new base for the Naval Infantry of the Black Sea Fleet.

The overall project for redeployment naval units and components associated with them is obviously related to the termination of the agreement for the lease of the Ukrainian base of Sevastopol, in Crimea, an agreement that Ukrainian authorities have repeatedly declared wont renew.

In recent weeks, among other things, the authorities in Kiev have ordered the cessation of all activities of the (Russian) FSB officers in Crimea. The latter, originally present on the territory of Ukraine to protect the security of the base leased to the Russians, would in fact have been involved in anti-government activities and, as such, are obviously perceived as undesirable.

Some experts say the announcement of Medvedev seems very significant, but far from the real economic and technical possibilities of present-days Russia. First, it will be extremely difficult to actually complete the work for a major naval base in just six years. The specific infrastructure of military interest, necessary for the support of a fleet, necessitates very complex and expensive work.

Secondly, the level of "90 naval units" that the new base should be able to host, is far from the conceivable level of forces for the future Black Sea Fleet. Currently, the fleet has less than ten combat vessels, all partially or completely obsolete.

The naval units currently in service would have non-less than thirty years in 2016, with most of them approaching forty years. Consequently, the Black Sea Fleet should receive, in the coming years, many new vessels, that comes in direct contrast to the modest and slow construction programs currently underway, with the time needed to set up new ships and the relatively low priority that the Black Sea Fleet has, compared to the North Sea and the Pacific Fleet.

It is noteworthy also the current negotiation between Russia and France, for the acquisition of a amphibious assault vessel, type "Mistral". The Russian Navy has not, at present, naval units of this type, and indeed suffers from a general obsolescence of the whole amphibious line. According to the Chief of Staff of the Russian Navy, Admiral Vladimir Vysotsk, if the Navy had available a similar unit, the assault conducted in August 2008 (against Georgia) would have required only 40 minutes instead of 26 hours required using existing old-fashioned vessels. The news is of great importance for at least three aspects: because not only confirms the serious situation of the Navy, but also of the shipbuilding in Russia, apparently unable to realize such a unit within an acceptable timeframe; because it makes evident the internal struggle between the various Russian services, with the Navy always looking for a "conventional" role, in addition to that played by the strategic fleet of missile-submarines; because the reason given by Admiral Vysotsk appears explicitly provocative, when considering the new and growing role of France within the Atlantic Alliance.

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Failure of new missile "Bulava"

Strategic weapons are giving little satisfaction to the Kremlin authorities, despite absorbing a large proportion of overall available resources. On July 15, there was a test of particular importance, namely the launch of a missile SS-N (X) -30 "Bulava" from the submarine Dmitry Donskoy. It was the eleventh test launch of the "Bulava", with the failures in the previous five launches putting at serious risk the continuation of the program.

Even the launch of 15 July, however, turned into a failure, with the missile that exploded just 28 seconds after launch, while still operating the first stage. Just a few days later, Yuri Solomonov, chief designer at the 'Institute for missile technology in Moscow and "father" of the "Bulava" resigned.

To fully understand the size of this failure is necessary to briefly retrace the events that have marked the development of Russian ship-borne strategic deterrence over the last fifteen years.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia inherited the entire "strategic" fleet made of nuclear-powered missile submarine class Delta II, Delta III, Delta IV and Typhoon, according to the nomenclature used by NATO.

Deleted for obsolescence the Delta II and placed in reserve – actually with no real chance to return to operational service – the Typhoon, Russia had based its plans in the medium term on continued service of the Delta IV, while gradually replacing Delta III with a new class of submarines, to be equipped with the new missile SS-N-28.

The repeated failures in the test launches of this missile, however, have forced the Russians to abandon the project, trying to modify the SS-27 Topol M missile system, based on land, for the ship-borne requirements, while designing substantial changes for the new submarines, in order to operate such a different missile.

This solution is not optimal – for differences between the systems for land use and those for naval use – however, but promised to be reasonably reliable, and thus to ensure, albeit with considerable delay on the original plans, the renewal of the naval strategic component.

The missile resulting from SS-27 modifications, named SS-N-30 "Bulava", after the first positive tests, has indeed showed several unexpected problems, such as those in the first stage, exploded on July 15.

Therefore, Russia is now and again in a very serious situation of impasse, because after investing many resources in the new missile, and after initiating the construction of three nuclear submarines assigned to receive it, could be forced to abandon the project and start to look for new solutions.

Meanwhile, the Delta III is getting closer to the date of the withdrawal, while the Navy is seeking to maximize the operational effectiveness of the Delta IV, whose SS-N-23 "Skiff" missiles seem to be the only reliable strategic offensive missile left. Just few hours before the test of the "Bulava", Russians have in fact made a double test launch of SS-N-23 from vessels operating under the Arctic cap.

According to the Russians, the missiles followed a "depressed" trajectory that would have kept them low on the horizon for the first part of the flight, so as not to offer a possible anti-ballistic system the opportunity to intercept. Details with which these launches have been conducted, and

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still more with the following declarations, are to indicate how Russia focus on the ability to maintain a credible nuclear deterrence. In other terms, Moscow attaches importance to maintaining a "strategic parity" with the United States, indeed as evidenced by the ongoing negotiations between the two countries on the future level of strategic weapons.

However, the possible abandonment of the "Bulava" would mean a further delay for at least another five years on the operation of the new Borei-class submarines, while according to some analysts the development from the scratch of a new ballistic missile and its integration with the Borei could require more than ten years.

The Delta IV with their efficient SS-N-23 are likely to remain in service beyond 2020, thus ensuring at least a partial capability of deterrence. However, Russia could be forced to invest huge sums in modernizing its nuclear deterrent, sums that would prevent the upgrade of the "conventional" military, also in need of substantial upgrades.

More recently, with a rather unusual public declaration, and highly significant in itself, the Russian Security Council chief, Nikolai Patrushev, has revealed that the new Russian military doctrine, currently being finalized, will contain significant news about the use of Nuclear Weapons.

According to Patrushev, the new doctrine would involve the possible use of nuclear weapons even in a preventive (and not just "pre-emptive"), vis-à-vis non-nuclear adversaries.

Essentially, this new doctrine would mean a dramatic lowering of the threshold for use of such weapons. It seems significant also that the final draft – according to Patrushev – will be approved by President Medvedev in early 2010, that is roughly the same period during which the negotiations with Washington for a new Strategic Arms Treaty is expected to be concluded. This could be, therefore, a strong message of the "siloviki" to Medvedev and toward the White House, about their desire to prevent a real normalization of relations between Russia and the United States.

Obama's new course on missile defence: effects on international relations

The so-called "third site" of the anti-ballistic architecture, after those already built in Alaska and California, which at the end of 2010 should have a total of 30 missile interceptors, was designed to further improve the defence of the North American continent from attack conducted with a limited number of ballistic missiles, in this case from the Middle East region and, in particular from Iran. The anti-ballistic system "based on land," as technically defined, is intended to hit the enemy attacking missiles during their mid-phase trajectory, and not in ascending phase or during the re-entry into the atmosphere, or "terminal phase".

To ensure such capacity, the interceptors must be placed in specific regions of the earth to ensure coverage of those routes that would be precisely followed by enemy ballistic missiles during their flight. That is why Central Europe was identified as an ideal location for that site. The ballistic trajectory between the Persian Gulf and North America cross over the region, hence it would be possible to give any "mid-course" anti-ballistic system the greatest chances of success.

The proposed European site would include a radar detection and tracking system of targets, located at Brdy, about 90 kilometers southwest of Prague and a set of ten silos for the launch of

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interceptor missiles, located in the former military base of Redzikowo in Poland, near the Baltic coast.

Rather detailed technical information about this proposed system have always been widely available, even on open source, and the congruity between the stated U.S. intention to deploy this system to counter attacks from rogue states and the known characteristics of the system was confirmed by the vast majority of analysts.

However, the "third site" has become one of the main points of confrontation between Russia and the United States, and to some extent also between Russia and NATO, especially after the Atlantic Alliance had accepted and embraced the need for anti-ballistic defence, to be based in Europe. According to the Russians, the site in Central Europe had nothing to do with the "Iranian threat", but was built to unilaterally overcome the strategic balance with Russia, putting an end to the "mutual assured destruction" that has been for decades the cornerstone of the mutual deterrence. With the anti-ballistic, Moscow argued, America would first proceed with a surprise attack against the Russian missile systems and then he could intercept the few surviving Russian weapons, thereby protecting its territory from retaliation.

This theory has been invalidated by some simple considerations relating precisely to the technical specifications of the "third site". From Czech Republic, in fact, a radar operating at wavelengths for this specific type of equipment would be able to track Russian missiles from the central parties in the country - particularly from the typical areas of deployment of Russian strategic systems - only when these they would be well above the Arctic.

The interceptor missiles based in Poland would not then able to "chase" the Russian missiles with such a trajectory, to hit them before they reach their targets. Also, the planned number of interceptors, amounting to ten, was clearly inadequate to cope with even a limited Russian retaliation.

After this first phase of accusations and counter-accusations, the Russian position was changed. According to some analysts close to the Kremlin, in Russian military and political establishment there was a strong fear of being put within a few years under the threat of missile systems capable of striking with extreme precision the Russian leadership, in very few minutes after launch, without allowing a sufficient warning time. Partly as a result of this further escalation in the dispute, the Kremlin introduced into the "game" an additional variable, represented by the threat to deploy in the enclave of Kaliningrad a "Iskander", SS-26 for NATO, surface-to-surface system.

This threat was very ambiguous, since the SS-26 - which under the INF Treaty can not have a range exceeding 500 kilometres - launched from the territory of Kaliningrad would not be able to hit the radar in the Czech Republic. The silos in Poland, however, were within the range of Iskander, but the accuracy of the latter, together with the power of conventional warhead, made them unsuitable for destroying those silos.

The Russian threat seemed so patently devoid of content, unless they had implied that Moscow was preparing to withdraw from the INF Treaty, increasing the range of SS-26 beyond 500 kilometres, or to install a nuclear warhead on them. Since Warsaw and Berlin is also located less than 500 kilometres from Kaliningrad, the second hypothesis would suggest a dramatic return to a direct nuclear threat on the European Capitals.

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Quite obviously, therefore, the reaction of Moscow has always instrumentally used technical issues to determine purely political consequences. The goal of Moscow was clearly to force the United States to pay a high political price in terms of domestic and international consensus in order to advance their project.

Well aware of the Russian threat to prepare a form of military retaliation against the countries of Central Europe, and therefore aware of the "political cost" that the governments of the region would incur while ensuring the continuation of the program, the United States were therefore prepared to support explicitly, both in political and military terms, the "new allies" in Central Europe. In many ways, therefore, the question of the "third anti-ballistic site" had assumed a political dimension even more relevant than its high technical and military meaning.

The U.S. President, in announcing in mid-September the decision to substantially revise the project for the anti-ballistic system in Europe, reaffirmed his willingness to pursue the goal of countering the threat posed by ballistic missiles.

According to Obama, however, this will be pursued in a "more flexible and efficient" way, and many have read in the words of the President that the United States intend to use even for the European region the ship-borne SM-3 anti-missile system, which repeatedly proved to be successful in past years, and a new version of the SM-3, to be based on land.

From a technical standpoint, the decision to focus on SM-3 is not a particular surprise. As mentioned, the system that combines the AEGIS command and control apparatus – embarked on dozens of U.S. naval units and on the main vessels of the navy of Japan, South Korea and Spain – with the SM-3 interceptor is tested since the early years of the decade. To date, 23 tests have been conducted, with 19 hits.

There are currently 18 U.S. Navy ships able to launch and guide the SM-3 missiles, 16 of which are allocated to the Pacific Fleet and only 2 in the Atlantic. By 2010, an increase of three units in the number of ships assigned to the Atlantic Fleet is planned. SM-3 systems are capable of intercepting ballistic missiles during the intermediate phase of flight, even if it could effectively counter only short-range and intermediate range ballistic missiles.

The missile, however, is in constant development, and a new version is expected in 2012-2013, with significantly increased performances. Immediately, analysts have inferred a kind of re-evaluation of Iran's missile capabilities. With the AEGIS + SM-3, as mentioned, you can not currently engage long-range missiles, for which the United States. This would implicitly mean that the risk of an Iranian attack on US territory will not materialize in the short term. However, the SM-3 could evolve into something very similar, in terms of overall performance, to the Ground-Based Interceptor that was destined for the site in Poland.

From a technical standpoint, therefore, the declaration of Obama in no way means that anti-ballistic systems of great sophistication and performance will not be based in Europe.

Indeed, if one considers that the ships already able to use these missiles are 18, that they could rapidly increase (the U.S. ships equipped with the AEGIS missile and SM-3-capable launcher are more than 80, plus those of the Allies), and that on each ship tens of SM-3 missiles could be installed, one might speculate that the United States will be able, in a relatively short time, to make operational a "shield" much broader and "thick" than originally imagined.

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Despite all this, the declaration of Obama has immediately sparked a series of reactions, at the highest levels. In Russia, the announcement was immediately followed by statements of satisfaction with the new, conciliatory attitude of the U.S. and shortly after President Medvedev announced the decision to not proceed with the deployment of the “Iskander” missiles in Kaliningrad.

In Europe, during the talks with U.S. Vice President Biden, both representatives of the Polish government that those of Romania showed interest in joining the new, revised U.S. project, including the basing on land of SM-3 missiles.

Moreover, according to information obtained from diplomatic sources in Kiev, talks between the United States and Ukraine, concerning the possible inclusion in the U.S. ABM architecture of two radar systems with long-range surveillance capabilities, based in Crimea and in the westernmost region of Ukraine, near Mukachevo, took place in September

It is not surprising at all that Moscow has immediately voiced a very strong disappointment for any such deal between Washington and Kiev.

Africa



GABON: “TOUT RESTE A FAIRE”

Maria Egizia Gattamorta

Quarterly Africa

In Africa, in the past quarterly three were the issues of particular relevance on domestic, regional and international levels other than the still ongoing violence in Somalia and Darfur, the stall of negotiations among the main players of the crisis in Madagascar and the surrendering of some MEND leaders who were willing to negotiate with Nigerian President Yar'Adua.

The elections in Gabon (August 30th) were significantly important since it indicated the start of an obligatory path where “tout reste à faire”, on the trace of a past that had tightly marked an internal political evolution and undoubtedly shaped the Franco-African relations; the African Union Summit on conflicts (August 31st) made a point on the continent's peace efforts and security; finally the Second Africa-South America Summit in Margarita Island (Venezuela, September 26th -27th) showed the willingness to create a single block on what regards security, energy, economy, development cooperation and education.

Today's Africa wants to appear increasingly engaged in the efforts of internal growth and external visibility. Will it be really able to stand up for such challenges?

Gabon: “tout reste à faire”

The passing of President Omar Bongo Ondimba last June was perceived by some observers as the end of 40 years of stability, and by others as the natural end of a patronage system. Apart from the fact if it was actually an epilogue or the beginning of a new era, OBO's death without a heir designated to succeed to power, initiated a process of internal discussions - regardless of the August 30th elections results – that is useful to start a new political path in Gabon, to review the structure of balances of the Central African Region and nevertheless to have a concrete cross examination towards the role of the government of Sarkozy wants in the area.

The results of the polls coagulated forces, cemented friendships and drew attention to what might become the “other Gabon”. With a participation rate of 44.24%, voters awarded victory to Ali Bongo Ondimba, the man nominated by the Parti Democratique Gabonaise (PDG) in order to lead the country. The winner obtained 41.73% of preferences (141,952 votes), compared to 25.88% of Andre Mba Obama and to Pierre Mamboundou's 25.22 %. Among the many assumptions and expected wins, the only thing that was quite surprising was the withdrawal of Casimir Oye Mba on the eve of the competition. His fear of triggering a spiral of violence or perhaps his awareness of not being ready for the supreme court pushed the former prime minister to step back on August 29th and remain in the shadows behind the scenes.

Africa

What lies beyond the recriminations and accusations by various candidates on regard to the behavior of the Commission électorale nationale autonome et permanente (CENAP)?

Demonstrations and clashes were reported in Port Gentil and Libreville in September 2009, a sign of discontent to which the new head of State and his team will, inevitably, have to answer to. People want change, no matter what the result is, even if it comes through continuity.

There is discontent and malaise that can no longer be ignored: despite of the great oil wealth (which makes the country one of the best partners in Africa for when it comes to energy), unemployment rate has reached 21%, 20% of the population lives on \$1 a month, average life expectancy is 56 years and 80% of alimentary goods are imported.

Corruption, the use of public funds for private goods, a patronage system are the roots of evil for a tangible social imbalance.

There is so much to do in orders to address this situation and division of roles (let alone the resources) among those closest to Ali is simply not sufficient.

Clearly, that all efforts should be concentrated on some priorities: clashes between groups must be avoided (particularly between fang and tèkè, but the differences among the other 40 ethnic groups in the area should never be underestimated), national unity should stay solid, much efforts have to be put on the purchasing power of the middle class, on the health and educational¹ sectors, on minimal wage, on employment programs and local potentials (outdated for too long) must to be implemented.

These are the elements that need urgent feedbacks, but what follows is not any less important: the thorny problem of minimal wage given to civil servants, the proposal to abolish the Senate, the attempt to reduce the Presidential term from seven to five years and renewable only once, and the demand to expand and secure the freedom of thought and speech among all citizens.

Regional challenges are of equal importance to the numerous internal ones. Throughout the last four decades, Gabon gained the reputation of great prestige, moderation and balance. Will the new President be able to maintain the same level of relations with his counterparts? Many doubts remain on this.

What sort of a relationship the President will establish with the French President Sarkozy? Despite all assurances given by the government of Paris from June 2009 onwards, there has been inevitably a position in favor of the son of the man who was one of the largest African allies of France in the last forty years. How will the agreements on defense be redefined? On which bases will the presence of French multinational companies in the energy sector be guaranteed? The expected victory was achieved and once again power has been passed from father to son..., perhaps still understandable by the population, who – even though starving – albeit wants assurances related to the past and also slow changes in order to manage the immediate future.

This is the task of the second generation of the African Leaders: no matter if they're called Bongo Ondimba, Eyadema, Wade, Gaddafi, they still need to unwind a “chisel sort of job”...with the awareness that after 50 years of independence “*tout reste à faire*”.

¹. On this regard, rate of infant mortality remains high, there are inadequate medical facilities in the country with an alarming rate of illiteracy.

Africa***The response of the African Union to continental conflicts***

The ongoing African conflicts involve exorbitant costs that are no longer sustainable by a great chunk of the continent itself; those costs involve waste of economic resources, loss of life, decrease in investments, a set back in the potentials for an eventual concrete future development and poverty. This awareness has led Qaddafi, the current president of the African Union to propose a special summit on conflicts on August 31st, aimed to examine the real causes, the processes put in place within the AU for their resolution and the secure possibilities in order to exit dramatic scenarios.

The data forwarded by Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Jean Ping are clear: between 1990 and 2009 at least 19 conflicts of varying nature and varying intensity were registered. Conflicts caused the loss of 300 billion dollars, 3 million refugees from all the five regions, 11 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and over a million casualties among civilians and combatants. Despite of all the peace agreements reached in DRC, Burundi, Comoros, South Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, there are still many areas involved in violent clashes and where mediation often fails (just think of Darfur, Somalia, Madagascar, the Western Sahara, the Great Lakes region)

Where is the continent heading to? How is it best to remove direct and indirect costs? In the Tripoli declaration the participants agreed on the common need to continue along the path adopted in Durban (July 2002, where the new panafrican organization was launched), particularly on the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the Panel of Wise, the African Standby Force, the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS). Only through the implementation of these means can create an effective barrier against challenges that are present in multiple forms: unconstitutional changes of government, drugs trafficking, terrorism, piracy, transnational organized crime, border disputes.

The African leaders present in the Summit seem to understand that the only winning strategy can only be that of a holistic approach, the result of various factors which are obtained through the imposition of the rule of law and through the democratization and good governance. Still, beside the formal knowledge what is needed is concreteness and coherency. Currently the continent lacks both of those two elements.

How is it possible to reconcile the “uncomfortable and criticizable” presences of Robert Mugabe and Omar El Beshir with the issues discussed during the conference? How is it acceptable to take into consideration only the reports released by the government of Khartoum regarding the real numbers of the dead in Darfur (10,000 casualties) and rule out those reported by NGO officials or by the UN officials (estimated at 300,000)?

Can Ben Ali speak of “culture of dialogue” while Qaddafi accuses Israel of being the primary cause of all the conflicts in the continent?

All regional efforts are appreciable but now it is time to pass from words to deeds. It is simply not sufficient to dedicate the year 2010 “to peace and security” for it to be as such.

ASA Summit: increasingly strong ties between Africa and South America

The defining elements of the second Summit ASA held in Margarita island (Venezuela) on September 26th and 27th are as follows: a convergence of interests and a strong South-South cooperation in various fields and a desire to deepen the natural link between Africa and South

Africa

America. The event provided an opportunity to review the work done by the 8 working groups (trade, investment and tourism, infrastructure, transport, mining and energy, peace and security, agriculture and environment, education and culture, social affairs and sports; science, technology and communications, institution-building and public administration) constituted during the first Summit in Abuja in November 2006 and to plan new initiatives.

Through their purposeful approach, it is clear that the South American leaders are Hugo Chavez, Luis Inacio Lula Da Silva and Cristina de Kirchner, while for African side stand Muammar Qaddafi and Abdoulaziz Bouteflika. Each with a different shade (more or less in opposition to the United States and Europe) offer new collaborations and indicate suitable areas for future joint action.

It is not only the possibility of enhancing trade that induce the countries of the two groups to come forward as a block within a global context. It is certain that Brazil sells food and manufactured goods to Africa as a whole and has seen this business grow from 5 billion dollars in 2002 to \$ 26 billion in 2008, as is well documented that 3,5 % of Argentina's foreign trade is done with an African partner.

Seeking new customers and diversify partners is a good method to get around globalized economy but still is not enough in this period of time. A political project is needed in order to coagulate efforts and propose alternatives to world order.

This project can be achieved where there is a common ground based on a colonial system and on same feeling of revenge. It is also the awareness of holding vast energy resources oil and gas, that pushes the formation of a block against the Western world; it is certainty that supports the desire to write new rules within an international system to protect its interests and ensure its development.

From the final statement, everybody can deduce the will of change of the UN Security Council order, the joint efforts to enhance energy cooperation, to combat climate change, to ensure world food security and the condemnation of all forms of terrorism.

Is this the usual rhetoric or a sincere commitment? It more likely seems like an exercise which takes into account a number of hot sensitive topics and not a particular effort in order to offer a qualitative contribution into ongoing international discussions.

As of what regards specific proposals, the participants agreed to create PETROSUD (a multinational oil company that will guarantee all partners access to valuable energy sources), BANCOSUD (a bi-regional bank which scope is to finance projects in both continents)², Telesud (a TV channel, an essential mean which promotes authentic integration between the two parties) and the South University (to ensure the training of millions of youths in the world's two Southern regions).

The proposal of President Qaddafi to create a Libyan defense organization parallel to NATO was considered to be too hasty. The participants preferred not to include the Libyan suggestion in the final declaration and thus demonstrated a certain degree of moderation.

When looked at externally, ASA does not seem to be a real joint project but a crusade against the big international players, those who shaped -for better or worse - the histories of Africa and South America.

² BANCOSUD will offer 20 billions as the initial capita; Venezuela, Argentina and Brazil are committed to donate 4 billions each

Africa

Qaddafi and Chavez do not seem to be able to disengage from their critical approach towards the Western world, which they often demonized and exploited as a means for them to justify their absolute leadership.

The Venezuelan leader in particular used the occasion to sign eight energy deals with some South African countries (including Mauritania, South Africa, Sudan, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone and Niger), with the precise aim to put the “black oil” as the “cohesive element” for the world's southern hemisphere.

The third ASA summit is to be held in Libya in 2011.

It will be interesting to see how this forum will develop its capacity in parallel to the proposals coming from Asian partners.

India and China**THE END OF CHINDIA?***Nunziante Mastrolia*

However, the Arunachal Pradesh remains the main cause of stalling the talks¹ between the two great powers. India considers the region as an integral part of its territory and gives it a great strategic value². As for Beijing, the Indian State remains historically and culturally Chinese also due to the presence of the ancient Buddhist temple of Tawang.

These territorial disputes originate from the British colonial period in India and the weakness of the then Chinese empire and thus represent a raw nerve for the collective consciousness of both countries.

For China, the loss of those territories is one of the last memories of humiliation and dismemberment it endured throughout the last 150 years that ranged from the first Opium war until its independence in 1949. For China to obtain control of those territories means to revive its former glory and regain its status as a regional power. At the same time those territories boost the national pride of India still frustrated by the defeat during its war with China back in 1962 and which often evokes the crumbling of the country's national unity. Contrary to the Chinese case, ceding those territories can represent a severe blow to the Indian ambitions to emerge as a super power and its aspiration to play a boarder role on the international scene by showing that it has no real consistency.

It is for this reason following the Chinese activism in Tibet which, had led to an increase in troops and a massive work of infrastructure throughout the territory³ (one of the greatest examples of all is the railway which reaches Lhasa), New Delhi, which had always kept a low profile role in the region in order not to arouse suspicions by Beijing, adopted the opposite attitude.

In fact, over the past four years India has launched a broad infrastructure program⁴. The decision of the Asian Development Bank to finance some projects in the region of Arunachal Pradesh aroused a sense of indignation in Beijing. Recently New Delhi has also taken steps to

¹ Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman, "The 90000 sq kms Sino-Indian tangle", IPCS, September 8th 2009

² Subhash Kapila, "India: The Strategic Importance of Arunachal Pradesh", South Asia Analysis Review, September 17th 2009

³ Subhash Kapila, "China stiffens Military Intransigence on India – Tibet Border", South South Asia Analysis Review, September 10th 2009

⁴ CT Niles, "tensions between India and China increase in the reign of Cindia", Asia News, September 14th 2009. Also see "Work to resume soon on Kashmir rail link project", Daily Excelsior, August 29th 2009

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increase the presence of its armed forces in the area. In July, 2009 two mountain divisions⁵ of circa 30 thousand men were stationed in the region. In June, four Sukhoi 30 MKI were stationed at the base of Tezpur in the Assam region and their number is expected to rise to thirty by the end of October 2009. A second squadron will be stationed in the airbase of Chabua (also in the Assam region)⁶. Additionally, India is transforming the numerous *Advanced Landing Ground* constructed along the *Line of Actual Control* until now accessible only by helicopters into a full-fledged airbase for fixed wing transport aircraft⁷.

The Indian Government is not only limiting its activities on the implementation of land infrastructures and strengthening its air and ground forces: the government has also been applying political attention on the State of Arunachal Pradesh. The visit of the Indian Prime Minister Singh to the region last October highly irritated the government of Beijing. It is worth mentioning that this was the second visit to the area by an Indian Premier over the last twelve years (the first of which only took place a year before in 2008). As in the past, this shows how the Indian authorities have been careful to keep a low profile on the issue precisely in order to not create tension with Beijing and also highlights how that attitude has now changed⁸. India's renewed presence and attention towards the North Eastern border regions has aroused strong official reactions in Beijing that triggered an intense media campaign by semi - official organs, characterized by mocking tones that are nearly disparaging towards India and its ambitions⁹.

Perhaps the event that had a major echo in India and which brought the country to file an official protest against the Chinese government was an article published in August 2009 on the website of the China International Institute for Strategic Studies that suggested the aim of the Chinese foreign policy towards its neighbour: the dismemberment and Balkanization of India by leveraging on its internal divisions and weaknesses. Other editorials, especially the *Global Times*, owned by the *People's daily*, have mocked India's ambitions to play a key role as a global power. According to China those ambitions would eventually lead India to adopt an aggressive and provocative approach on a regional level. No matter how moderate or harsh the Chinese press campaign against India varied in its tone (depending on its authors) they all agreed that Beijing cannot tolerate the existence of another super power in the region. In other words, "in Asia only one sun can shine"¹⁰.

These tensions are not an occasional event nor temporary but are part of a broader framework of competition and strategic rivalry, of under surfaced tensions and attempts to approach each other.

In fact, in recent years the relationship between the two countries has been mostly measured

⁵ Nirmalya Banerjee, "New N – E division with eye on China?", *The Times of India*, September 11th 2009

⁶ IAF to up vigil along LAC to counter China", *The Times of India*, September 26th 2009

⁷ "Ladakh – Nyoma Airstrip to be Expanded, Converted to Advanced Landing Ground2, India Defense, September 20th 2009

⁸ Sudha Ramachandran, "China opens new front in Kashmir", *Asia Times*, October 16th 2009. Also see M. K. Bhadrakumar, "The Dragon spews fire at the Elephant", October 24th 2009

⁹ B. Raman, "China- India: Non- Governmental Hostility Behind Facade of Governmental Cordiality", *South Asia Analysis Review*, August 14th 2009

¹⁰ See Bhaskar Roy "Chinese Perception of India In The Frame Of Sino – Us Strategic Game", *South Asia Analysis Review*, July 2nd 2009. By the same author "CHINA: Back to Containing India?", *South Asia Analysis Review*, July 7th 2009

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through rivalry and competition, mutual suspicion and envy and not through cooperation. The reasons behind this attrition are increasing alarmingly to an extent that the now famous Chindia appears to be nothing but a fake myth.

Just consider a few cases: in addition to border tensions India is particularly worried about the increasing Chinese influence in Pakistan and Sri Lanka; China exploited India's reluctance to arm Colombo by massively supplying the country with weapons in its fight against the Tamil Tigers. Similarly, concern is growing in India over the Chinese influence in Myanmar and the increasingly close ties between Beijing and Islamabad. On this regard in October 2009 India accused China of compromising the success of the talks for the definition of territorial disputes, for the financial and technical assistance it provides to Pakistan for the construction of various projects and for the installation of a hydroelectric plant of seven thousand megawatts in Bunji, situated in the disputed Kashmir area, which India still considers illegally occupied by the Government of Islamabad¹¹.

This is the first time in which India takes a clear stance on this collaboration process that was initiated in August 2009 in occasion of the visit of the Pakistani President to China: “ we had complained to them in private but this time it had to be made clear that there cannot be different standards on disputed areas”.¹²

Even with Pakistan the situation seems to be quite critical¹³; beyond the stalemate in peace talks in the aftermath of last November's terrorist attacks, New Delhi fears that the new American AF – Pak strategy could supply Islamabad with weapons that could be used against India¹⁴.

Moreover, it might be sufficient to mention that India has launched a wide debate on its own nuclear policy. This all started with a speech by the Chief of Army Staff, General Deepak Kapoor, who has raised the possibility that his country is obliged to review its no-first use policy¹⁵ as a reaction to the increase of Pakistan's atomic arsenal. This also explains India's decision of not to participate, after years of advanced talks, in the construction of the Iran – Pakistan – India pipeline, which would have been the pipeline of peace. Furthermore, India continues to accuse Pakistan of maintaining a soft attitude towards those who committed the Mumbai attacks and also Singh's attempts to restart peace talks, even before the condemnation of the terrorists of Mumbai, failed due to the strong criticisms by the opposition and part of the Congress Party¹⁶.

Finally, the growing Chinese activities in the Indian Ocean is a cause of great concern for India, also because of the missions to patrol the sea lines of communication in the Gulf of Aden, an activity that China started last year. Great apprehension was also aroused as a result of the Chinese ASAT test. According to India, these are all pieces of a broader strategy which aim is to prevent the rise of the subcontinent, to contain and shut India within its own borders.

On the other hand China never approved the American clearance to India as a nuclear power and thus backing its ambitions to play a leading role both regionally and globally. On regard to

¹¹ “India asks China to stop development activity in PoK”, The Hindu, October 15th 2009

¹² “India, China will continue talks to resolve differences”, The Hindu, October 16th 2009

¹³ “Security threats from Pakistan have not lessened: Chidambaram”, The Hindu, September 12th 2009

¹⁴ “India conveys concern to US over Harpoon modification by Pak”, The Times of India, September 5th 2009. Also see “Pakistan illegally modified missiles”, The Hindu, August 31st 2009

¹⁵ “May have to revisit nuclear no – first use policy: Army chief”, The Times of India, September 6th 2009

¹⁶ “Terror Suspect Cleared Again in Pakistan”, The New York Times, October 13th 2009

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this in July 2008 India accused China of suspicious attempts to obstruct it at the NSG.

On this perspective the decision to activate a direct “red line” of communication between the two governments should not be taken as a sign of relaxation, on the contrary could be the perfect picture of the risks those tensions that characterizes the relationship of those two countries.

The biggest risk associated to those tensions, expressed in the words of Robert Kagan, is the return of history: the struggle for power and the conquest of influence by the great powers. Kagan believes that this phenomenon is already occurring and could not be far from the truth: “The United States remains the sole superpower. But International competition among great poker has returned. With Russia, China, Europe, Japan, India, Iran, the United States, and others vying for regional predominance. Struggle for status and influence in the world have returned as central features of the international scene”¹⁷.

Moreover, the question to ask is why only now New Delhi has decided to put so much emphasis on this issue? Certainly the answer cannot be clear and definitive but an attempt for an interpretation can be sketched out. It seems that top Indian politicians foresee a series of narrow and uneven passages in the future, starting with the nuclear issues, the climate, the revival of the Doha Round looming on the horizon. Generally speaking there is the fear of a new international isolation, in front of a growing terrorist threat: both internally, particularly by the Naxalite movement which it intends to combat even by engaging Armed Forces¹⁸ and internationally: the October 8th terrorist attack against the Indian embassy in Kabul¹⁹ and the ongoing tensions with Pakistan²⁰: in addition to what was mentioned earlier, the government of Islamabad accuses India of instigating instability in the region of Baluchistan.

This therefore could mark a new period of isolation. Paradoxically India and China agree on many issues that range from climate to commercial issues, economic integration has been increasing but the tensions arising from territorial disputes and the intense Chinese activism in the Indian Ocean might lead to infect those sectors where cooperation is strong²¹.

Since its independence, India has had a special relationship with Russia a country with a powerful defence industry: Moscow is India's main weapon supplier and its main partner in the development of new military technologies: Russian exports of weapons to India from 2000-2008 reached 11 billion dollars. England comes second with 720 million dollars followed by Israel, Uzbekistan, Poland, France and Germany. The United States are only ninth with 146 million dollars.

Yet, as many experts pointed out, there have also been a setback in the relations between India and Russia during the visit of the Indian President Pratibha Devisingh Patil in Russia²².

Some frictions were recently surfaced particularly on regard to the issue of weapons supply. On this behalf the case regarding the aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov is quite emblematic. In 2004 India and Russia agreed on the delivery of the Gorshkov for a total cost of 1.6 billion dollars by

¹⁷ Robert Kagan, *The Return of History*, Vintage Books, 2008, New York

¹⁸ “Manmohan: naxalism the greatest internal threat”, *The Hindu*, October 11th 2009

¹⁹ “India hints at Pakistani link to Kabul attack”, *The Hindu*, October 10th 2009

²⁰ “Situation not conducive for talks with Pakistan: Farooq”, *Hindustan Time*, October 14th 2009

²¹ “Peter J Brown, “China's navy sails past India's dock”, *Asia Times*, October 5th 2009

²² “Investing in India – Russia relationship”, *The Hindu*, September 30th 2009

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2008. However, the Russians have repeatedly delayed the deliver by citing technical problems and increased the price for unforeseen additional costs to a total of 2,7 billion dollars. These technical issues can, however, be a signal of some tension between the two nations due to certain choices made by India on international policy choices particularly its increasing cooperation with Washington: *“Russia was playing hard ball partly because it was uneasy about India's growing ties with the United States and its plans to buy more weapons from Washington”*. According to Manoj Joshi of the Hindustan Times *“clearly, the Russians do appear to be now sending a message to India. They are saying that they are not happy with Indian moves to get closer to the U.S.”* As for Ashok Mehta Moscow is trying hard to keep away other competitors from the highly profitable Indian weapon market: *“the Russians are unhappy that India is moving closer to the U.S. who have just entered the market, while India does not want to put all the eggs in the Russian basket”*.

With this in mind China, South Korea and Japan are increasing their political and economic coordination to the extent that at a recent summit held in Beijing on October 10th, the three nations pledged to establish a common integration path similar to the European model.

On a similar note the relations between Russia and China are following the same approach both within the context of SCO and bilaterally and this was quite evident during the visit of the Russian Premier to Beijing last October. Pakistan has been exploiting India's isolation by increasingly relying on the ever growing Chinese support. The Government of Islamabad has opened a new chapter of bilateral relations with Moscow²³ and with Obama's AF – Pak strategy it has reconquered a central role in managing the Afghan crisis, as mentioned earlier.

The relations between India and Washington, on which India had invested great deal of efforts in recent years, have been less idealistic particularly on regard to the strong desire of the new Democratic Administration to strengthen the international non- proliferation regime, which for India can only mean an increase in pressure for it to accede the Non – Proliferation Treaty and the CTBT.

India seems to fear a change of attitude by the United States during the transition process from George W. Bush to Obama as a “hit and run”²⁴ game. What India mostly fears is for the US not to fulfill its commitments to transport weapons as planned and promised, as already occurred in the past²⁵. In other words they nurture serious doubts on the reliability of the United States as a long term weapon supplier. The new US ambassador to India Timothy J. Roemer has repeatedly addressed the delicate issue: *“I know that some are apprehensive about reliability of the United States as a supplier of military equipment to India. I can tell you that our relationship is far different than it was even a few years back.”*²⁶ And if India does not prevent the Dalai Lama from visiting the Tawang temple, President Obama does not receive the spiritual leader during his recent trip to the USA in order not to compromise his visit to China.

In conclusion, not only seems to be coming together, paradoxically, in a period of dangerous

²³ “PM Gilani meets Russian counterpart in Beijing”, Asia news, October 14th 2009

²⁴ Joshua Cooper Raomo, “Il secolo imprevedibile”, Elliot, 2009

²⁵ For in depth look at this matter see Teresita Schaffer, *India and the United States in the 21st Century: Reinventing Partnership* focuses on the two countries, CSIS Press, 2008

²⁶ “US will be a reliable military item supplier to India: US Ambassador”, The Times of India, October 19th 2009

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stalemate in most negotiating efforts, but considering India's rush to regain its status of influence and increase its capacity to control and defend the bordering regions, tensions might probably soar again and the situation might very well get out of control²⁷.

It is always worth to remember that Asia continues to be the arena in which the Leviathans compete and makes of it the real global powder keg, a region where the logic that control regional relations is that of a modern Westphalia state, with the insisting thought of prestige, glory, national security and where it is of vital political priority to regain control of those territories that have once been under their indirect influence.

²⁷ B. Raman, “India – China: Dangerous Hysteria”, South Asia Analysis Review, September 22nd 2009

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THE TREATY OF LISBON AND THE FATE OF THE 1954'S TREATY OF BRUSSELS

Lorenzo Striuli

The website www.euobserver.com has recently brought (in the article by Andrew Rettman of the 3rd September 2009, entitled “European defence league poised for debate on dormant pact” and available to the internet address: <http://euobserver.com/13/28615>) that “a group of the EU's major foreign policy players is waiting to find out what happens to the Treaty of Lisbon before deciding if it should keep or scrap an old 'musketeer' defence pact”. The pact “musketeer” who the columnist refers is Treaty of Brussels of 1954, to which Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, Holland and Greece adhere.

In effects, usually, just a few remembers that such Treaty is still in force. In it, the famous Western European Union (or WEU) has found its origins, and although such organization is often brought as an organism of the today's European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), the things are not really in this way.

A first Treaty of Brussels was agreed in 1948 by the United Kingdom, France, Belgium and Luxemburg as pact of collective defence. Its following extension to Italy and Germany in October of 1954 by adding a special protocol produced the so-called Modified Treaty of Brussels, determining the birth of the WEU, that followed to the failure of the European Community of Defence. The WEU was soon supplanted by NATO as the main defence-oriented continental organization, but this did not represent its end. Rather, during the final twenty years of the last century, the WEU carried out its first activations in form of: monitoring and naval operations in the Persian Gulf, in the Danube and in the Adriatic Sea; the deployment of a police contingent in Mostar and a mine action mission in Croatia; and the assistance to the Albanian police.

In its complex history, a decisive role was played by the NATO Council of Berlin held in June 1996, when the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Atlantic Alliance's member states (among which many were also members of the European union and/or the WEU, in accordance with that system of mutual overlapping between different international organizations that just in those years began to be conceptualized in terms of *interlocking institutions*) agreed on the necessity of developing a so-called European Security and Defence Identity (or ESDI, that had been already “announced” by the NATO Council of Brussels held in January 1994). The aim was to establish a sort of pillar in the matter of European defence, but included as part of NATO and in accordance with the concept of “separate but not separable forces”, in order to allow European countries the autonomous conduct of military operations where NATO, while not activated as a leading international organization, would be act as a force and assets provider. In accordance

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with these terms, the famous Berlin Plus agreements were drawn up, providing for the use of NATO facilities, manpower, resources and even planning assets by forces activated under WEU “flag”, and successively for crisis management operations launched by the European Union, as confirmed by a special strategic partnership signed jointly in December 2002 and known as “NATO-EU Declaration on ESDP”. Indeed, during both the European Council held in Cologne in June 1999 and the WEU Ministerial Council held in Marseilles in November 2000, the top European policy-makers had decided to “empty” the WEU of nearly all its functions and its (few) common assets, by merging them in the European Union on 1 January 2002. Since the 2001’s Treaty of Nice, moreover, it is no longer recognized the WEU in its role as collective defence, instead explicitly attributed to NATO.

But the Article V of the Treaty of Brussels has never been cancelled, and that is what the aforementioned article calls “Musketeer Pact”. It refers to the automatic military collective response in the event of external aggression to one or more member countries of the Treaty (the so-called “collective defence”). On the contrary, the Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty provides for an automatic activation of forms of assistance, that not necessarily must be military (and indeed NATO is more properly an organization of “collective security”). At the same time, the WEU still exists and is active in the field of the few functions that still retains, and the EU’s High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, who chair the General Secretariat of the Council and the European Defence Agency, also holds the role of the WEU’s General Secretary. The Brussels Treaty of 1954, then, continues to be the only true existing European defence agreement.

Some of the ten countries signed that pact (still full WEU members) want to keep it alive because the aforementioned dispositions of its Article V may arise in the future as the basis of a new all-European defence pact. Among the proposals made in this direction, it has been also considered the possibility of dismantling what remains of the structure of the WEO (65 officials located in Paris and Brussels at a cost of about 13.4 million euros for year), without denouncing the Treaty; this is because the recent Treaty of Lisbon still does not provide any disposition for a defence or a collective security pact.

Although some degrees of reasonability, this solution could however spread in scenarios perhaps not convenient for the most important European Union countries. The enlargement of NATO and the EU to many small European countries have revealed that some of them have a propensity to some degree of “free rider-like” dynamics in military fields. Most of these states have drastically reduced their armed forces and, in some case, even the contributions they provide for multinational missions, calling the needs of transition to the professional model for their military tools and the aim to reach Western standards for their forces. For such countries certainly it would be convenient joining a collective defence Treaty extended for all European Union countries, because in that way any aggression would require the entire European Union military response, and all of this would even be combined with the provisions of a Treaty of Lisbon which continue to guarantee national prerogatives in foreign policy. So, from the EU point of view (or also from the point of view of the national interests of the most important European countries), would really be convenient agrees a revival of the 1954’s Treaty of Brussels under the aforementioned terms, evolution itself of a Treaty agreed during a time in which, against the two hundred Soviet divisions deployed in Eastern Europe, the member countries were able to deploy the equivalent of no more than five divisions?

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The terrorist threat against the countries of the European Union: data from the new EUROPOL report

According to the EUROPOL TE-SAT 2009 "EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report", during 2008 within the borders of the European Union a total amount of 515 planned or real terrorist attacks has occurred, a figure which corresponds to a decrease of 23 percent compared to those counted during the previous year (the separatist terrorism, for example, has decreased from 532 actual and attempted attacks in 2007 to 397 in 2008). These attacks are attributable mainly to Islamic fundamentalist groups from one hand, and to entities with ethno-nationalist or separatist connotations from the other. The latter component was responsible for 397 of the above-mentioned attacks or attempted attacks, of whom at least 97 percent related to Spain and France etno-conflicts.

For Spain, in particular, the main threat continues to be related to Basque ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna) organization, while a prominent role for France is due to the Corsique separatism.

For what concerns other situations, the Greek terrorism continues to follow a mostly far-left connotation (the right-wing terrorism, at any rate, is now completely absent from the European Union), in particular with the Epanastatikos Agonas (or Revolutionary Struggle) group.

After years of a gradual de-conflict, further, also in Northern Ireland echoes of the old *troubles* are returning, since the recent attacks (even with fatal consequences) brought from the old PIRA splinter groups, namely RIRA (Real Irish Republican Army) and CIRA (Continuity Irish Republican Army).

However, it is the Islamic fundamentalism the most common and pervasive threat, as evidenced by the 187 judicial proceedings carried out in 2008 (mainly in Spain, United Kingdom, Germany and Italy) against perpetrators (or suspected) of attacks and terrorist threats. Such efforts have helped in reducing to one the number of attacks actually implemented in that year from this type of terrorism (a bomb exploded at a British restaurant that caused only one victim) and have resulted in 1009 arrests for crimes related to terrorist activities, occurred in thirteen of the European Union Member States. In 384 verdicts carried out in 2008, moreover (related to indictments for offences initiated in the previous years), 50 percent referred to convictions for fundamentalist terrorism, while 39 percent for separatist terrorism. It is important to stress out that the danger of fundamentalist terrorism is also related to its intrinsic organizational dynamics, since it is generally structured in small independent cells characterized by no or very loose links, and then it is very difficult to detect and dismantle; on the contrary, the nature of separatist and/or ideological terrorism continues to be related to top-down and/or pyramidal organizational models, with paramilitary aspirations. This kind of terrorism has recently sometimes shown the will to find new alliances, also quite unusual as evidenced by recent examples of contacts established between factions of ETA and the FARC (Revolutionary Fuerzas Armadas de Colombia) in Colombia. The differences between fundamentalist and separatist and/or ideological terrorism do not end at the organizational and operational procedures, but also cover their "logistical" philosophies. Indeed, EUROPOL report stress out how the fundamentalist terrorism tends to self-finance through activities of fraud (also telematics fraud) and connivance (both voluntary and involuntary) to charitable organizations and non-governmental organizations, while the separatist and/or ideological terrorism are more inclined to forms of extortion that often is quite similar to those carried out by the organized

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crime. Common dynamics between the two kinds of terrorism have instead been noted about the perpetrators of physical attacks: usually men of very young age. Women, on the other hand, play vital supporting roles, such as propaganda, fundraising, recruiting, rentals of vehicles and safe houses, etc.

In conclusion, returning to fundamentalist terrorism, it is important to note that the perpetrators appear to be often linked to problems of instability occurring in North Africa, the Sahel region, in Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan and even India; Iraqi perpetrators, instead, unlike previous years, are reported as very declining.

This is the synoptic view of the terrorist phenomena in the European Union's Member States, according to the number of planned or carried out attacks (Figure 1) and arrests (Figure 2) and in both cases with the related identity affiliations¹:

Member State	Islamist			Separatist			Left Wing			Right Wing			Single Issue		Not Specified			Total		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Austria	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	6
Belgium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bulgaria	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0
Czech Republic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cyprus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Denmark	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Estonia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
France	0	0	0	283	253	137	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	11	14	5	294	267	147
Germany	1	1	0	0	15	0	10	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	13	20	0
Greece	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	2	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	2	14
Hungary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ireland (Republic of)	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Italy	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	6	5	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	11	9	9	
Latvia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Malta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Portugal	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Romania	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0
Slovakia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spain	0	0	0	136	264	253	8	8	10	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	145	279	263
Sweden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
the Netherlands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UK	0	2	-	4	-	-	0	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5	2	74
Total	1	4	0	424	532	397	30	21	28	1	1	0	1	5	16	24	11	472	583	515

¹For both cases the source is: European Police Office, 2009, TE-SAT 2009. EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report, The Hague, available at: http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications/EU_Terrorism_Situation_and_Trend_Report_TE-SAT/TE-SAT2009.pdf.

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Member State	Islamist			Separatist			Left Wing			Right Wing			Single Issue		Not Specified	Total		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2007	2008		2006	2007	2008
Austria	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	8	0	
Belgium	1	9	17	0	1	1	1	0	4	12	0	0	0	0	14	10	22	
Bulgaria	-	4	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	4	0	
Czech Republic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Cyprus	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	
Denmark	9	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	3	
Estonia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Finland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
France	139	91	78	188	315	283	15	3	37	0	0	0	3	1	342	409	402	
Germany	11	3	8	4	8	1	5	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	20	15	12	
Greece	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hungary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Ireland (Republic of)	0	0	3	4	24	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	24	52	
Italy	34	21	9	0	0	35	25	23	7	0	0	0	0	2	59	44	53	
Latvia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Luxembourg	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
Malta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Poland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	
Portugal	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	
Romania	-	1	0	-	2	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	3	0	
Slovakia	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Spain	51	48	61	28	196	129	6	17	6	0	0	0	1	85	261	197		
Sweden	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	3	
the Netherlands	6	4	4	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	10	0	0	0	6	16	4	
UK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	156	203	256	
Total	257	201	187	226	548	501	52	48	58	15	44	0	0	3	706	1044	1009	

The state of organized crime in the EU

It has just published the 2009 edition of the “EU Organized Crime Threat Assessment” by EUROPOL, where it is possible to find interesting considerations regarding the inherent "duality" of the gradual liberalization in the movement of goods, commodities, people and capitals inside the European Union context. These tendency, indeed, do not bring only important benefits on the normal and legal business activities, but also, inevitably, forms of facilitations for drug smuggling, human trafficking, and counterfeiting of goods and fake currency, particularly in combination with other factors such as the enhanced possibility of access to low-cost flights and the large availability in Europe of low-cost Chinese job-immigrants.

Immigration in recent times has demonstrated to be the best source for the establishment of new crime-oriented organizations, largely resulted by the aggregation of immigrants gangs from West Africa, which tend to link with other unlawful organizations in the countries of origin. For these gangs, the main sectors for “dirty” business are related to drug smuggling, particularly of drugs like marijuana (Moroccan gangs are among the most important exporters of this drug toward the European Union’s Member Countries) and cocaine. The reason for this situation is the geopolitical configuration of this area, who sees the Gulf of Guinea (Nigeria in primis) as a sort of strategic hub for drugs coming through the Atlantic Ocean from South America.

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The same Gulf also arises as a major source of trafficking of human beings towards the European Union.

Certainly however, many traditional channels of illegal trafficking still play their importance. This is the case of the Balkans, still a key area for smuggling activities, also because the greater liberalization of people movements, goods and capitals from and toward countries not yet members of European Union. Within the EU's borders, however, it is possible to numerate five major hubs of organized crime, described as follows:

1



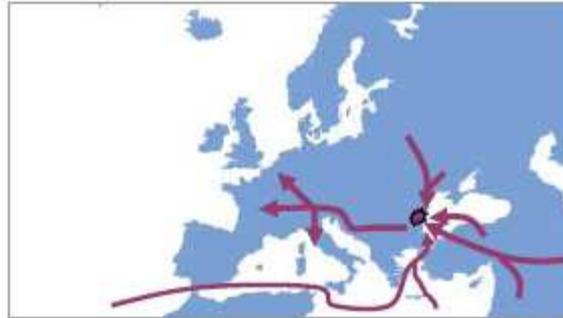
2



3



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4



5

The number (1) seems to be the one with the most important dimensions, and it is able to combine criminal interests from Holland and Belgium to the United Kingdom and Ireland. It appears to be less tied to autochthonous groups, and increasingly identified with criminal organizations linked with Africa, East Europe, Turkey, Pakistan, China, Vietnam and Colombia. The hub number (2) is predominantly structured on autochthonous groups, interested in illicit markets linked to drug smuggling, illegal immigration, fake currency and trafficking of counterfeit goods from China or produced by Chinese expertise based in Italy. Quite worryingly, it seems that these unlawful trades have also recently added goods related to the pharmaceutical industry, with illegal products coming not only from China but also India, Thailand and Turkey.

The hub number (3) is characterized by the presence of Lithuanian groups allied with gangs based in St. Petersburg, but also in Belarus and Ukraine, while the hub number (4), based in Romania, is particularly directed towards drug smuggling and illegal immigration, related to Moldovan, Ukrainian, Albanian, Kosovar, Serbian, Montenegrin and Turkish gangs. The hub number (5), finally, is characterized by high trafficking not only from North Africa, but also from South and Central America.

Beyond the mere listing of these criminal hubs, perhaps it is more appropriate to point out how the current recession is decreasing the purchasing power of many incomes, producing inevitably a greater number of consumers interested to counterfeit products. On the other hand, there is an increased availability of many entrepreneurs in recruiting cheap labour readily available in illegal immigration. Both factors are strictly related to some configurations of the European internal market, and then the fight against crime could be addressed not only by police and judicial means but also by common economic measures.