

***The Third Gulf War  
as a Reflection of the Post-Cold War  
Transatlantic Ideological Crisis***

حرب الخليج الثالثة: انعكاس للأزمة الأيديولوجية عبر الأطلسي ما بعد الحرب الباردة

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## *To Our Mother Earth*

*My thanks to Dr. Roger  
Who made this work possible  
and  
Thought me to enjoy the search for new answers*

*My sincere thanks  
to Dr. Helga and Dr. Samir  
for having kindly accepted to read this work  
and  
for having confirmed  
together with all the teachers, students and employees of the  
MA Program in International Studies  
that  
the love for teaching and learning  
overcome all constraints and difficulties*

*My thanks to my Parents  
Who thought me Justice  
and  
to Palestine  
where I finally knew that Peace comes with Justice*

## **Abstract**

This thesis analyses and compares the two strategies of power projection pursued by Western European countries and the United States in the Middle East region (ME) since the demise of the Soviet Union until the beginning of the Third Gulf War.

Starting with the Second Gulf crisis onward, these strategies have revealed their own peculiar characters in both the ideal development of tradition of political thought and practical deployment of material resources.

Thus, on the one side of the Atlantic the establishment of the European Union has introduced the necessity of investing in the construction of a distinctive political identity in world politics.

This specific aim has been pursued in particular through the projection of a concept of security in the ME politics that, as it is well known, is based on the European model of regional coexistence. In this sense the analysis also emphasizes the “new” relevance of the ME to the EU and not solely vice-versa: a relevance, in fact, that is explained above all by the geopolitical dimension of the EU/ME relations whereby spatial-geographic and conceptual-political aspects in the ME have the capacity to affect deeply those of the EU, as in the case of issues related to inter-regional security and stability;

Looking at the ME from the other side of the Atlantic, a geo-political perspective also explains the terms of a strategy of global hegemony that by targeting a key-ME country such as Iraq from 1990 to 2003 has been searching for re-construct a role of political leadership in world politics especially vis-à-vis an emerging political competitor as the

EU in the ME. The analysis underlines that the US paradigm of power projection is politically and military grounded on a model of instability pursued through ethnic-religious fragmentation, as showed especially in the case of the Third Gulf War. Most important, however, is that this model together with the pre-emptive strategy is functional to redesign a space of global sovereignty: being the spatial borders of the cold war no more regulated by territorial limits of containment, Iraq –and Afghanistan- have become gates toward the Eurasian landscape where corridors for energy transportation are the new source of strategic control and global sovereignty.

All in all, the thesis intends to show that as much as the EU has progressively established a policy of political enlargement toward the East and a policy of emancipation through a constructed identity in the South Mediterranean and Middle East, the US has also entered into a phase of sovereignty's powers enlargement with the occupation of Iraq in 2003.

With respect, therefore, to the deeper status of instability initiated by the occupation of Iraq, main purpose of the research has been to verify the existence of a political linkage between the US decision to invade Iraq in 2003 and the growing role of the EU in the ME. In the course of the study, however, this perspective has reviled to explain facts only on a first level of analysis; most important are the theoretical results emerging in the conclusive stance. These aspects, in fact, re-focus a central problem of the Third Gulf War in the light of a profound ideological crisis that in the course of a decade has become structural in the nature of transatlantic relations: the state of exceptionality throughout which the military intervention has been possible and through which all the related actions in the international scene are also made possible – as the “Guantanamo model”

detainees- illustrates the challenges to democratic practice and values produced by an internal degeneration in the exercise of power within a system of global sovereignty.

### لخص

هذه الرسالة تحلل و تقارن بين استراتيجيتين لإستعراض القوى المتبعة من قبل دول أوروبا الغربية من جهة و الولايات المتحدة من جهة أخرى في منطقة الشرق الأوسط و ذلك منذ فترة انهيار الإتحاد السوفيتي و حتى بداية حرب الخليج الثالثة.

منذ بدء حرب الخليج الثانية و حتى الآن أظهرت هاتان الإستراتيجيتان خصائصهما المتميزة بالتطور المثالي للفكر السياسي التقليدي و بالتوظيف العملي للموارد المادية.

و هكذا ظهرت على جانب من الأطلسي حاجة مؤسسة الإتحاد الأوروبي لإملاك هويتها السياسية المتميزة و المؤثرة في السياسات الدولية.

و هذا الهدف أصبح منظورا بالذات من خلال المفهوم الأمني للسياسة الشرق أوسطية و الذي، كما هو معروف، مبني على النموذج الأوروبي من التعايش الإقليمي، و في السياق ذاته يأتي التحليل ليؤكد التقارب "الحديث" نسبيا للشرق الأوسط تجاه أوروبا و ليس بالمطلق العكس، تقارب واقعي يمكن أن يوصف بأنه يأتي و قبل كل شيء من خلال البعد الجيوسياسي للعلاقات الشرق أوسطية و الإتحاد الأوروبي ، حيث أن المحيط الجغرافي و مناحي المفاهيم

السياسية في الشرق الأوسط تملك القدرة على التأثير و بعمق على مثيلاتها في الإتحاد الأوروبي، كما هو في حالة المعطيات المتعلقة بالإستقرار و الأمن الداخلي.

و بالنظر للشرق الأوسط من الجانب الآخر للأطلسي، فإنه و من المنظور الجيوسياسي يمكن لنا فهم نواحي إستراتيجية الهيمنة العالمية و التي بإستهدافها دولة محورية في الشرق الأوسط مثل العراق منذ العام 1990 و حتى العام 2003 كانت تصبو لإعادة بناء دور لها للقيادة السياسية للسياسة الدولية و خاصة أمام منافس قوي كالإتحاد الأوروبي في منطقة الشرق الأوسط، هذا التحليل يؤكد أن النموذج الأمريكي لإستعراض القوى قد تمثل سياسياً و عسكرياً في خلق حالة من عدم الإستقرار أوجدت من خلال التفريق الديني و العرقي ، كما هو مبين و خاصة في حالة حرب الخليج الثالثة. من الأهمية بمكان التأكيد بأن هذا النموذج قد أتى جنباً لجنب مع إستراتيجية السيطرة المسبقة و إنما هو فعال لإعادة تشكيل فضاء جديد من السيادة الدولية مع الأخذ بعين الإعتبار بأن مناطق النفوذ التقليدية أبان الحرب الباردة لم تعد مقتصرة على حدود إقليمية أو تبعية، و من هنا يمكن القول بأن العراق، و من ثم أفغانستان، قد أصبحت بوابة للمشهد الأورواسيوي.

و بشكل عام تنوي هذه الرسالة الإيضاح بأنه و بقدر ما بناه الإتحاد الأوروبي و بإضطراد من نهج سياسي توسعي تجاه الشرق و نهج من التعريف البناء في الجنوب فإن الولايات المتحدة قد دخلت أيضاً مرحلة من بسط السيطرة التوسعية من خلال إحتلالها للعراق في العام 2003

من هنا، و مع التقدير للحالة العميقة من عدم الإستقرار إبان الحرب على العراق، فإن الهدف من هذا البحث هو تبيان ابعاد الترابط السياسي بين القرار الأمريكي بغزو العراق في العام 2003 و بين تنامي دور الإتحاد الأوروبي في الشرق الأوسط. في سياق هذه الدراسة نتمكن من الكشف و توضيح الحقائق فقط على المستوى الأول من التحليل بينما تبقى الأهم هي النتائج النظرية البادية في المرحلة الإستنتاجية.

هذه النواحي، في الواقع، تعيد التركيز على المشكلة الرئيسية في حرب الخليج الثالثة في ضوء الأزمة الأيدلوجية و التي خلال عقد من الزمن قد أصبحت هيكلية في بناء العلاقات عبر الأطلسية: تلك الحالة الإستثنائية التي لولاها لما كان للتدخل العسكري أن يصبح ممكناً و التي لولاها أيضاً ما كان لكل التطورات الدولية المتعلقة بالحرب على الساحة الدولية أن تصبح مرئية، كما في " نموذج غوانتانامو " حيث يمثل المعتقل التحديات المنبثقة من التدهور الداخلي في ممارسة النموذج الغربي من السيادة.

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## Chapter I

### *A European Concept of Security: The Power of Identity*

#### **1. Introduction. Defining a global actor's interests: Problems and Solutions.**

The purpose of this chapter is to define a long-term European foreign policy and the promotion of common interests in the ME since the demise of the Soviet Union, dating from the beginning of the second Gulf crisis in 1990 until the outbreak of the third Gulf crisis in 2003.

In order to analyse the substance of this policy it is first necessary to look at the specific nature of the EU as an actor based on the premise that the qualification and the pursuit of interests originate in relation to the kind of entity to which such interests are appropriate<sup>1</sup>.

The EU, as declared in the narrative of its own official representatives<sup>2</sup>, is a global actor. The definition of a global actor rests upon two basic concepts.

The first concept refers to the idea of being an actor whose main nature implies the basic qualities of autonomy and capability<sup>3</sup>. An actor, thus, is an independent entity endowed with capabilities. What is important here with regards to the EU is the fact that this capability may imply different evaluations in terms of power.

The second concept (global) attributed to the first (actor) clarifies the space of action, next to the means of action, whereby the term *global* refers to the interactive web of

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<sup>1</sup> McSweeney 1999: op. cit. 179.

<sup>2</sup> Javier Solana 2004: A European route to security, at <http://www.euro-horizon.com/isolana.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler 1999: The European Union as a Global Actor, 37.

relations in the international system as a specific and not just generic attribute to the noun.

Our basic question, therefore, regards the qualification of EU interests as an existing and self-determined actor whose significance is ontologically tied to external world – global relations.

Moreover, since we see the EU acting as a reflection of an ongoing process whose prime end rests on its factual existence<sup>4</sup>, the analysis does not intend to give an evaluation of either the positive or negative achievements of EU foreign policy. Rather, the analysis seeks to avoid an examination of the regional process just in terms of effectiveness in relation to potential ends, but instead, focuses on the factual functions exercised in the historical context under consideration.

Particular attention is placed on the relevance that the progressive construction of a distinctive identity of the European Union has assumed during the 90s, at the point when this process came to represent an alternative and effective political center in international relations with a range of priorities wider than economics.

A crucial factor stemming from the Maastricht agreement has been the shaping of a shared knowledge for a distinctive and qualified foreign and security policy among Western European countries.

From this perspective, we suggest that a fundamental factor in explaining EU behaviour, and the interests of the EU in the ME is to be found in the reasoning of the identity theory<sup>5</sup>. One aspect of primary importance to our analysis which is developed by this approach, concerns the issue of security.

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<sup>4</sup> Haas 1961: op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> See in particular Alexander Wendt 1999: op. cit.

The concept of security is deconstructed here from a traditional neo-realist outcome whereby a state-centred and militaristic focus prevails<sup>6</sup>. In this view, the relation between identity and security should not be limited to the outcome of survival as neo-realism tends to underline at the minimum level of power<sup>7</sup>.

It is, instead, the centrality of the outcome of political choice that prevails and characterizes the behaviour of our actor, thereby also explaining its ends.

By applying the image of world order as described by Wendt to European countries we see, in fact, that the EU has shaped a form of cooperative identity for which not just states' behaviour but also the fundamental properties of their interests have changed in substance<sup>8</sup>.

This is particularly evident when we focus on the developments that have taken place in the concept and meaning of security for the EU in the post-Cold War environment. That is, when a European collective identity finally had the opportunity to emerge from an advanced process of interaction and concretely deploy political programs outside its borders.

Accordingly to a different and broader understanding of what security means, a tie exists between identity and security for which security is an essential component in the definition and construction of identity<sup>9</sup>.

If the world of international relations is anarchic it is not autarchic however.

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<sup>6</sup> McSweeney 1999:op. cit. 82ss

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz (1959): *Man, the State and War*, 159-86.

<sup>8</sup> Wendt 1999: op. cit. 418.

<sup>9</sup> McSweeney 1999: op. cit. 156ss

Hence, in a world which is not autarchic, relational interaction is an essential part in the making of self-identity. External relations became a way of building a distinctive political identity.

A definition of EU interests in the ME, therefore, cannot be understood without a focus on the nature of the EU structure because the interests promoted outside are reflective of domestic entity developments. Since the Union process was deepened in 1992, the quality of the EU external interest has also changed.

In this light, the significance of the EU process of integration in the system of IR is a political phenomenon active in world politics whose choices and inclinations played a role in the distribution of power in the system of international relations.

This reasoning is particularly resonant when we consider security as being an identity issue that, in the EU's projection of power, is explicable under the terms of the process of political construction, above all, throughout the autonomous exercise of a distinctive and global foreign policy.

For this main reason, security has a stronger significance to European countries when it is translated into the terms of a constructivist identity issue. To put it differently, throughout foreign policy matters the EC/EU gave special attention to a distinctive and peculiar European approach during the 90s in order to strengthen its own domestic political identity.

Middle Eastern key issues, such as the second and the third Gulf crisis, have played a crucial role in this process.

As we shall see in the following sections, European mainstream countries have approached the two main crises in the Gulf with the aim of redesigning a post-Cold War

geopolitical identity for the European Union, starting with a long-term project for deepening relations with the ME not only from an economic perspective but with the special purpose of affirming a distinct EU political role in the region, and therefore, in world politics.

## **2. Second Gulf Crisis Revisited: Economic Interests of the Community Towards Political Interests of the Union**

The international crisis leading to the Second Gulf War represents a case study of great interest for academic scholars because it provides a combination of old and new analytical factors to examine in between Cold War and new world order issues.

In particular, one school of thought has focused on the role played by EC countries in the outcomes of the war, and on their stance during the crisis in particular. From this perspective, the 1990-1991 Gulf Crisis, coming as it did immediately after the Cold War, served as the first test of the EC's ability to assume a prominent role in the ME and in world politics in general.

Most analysts have thus evaluated the political performance of European countries as a failure because, in this view, they missed the opportunity to promote a viable alternative to the policy formulated almost exclusively in Washington<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Friedman Buettner and Martin Landgraf 1994: The European Community's Middle Eastern Policy, 77-131.

The problem with this evaluation however, lies in the fact that it assumes that EC members *did* have the aim of formulating an alternative solution to that of US policy. In fact, although there has been a European position demanding an alternative solution to military intervention, it is more realistic to consider such a position from a pragmatic and political perspective. In this way, European diplomatic performance would not necessarily have been indicative of a concrete willingness to engage in a policy directly opposed to that promoted by the US.

Instead, we presume that predominant concern in Europe has been that of consolidating a cooperative- transatlantic way of dealing with the ME and its status of structural instability.

This view can be supported, above all, by the fact that in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, EC members were not endowed with the necessary institutional capabilities needed to have the political strength to oppose their transatlantic partner.

Instead, they could have begun investing political resources in the long-term objective of *containing* the hegemonic tendencies of the sole remaining superpower, especially by binding the legacy of international military operations to a multilateral approach.

Having considered this, two factors emerge: on the one hand, political fragmentation occurred within the European front in the face of a crisis and, on the other, shared political interests emerged from the development of the strategy adopted during the course of the war.

If fragmentation served to prevent a cohesive standing against US policy, it also allowed the EC system to find a suitable compromise and benefit from the overall

strategy of intervention. We should, therefore, review some outcomes related to these two factors from a different perspective.

### *Fragmentation*

Under the pressure of US policy, the second Gulf crisis has been a source of fragmentation among EC members. Since the beginning of the crisis, European countries' national responses were not homogeneous. EC members were confronted with the double problem of satisfying both the US demand for support, as well as domestic-regional interests.

Differences in the national interests of member states have acted in favour of what has been recognized as the low diplomatic profile of European institutions<sup>11</sup>. Nevertheless, while non-key countries opted mostly for the 'anonymization' of national measures, the role played by mainstream founder-members played an important political function in the management of the crisis, a function that created a common priority from the need to reassess the terms of the transatlantic partnership following the end of the Cold War..

It is commonly recognized that Britain, who was the second largest military contributor to the allied forces, had a special interest in avoiding that the oil reserves of its former protectorate, Kuwait<sup>12</sup> fell into other hands<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Buettner and Landgraf 1994: art. cit., 80.

<sup>12</sup> At the time of Kuwait's independence a mutual defence pact was signed between Kuwait and UK in 1961 when the process for independence has opened a crisis with Iraq; Michael Brecher and Jonathan Wilkenfeld 1997: A Study of Crisis, 313.

<sup>13</sup> Kuwait's relevance for the UK financial stability is long-rooted, coming back to 1958 when the nationalist revolution take place in the neighbouring Iraq; since then UK officials have stressed the importance of Kuwait oil reserves for granting financial stability to the Western power. See See Dilip Hiro 2003: Desert Shield to Desert Storm, 18.



The case of Britain, however, appears far more important if considered from a political perspective because its behaviour introduces an essential aspect of the European dilemma that goes beyond national members' interests in the new world order.

What was important to Britain was the opportunity of reinforcing ties with the US because this meant the possibility of gaining importance as an independent and strong power in the changing system of international relations.

Hence, political, along with strictly economic interests in the Gulf led the former British Empire to take up the US strategy for a new world order without hesitation.

Nevertheless, it is important to note here that at the political level, the UK's preference is in line with the prevalence of a traditional concept of security in the tradition of the Kingdom for which the ex-Empire is still the European country fully and effectively endowed with military capabilities.

Thus, strong capabilities led the UK further from the European central focus on cooperative interest and nearer to unilateral behaviour in order to achieve national interests.

In fact, the dynamics of intra-European relations also have played a role in highlighting the UK's defensive position, which aims at counterbalancing the emergence of a stronger continental front, renewed by the re-unification of Germany and the challenges posed by the Franco-German axis.

The possibilities of reaching concrete advantages from a French-German understanding<sup>14</sup> were reduced however by the weak political position in which Germany

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<sup>14</sup> The strategic partnership between France and Germany come back to the Elysee Treaty of 1963 aiming at the advancement of the European integration program, especially because an integrated Europe was the only viable solution to grant both Germany's readmission in western politics together with its political supervision by France. German unification caused first some concerns in Paris but after the debate about

found itself from the beginning of the crisis onwards. Germany's difficulties stemmed from its role as an economic power within the Western front and its historical background, which complicated relations with the two fronts in the ME: the Arab and Israeli.

A favourable strategy was, as far as was possible, to assume a neutral approach towards the crisis. Under harsh UK-US pressure, the situation became more problematic when evidence was provided demonstrating the German role in supplying Iraq with essential parts used in the Iraqi unconventional arms industry<sup>15</sup>. Neutrality for Germany became a risk, negating the advantages envisaged by keeping a "non-aligned" position.

France's political stance has been that most in opposition to the US-UK alliance, one that illustrates a clear preference for a strong UN role in the crisis.

Two main factors are relevant in analysing and explaining French (op)position: the deep historical and economic involvement with Arab-ME countries, and the influence of domestic pressure from France's significant Arab communities<sup>16</sup>.

However, these reasons can also be applied to the British, and as such, the variable factor should be identified differently.

A real difference can be found when considering the importance attributed by France to the process of European political union that offers individual nations the opportunity to

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Germany's eastern border, the French reaction was to support self-determination and to engage the united Germany deeper in the EU. See Fraser Cameron 2003: Franco-German axis alive and well, at <http://www.theepc.be/en.html>.

<sup>15</sup> It was the judicial case of the German engineer Karl Schaab found guilty of selling nuclear secrets. Khidir Hamza 2003: The Inspections Dodge, The Wall Street Journal, Opinion Journal 11 February 2003, in [www.opinionjournal.com/editorial/feature.html](http://www.opinionjournal.com/editorial/feature.html)

<sup>16</sup> Five million Muslims live in France, the biggest Islamic community in Western Europe. Several times in the early 1990's suburbs of Paris were the epicentre of riots. Nowadays, experts underscore that the riots occurred in late 2005 recall a phenomenon more related to domestic problems than to issues of foreign relations with the Arab world. Matein Khalid 2005: Tragedy and Paradox of French-Arab Relations, 11 November 2005, at [www.yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article](http://www.yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article)

cope with a major dilemma in Europe, when domestic stability and foreign policy interests are being challenged by unilateral policies. The aim of avoiding being cut out of any redistribution of power following military interventions in the ME has been in the case under analysis critical to the solution of the dilemma.

From this perspective, French behaviour in terms of specific diplomatic choices made in dealing with ME politics is indicative of a wider range of interests within the Community in the region, together with outcomes relevant to the meaning of transatlantic relations. Maintaining stable relations with the transatlantic partner is also necessary to preserving stability among intra-European politics.

The French presidency opted for a strong diplomatic-political position in promoting an independent role for the solution of the crisis at the negotiating table.

In pursuing his policy, Mitterrand presented a four-point peace plan to the UN General Assembly on 24 September 1990 which showed, if not the concrete possibility, the prospect of a European diplomatic involvement in brokering a peace initiative with Arab countries and the Soviet Union.

It is worth noting that the French president developed his political position by linking the Gulf crisis with the general condition of instability in the ME and, indirectly, with the unsolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict<sup>17</sup>.

Nevertheless, any alternative prospect of containing the Iraqi threat by avoiding military intervention was definitively swept away with the invasion of Kuwait.

Hence, whether Saddam's decision was determined by the weakness of European political influence or by the feeling that the US would not be concerned with such an

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<sup>17</sup> Since the Six-Days War although France repeatedly declared its support for Israel's right to exist it was also emphasizing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. P.C Wood 1993: France and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Mitterrand Policies. 1981-1992, 22.

invasion,<sup>18</sup> this does not change the idea that the formal invasion of Kuwait and not European fragmentation determined the unavoidable development of the crisis towards military intervention.

Instead, in the context of a lack of a stable institutional framework, fragmentation at this stage acted as a flexible mechanism to work out challenges posed by the crisis. On the one hand, it avoided a radicalization in transatlantic divergences. On the other, it permitted the engagement of a freer policy in assuring the conduct of an international conflict under the aegis of the UN. This last objective is above all understandable as a long-term goal essential to a European role in world politics.

### *Shared Interests*

Just as fragmentation may represent a source of flexibility in the face of external pressure in specific historical contexts, the delicate balancing of European powers is also based on the firm assumption that political coexistence (outside of conflict) is possible when clashes over national-economic interests are reduced in favour of common benefits<sup>19</sup>. This assumption is political in nature and has driven the process of European integration since the beginning of its development<sup>20</sup>.

The successful model of European economic integration is, nevertheless, contradicted by the structure of a weak institutional framework unable to project any significant power in world politics.

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<sup>18</sup> Shibley Telhami 1993: Explaining American Behaviour in the Gulf Crisis, 153-83.

<sup>19</sup> This approach is well known as rooted in the political thought of Illuminist tradition. See above all the concept of *liberté conventionnelle* in Rousseau (*Du contrat social*) and the assumption for which “pour survivre on doit se faire agréer” (*Discourse sur l’inégalité*). Piere Burgelin (ed.) 1992 (1762): Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social*, 39.

<sup>20</sup> Gilbert defines it the politics of cooperation (“la politica della cooperazione”): Marc Gilbert, *Surpassing Realism: The Politics of European Integration since 1945*, 18.

Historically however, this weakness is relative: in the contradictory logic of the Cold War -through its main instruments of NATO and the Warsaw Pact- hegemony, dismemberment and regional integration granted Western Europe a certain geopolitical importance in world politics<sup>21</sup>.

It is, instead, after the logic of containment that possibilities for Europe to exercise influence—especially in the transatlantic alliance- turned out to be weak when confronted with the EU's lack of military power and military interventionist policies.

The rise of a multilateral coalition against Iraq in 1991 indicated however, the existence of a sphere of common political interests that EC founder members agreed to share at the end of the Cold War: that is, in a period of great uncertainty about the future development of a “new world order” when the bipolar system of power was over and a different paradigm for the redistribution of power in world politics was emerging, especially in relation to the Western system of alliances.

Indeed, the historical relevance of the end of the Cold War coincided with the second Gulf crisis, a war that called for an renewed political order regulating alliances in multipolar system.

Thus, although the driving factor of instability stemmed from the regional contest, the conceptual space of the crisis has been wider: the emerging of the crisis implied, first of all, the formulation of different terms of reference in the system of international relations. Among these terms, the legitimacy of international military interventions and the political meaning granting alliances at the global level became key issues.

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<sup>21</sup> David P. Calleo 2003: Transatlantic Folly: NATO vs. the EU, 20.

The dimension of a crisis, while indicative of a break with the past on the surface, tends to exasperate the salient element of the past and may even reinforce it as an essential factor in the development of the historical process<sup>22</sup>.

In the specific context of the second Gulf War, the crisis demonstrated the opportunity to give more space to the emergence of a multi-polar system of sovereignty on the one hand, while also leaving one super-power as the unconditional leader in world politics on the other.

This double nature in the reality of the IR system is, at the same time, a contradiction and invariable factor of the post-Cold War era. The tension produced explains in great part the ambivalence of transatlantic relations and the relevant role played in this tension by the construction of a definite European political identity. The second Gulf war, beyond fragmentation, has been the turning point for the shaping of a sphere of political interests shared by mainstream European countries.

In attempting to measure this space of shared objectives, it is possible to presume the existence of a continuous line where common interests prevailing among EC-EU founder-members –including the UK - are articulated. At one end of the spectrum lies the preservation of the EC-EU process and at the other, the containment of external challenges such as the threat posed by US unilateralism.

To put it differently, if in the wake of the 1990 crisis EC founder-members could not aim at assuming a prominent role in the ME for the short-term, their main and common concern was instead the international challenges introduced by the end of the Cold War. A concrete aim has been, therefore, to preserve the status of regional intra-European

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<sup>22</sup> See the cyclical concept of history in Vico and that of progress in Popper: Leon Pompa (ed.) 2002: Gianbattista Vico, *Scienza nuova* (1725). *The First New Science*, 21; John Watkins 1997: *Popperian Ideas on Progress and Rationality in Science*, at [www.eeng.dcu.ie/~tkpw/tcr/volume-02/number-02/node1.html](http://www.eeng.dcu.ie/~tkpw/tcr/volume-02/number-02/node1.html)

cooperation as much as possible, which is considered essential for the future development of the political union.

We should recall at this point the holist hypothesis formulated by Wendt, based on the vision of an anarchic structure of IR characterized by a certain redistribution of both ideas and material capabilities that, taken together, affect states' behaviours and choices<sup>23</sup>. According to this theory, the distributional process creates three progressive levels of shared knowledge. In the first degree, states' behaviour is constructed by the concept of necessity as the driving source of their action. At this level, the space of choice is narrowed to merely the necessity of acting in order to avoid a negative consequence.

This is a full Hobbesian scenario in which the idea of "political choice" emerges as an oxymoron since necessity eliminates the possibility of choice, and political concept is deprived of a substantial meaning indicating decisional possibility. Instead, a second degree of shared knowledge implies that states focus on self-interests and thus, national behaviour is driven by a meaningful space of choice in order to achieve such interests<sup>24</sup>.

It is the shared meaning that is important to our argument because from it emerges a common evaluation of the political reality, the understanding of expectations and external challenges. In other words, the acceptance of certain choices is instrumental to shared expectations.

Hence, the importance of the common project has introduced a second level of shared expectations and ideas that have augmented the interest for deepening ties with the Middle East, especially in that relations between Europe and the region express a deeper meaning for the political nature of the European Union.

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<sup>23</sup> Wendt 1999: op. cit. 248.

<sup>24</sup> Wendt 1999: op. cit. 271.

Just as much as individual countries in Western Europe had different priorities and perspectives from the post-Cold War US, European-ME relations were not motivated by the need to exercise a hegemonic role in the region, but to consolidate a political alliance that would have enhanced the degree of Europe's political role and identity with the countries in the region, and at the same time, demonstrating the ability to contain the US' space of leadership.

The ME in particular, through its regional politics and crisis, has played a very important role in constructing a shared knowledge of ideas in Europe. Among these ideas is the perception of the interest of overcoming fragmentation in response to external pressure or challenges which has become crucial both on the individual national and inter-regional levels.

As we shall see, some key passages in the history of the ME before and after the second Gulf crisis confirm this view and help to clarify elements of coherence and contradictions in the behaviour of European countries.

### *Significance of the ME to a European Political Identity*

The 70s represented a turning point for the European Community, during which the challenges stemming from critical events destabilising the ME pressured the Community to overcome political limitations imposed by a weak regional institution.

In the course of the decade, EC members have taken the first steps necessary in order to coordinate matters of foreign policy within the framework of the European Political Cooperation<sup>25</sup>. The EPC had a non-binding character and was thought of as an

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<sup>25</sup> The initiative was first suggested by French President Pompidou at Hague Summit in 1969. H. Wallace and W. Wallace, *Policy Making in the European Union*, 464..



intergovernmental forum outside of EC institutions and treaties and coordinated regular meetings of members-states' foreign ministers.

The decision to create the forum was mainly due to the assumption that economic integration had to be accompanied by political integration in order to cope with the network of the community's foreign relations<sup>26</sup>.

Not surprisingly, EC members endowed with what was intended to be a diplomatic declaratory platform could not offer, for instance, a factual response to the Afghani crisis of 1979. Hence, their role was limited to ensuring that US sanctions against the U.S.S.R. after the invasion of Afghanistan were not broken by Community members<sup>27</sup>.

Most importantly however, is the fact that the increased frequency of meetings between EC foreign policy-makers within the EPC framework created the so called "co-ordination reflex" enhancing the tendency to assume common positions on important external issues. This mechanism was intended, above all, to prevent the differences between member states being exploited and used against them<sup>28</sup>.

The relationship between ME key issues and the construction of a shared European knowledge is evident in the development of the EPC initiative as it is codified in the contribution of specific reports - Luxemburg 1970, Copenhagen 1973 and the London Report 1981- that were initiated by main events central in the politics of the ME, such as the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979<sup>29</sup>.

From an historical perspective, if the Afghani crisis pointed out limits to reacting quickly to international crisis, the EPC turned out to be more significant for its

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<sup>26</sup> Fraser Cameron 1999: *The Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union: Past, Present and Future*.

<sup>27</sup> Christopher Hill 1982: *Changing Gear in Political Co-Operation*, 48.

<sup>28</sup> Hill 1982: art.cit., *ibid*.

<sup>29</sup> Christopher Hill and K. Smith 2000: *European Foreign Policy: Key Documents*, 114. .

aspirations than its achievements at a time of rare agreements by the Community on the ground when, in fact, security matters were almost wholly reserved for NATO<sup>30</sup>.

During the 80s it became more and more clear that EC institutions had to face this political weakness if it wanted to promote the interests of its members in world politics. An important step for the process of European Foreign Policy was given within the Single European Act, the first written agreement on the way of the EC treaty establishment<sup>31</sup>.

The objective could be achieved by developing supranational institutions and, therefore, by reforming the whole policy-making machinery of the Community.

As it is well known however, during the Cold War, the strong US role in EU security matters always prevented European countries from producing a stable institutional framework with which to advance a political strategy for a common foreign policy.

Nevertheless, if the logic of the Cold War gave NATO the responsibility for security and military affairs, it was through the war against Iraq in 1991 that the US tested for the first time an automatic passage of this responsibility from NATO to US leadership.

In parallel, however, the European Council also convened the first intergovernmental conference in 1990 to discuss possible steps towards political union.

The establishment of a separated institution dealing with external affairs created a division between economic and political matters however<sup>32</sup>. Nevertheless, such a division

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<sup>30</sup> Just later on conflicts over the out-of-area competence of NATO pointed out even the limits of the Atlantic alliance and the necessity to reform its principles of security. NATO, for example, did not prove to be a very useful tool dealing with the growing instability of Eastern Europe that have followed the disintegration of the Soviet Union: Richard N. Haass 1995: *Paradigm Lost*, 26.

<sup>31</sup> The Single European Act was signed on February 1986: Hugh Compston 1998: *The end of national policy concertation? Western Europe since the Single European Act*, 507 – 526.

<sup>32</sup> See Buettner and Landgraf 1994: *op.cit.*, *ibid.*

was inherent –as much as was necessary- to the background of the Cold War era under which governments in Western Europe had initiated the regional process of integration.

### *Strengthening European-ME Relations*

As discussed above, constraints stemming from the European structural division were reflected in the ambivalent position assumed by EC members in the face of the crisis. The lack of political institution, in fact, determined a movement toward other means for constructing relations between the two regions. Hence, especially before the second Gulf crisis was officially declared, while the EC had not developed an autonomous and common strategy for the Gulf region, mainstream countries in Europe opened preferential relations for arms exports with Arab countries which, in parallel, strengthened political ties with them<sup>33</sup>.

From the Arab countries' perspective however, importing arms from the EC instead of importing them from US had the advantage of reducing dependence on the United States and helped to neutralize the growing restrictions on arms sales to Arab states imposed by Congress, which was interested in responding to growing Israeli security concerns<sup>34</sup>.

It was at the end of the Iraq-Iran war that Western European countries initiated a concrete policy for an autonomous security program, coordinating their first military undertaking in 1987-88, the “Cleansweep Operation”, organized to secure free navigation in the Gulf<sup>35</sup>. From a NATO perspective however, European initiatives had to be

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<sup>33</sup> After Soviet countries had cut off arms export to Iraq following the invasion of Iran, China France and to a lesser extent Britain were at the end of the 80s the largest weapons suppliers. The issue became known as the Arms to Iraq scandal after the Scott Report was presented in the UK by Matrix Churchill in 1996. See data from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in [www.answers.com/topic/arms-sales-to-iraq-1973-1990](http://www.answers.com/topic/arms-sales-to-iraq-1973-1990)

<sup>34</sup> See [www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports/hcrep.html](http://www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms/reports/hcrep.html).

<sup>35</sup> Catherine McArdle Kelleher 1995: *The Future of European Security: An Interim Assessment*, 54..

considered as part of a Western defence policy that could also strengthen the European pillar of the North Atlantic Alliance<sup>36</sup>.

Although at this stage the EC could not be free to engage in any security strategy separately from the US, these initiatives all together reflect a progressive search for a role in hard security matters and a political orientation towards establishing preferential relations with Arab countries.

A homogeneous aspiration of Western Europe countries in this direction would have to enhance a latent but constant tension in the transatlantic alliance for which competitive EU-US behaviour would be clearly framed in the second half of the 90s.

European countries' arms deals came in sharp contrast to the political position assumed by the Community towards the ME's instability, starting with the commitment declared by the EC to end the Iraq-Iran war. In this light however, the supposed lack of political coherence on the part of the EC is reduced to a less sharp contradiction and a more rational policy.

Especially to mainstream European mainstream, the coming of the second Gulf crisis just after the first signified growing concerns for ME instability and called for the preference of a "security" strategy aimed at assuring the maintenance of renewed, long-term political relations between the forthcoming EU and Arab suppliers of oil.

After the second Gulf crisis and after Maastricht, the EU was freer to project its diplomatic power and engage a different strategy for stability in the ME<sup>37</sup>.

Among EC strategic interests before and during the second Gulf crisis, priority was given to a merely political objective to preserve and strengthen political understanding

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<sup>36</sup> See [www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb1504.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb1504.htm).

<sup>37</sup> See below: 3.

with Arab countries in order to contain and reduce the US' possibilities to use ME instability as a lever for exercising indirect pressure on mainstream European countries. The search for a closer European-ME understanding could not come, therefore, without competing with the US leadership.

### *The Reluctant Cooperation*

An important factor in considering the EC's policy during the second Gulf crisis is the prevailing of national interests among EC members. This aspect is not relevant just because it illustrates the limits and advantages of the European system, but also because it allows following the line of political development towards the creation of a common sphere of political interests with respect to the ME.

Indeed, if the EC was not intended to assume an autonomous policy in the region because of its structural weakness in front of the US consolidated role in security matters, the strategy adopted during the crisis was driven by the usefulness of gaining benefits within the major US plan of intervention.

This view is supported by some outcomes that emerged during the war.

In contrast to the strategic objectives pursued by Bush Junior in the third Gulf war, the strategy of Bush Senior was based on the idea that low costs and speed were critical factors to the success of the war<sup>38</sup>. Thus, an important aspect of the overall strategy was

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<sup>38</sup> To defend America's interests around the world, future force structure must enable us to continue to employ the winning strategy of concentrating superior force anywhere rapidly enough to deter aggression or achieve quick success in combat". More factors have contributed at the success of the intervention, among which the "Iraq's survival-oriented strategy", the fact that Iraq was not a maritime power while possessing only limited ability to threaten the coalition's forces: See US Department of the Navy 1997: U.S Navy in the Desert Shield/Storm. Lessons Learned and Summary, at <http://www.history.navy.mil/index.html>

to isolate Iraq<sup>39</sup> while improving and consolidating favourable relations with Arab states- those ready to stand with the West against Iraq- through economic assistance.

The political involvement of the EC became fundamental to this task. European countries granted the adoption and the success of the main US strategy assured by the extensive humanitarian and financial aid offered to the Arab countries most badly affected by the embargo against Iraq and by the ensuing refugee emergency.

Secondly, due to the weakness of the Iraqi regime an immediate objective pursued by the EU was to prevent new imbalances from emerging in the region in the aftermath of the Gulf war by creating a system of security that would not be dependent on the presence of outside troops. It is important to note here that the same concern is expressed in the official documents issued by the EU Ministers Council in the wake of the third Gulf crisis<sup>40</sup>.

From its position inside the Western front, the Community has developed concrete finalities limiting its objectives to what could be achieved on the ground of a new stage in transatlantic relations. The community had, therefore, the important function of managing -with success- relations with Arab countries providing financial support to accomplish the overall US strategy to isolate Iraq. Rationally, it could be argued that EC cooperation with the US in the ME was seen as being the best choice available in order to consolidate, and begin to enlarge a European sphere of influence in the region.

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<sup>39</sup> Regional allies, in fact, gave an essential logistic contribution providing a well-developed infrastructure for quickly base over 500,000 troops and over 2,000 aircraft in what could have been a difficult operating environment: U.S Navy in the Desert Shield/Storm: *ibid.*

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Participation in the war under the UN framework was a solution offering each EC member higher benefits than what the community as a whole could have offered by opting for an absolute refusal of the US approach.

Division in war proved to pay more than unity against war.

Thus, while the costs of a radical and concrete opposition to the transatlantic partner would have largely exceeded those of a “reluctant cooperation”, EC diplomatic and economic capacities turned out to be a contradistinctive means characterising the European role in ME politics. Moreover, EC countries also provided the US with an essential contribution to the military logistics for the US deployment of troops in the region<sup>41</sup>.

This choice - legitimated first of all by the multilateral nature of the intervention against the invasion of a sovereign state as provided by the UN Charter - had the prospect of avoiding the US acting unilaterally and not being excluded from the redistribution of power in the aftermath of the war.

In fact, even though during the war the role of the community was part of the US' overall strategy of intervention, the crisis opened a new stage for a progressive development of the European policy towards the ME intensifying ties with Arab countries.

French political stances played a key role in shaping basic aspects of a European political identity in international relations. Great importance was given to the

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<sup>41</sup> The European allies also contributed about 10 per cent of the total forces in the region, with the British sending the largest portion of these. Nevertheless major European contribution was made with the logistic support to troops deployment provided by European next to US basis: William H. Taft 1992: European Security: Lessons Learned from the Gulf War, 16-21.

involvement of the UN in granting the international legitimacy necessary to assuring a multilateral approach towards ME politics.

All this considered, and given the circumstances of a severe change of the IR structure in the wake of the second Gulf war, the EC-EU was concerned first of all with limiting the predictable tendency of the victor of the Cold War to use its military power by acting unilaterally in the ME.

It was in the interests of all countries of the European Community to grant the US their support and demonstrate, at the same time, the relevance of their cooperation for the success of any future Western approach towards the ME. Indeed, once Saddam had invaded Kuwait, EC members were bound to cooperate and participate in military intervention as a means of strengthening the system of multilateral mechanisms in the management of international crises.

### **3. The Long Way to MEPP's Strategy: An Alternative Model for Security**

From early 70s, the EC began shaping ME policy within the Global Mediterranean Policy, through which a network of agreements with Middle Eastern countries was built<sup>42</sup>. As mentioned above however, attempts at creating an effective policy toward the region did not succeed during the Cold War, when the paradigm of the East/West confrontation in the region represented a principal constraint limiting possibilities for an approach independent from that of the United States.

In particular, the Arab-Israeli conflict constituted a cause of fragmentation among European member-states holding different attitudes towards what became a dominant

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<sup>42</sup> Cameron 1999: op. cit.



issue on the European agenda in the 70s<sup>43</sup>. The two greatest crises of the ME in 1967 and 1973, in fact, revealed that political linkages between European and Middle Eastern stability were unavoidable. Outcomes of the conflict were directly reflected as challenges to EC welfare and the political system<sup>44</sup>. EC founder-members clearly identified the need to coordinate their respective political position in the face of the conflict.

However, the policy adopted by the community with the first official ME policy paper in 1971 (the Schumann Paper<sup>45</sup>) did not open the path for a homogeneous EC standing in regional politics. Instead, from this first political initiative emerged the structural dilemma trapping the system of relations inside the Community when founder-members found themselves in the situation of facing key-issues in international relations. European countries' foreign policies were confronted with a double challenge for which the necessity to engage in ME politics involved risks and difficulties on the level of both intra-European and transatlantic relations.

The Israeli-US criticism of the main points adopted in the Schumann Paper was substantial. Above all, it was indicative of the US-Israeli refusal of a European political initiative conducted autonomously in the region, either because the initiative could bring evidence of a possible, active EC role in critical matters in the region, or because any

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<sup>43</sup> In the first EPC ministerial meeting in November 1970 the Middle East was one of the two items in the agenda. S. George and I. Bache 2000: *Politics in the European Union*, 396-7.

<sup>44</sup> It was the first time that an international crisis as such caused EC governments to face a precarious situation seriously threatening their economic and political interests. Compared to US EC members were more dependent to the Arab oil. Thus, from 67' European countries had strong indication of the significance represented by the Arab-Israeli conflict to their own regional stability: Philip Gordon 1998: *The Transatlantic Allies and the Changing Middle East*, 16.

<sup>45</sup> Israeli withdrawal from the 67' Occupied Territories; the right of Palestinian refugees to return; international administration for Jerusalem: George and Bache 2000: *op. cit.*, 402.

initiative for dealing with the Arab-Israeli issue could have important effects on local power assets.

Nevertheless, while Israel did not welcome the initiative -arguing that the position expressed in the document was considered to be pro-Arab-, disagreements also emerged within the Community<sup>46</sup>. Divergences that emerged in the 70s remained the major aspect characterising the European system composed by different national interests and different aptitudes, that were overcome however, with the identification of an alternative model of security.

### *Political Approach*

It was in the middle of the European structural weakness of the 70s that the Community took the most important step in identifying the basic principles of its distinctive policy that formed the European approach to problems of instability in the ME. The turning point introduced with the new policy consisted in decentralising political tension from the core Arab/Israeli-US block -highly problematic for the political unity of the Community- toward the redefinition of the nature of the conflict on the basis of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian national identity.

After the Schumann Paper, the 1977 London European Council's Declaration<sup>47</sup> represented this important shift by which mainstream European countries convened to engage in political support for the Palestinian issue, giving it a central role in the resolution of the conflict.

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<sup>46</sup> On one side the French-Italian position was pushing for a European foreign policy more independent from the US sphere of influence and on the other the Anglo-Benelux position was inclined to preserve tied relations with the US.

<sup>47</sup> The European Council's London declaration of 29 June 1977, in <http://www.ena.lu/europe/european-union/organisation-european-council-meetings-1977.htm>

European countries already sought closer relations with Arab partners leading to the establishment of the diplomatic framework of Euro-Arab Dialogue by which the newly enlarged European community tried to face the consequences of the 1973 threat of an Arab oil embargo<sup>48</sup>. The Arab participants insisted on a linkage between trade and political matters, which forced the EC to overcome this demarcation. Since the beginning, the distinctive character of the EC move towards these two fields lay in the emphasis given to the promotion of regional integration in the area<sup>49</sup>.

More concrete action in this direction was then taken in the 80s when the Commission identified regional cooperation as a priority, and allocated financial assistance for the promotion of regional integration<sup>50</sup>.

However, just at the end of the East/West confrontation, and especially in the aftermath of the second Gulf war -between 1992 and 1996- the EU actively financed projects in the area based on an inter-states cooperative approach aimed at regional integration.

The Gulf war led to a substantial deepening of the existing Middle Eastern policy especially in terms of diplomatic relations between EU members and the Arab countries. In this perspective – in a way not so different from what occurred in the case of the Afghani crisis and the establishment of the ECP - the second Gulf war had the effect of accelerating the development of a European institutional framework, enabling a more concrete foreign policy specifically oriented towards the ME<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> The Euro-Arab Dialogue was founded in 1974 and, however, it remained a forum limited to the discussion of economic and technical issues: George and Bache 2000: op. cit., 396.

<sup>49</sup> Such a policy was initiated by the EC Council of Ministers in 1974 adopting a resolution on regional integration among developing countries in an overall framework for development cooperation policies

<sup>50</sup> See the 1985 European commission declaration of assistance for regional integration.

<sup>51</sup> Analysts of European institution believe that the community external policies tend to be crisis-driven and that such policies develop when the community is confronted by an immediate need to offer a response to

Meetings and conferences were convened between the partners of the two regions. The proposals presented emphasized the same general objective: the creation of a stable mechanism of regional integration and cooperation aimed at *granting a system of regional security*<sup>52</sup>.

Thus, as soon as it became possible for the Union to engage in a freer foreign policy, the “Oslo Peace Process” offered the first diplomatic framework within which European countries under the Union framework has tested and developed *the Union’s capacity to represent itself as a political actor relevant in the ME*.

After the Declaration of Principles, the South Mediterranean and the Middle East were openly recognised as areas of great importance for European foreign relations and included among high priority issues on the European agenda.

The immediate step forward resulted in the establishment of the comprehensive Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, launched at the Barcelona Conference in 1995 which governed relations with Middle Eastern countries<sup>53</sup>. These relations were obviously considered by the Union’s foreign policy as being complementary to the Middle East Peace Process<sup>54</sup>.

### *Alternative Security Strategy*

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the crisis: Timothy Niblock 1994: Regional Cooperation and Security in the Middle East: the Role of the European Community, 116-31.

<sup>52</sup> Commission of the European Community: Proposal for a Council Regulation Concerning Financial Cooperation in Respect of all the Mediterranean Non-Members Countries, COM (91) 48, 19 February 1991. Niblock 1994: art. cit., 123.

<sup>53</sup> The European institutions involved in this policy area the EU Commission's External Relations Directorate-General mainly in charge of implementing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and Creating the Euro-Mediterranean Free-Trade Area with the EU’s 12 Mediterranean Partners existing in the area. [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/euomed/free\\_trade\\_area.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euomed/free_trade_area.htm)

<sup>54</sup> The EU external relations Directorate-general is also the official representative of the Community policy in the MEPP: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/mepp/](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/mepp/)

The MEPP became an inclusive program for an overall model of integration and cooperation between the EU and the vast and complex Arab neighbourhood. In fact, although its functioning as a peace program managing, firstly, EU financial support through assistance to the Palestinian Authority is central to the MEPP, the overall structure of the MEPP is based on strengthening economic ties as a principal means of enhancing cooperation and inter-Mediterranean dialogue with all Arab project partners<sup>55</sup>.

Secondly, the aim of the EU project has been to favour the emergence of an economic free trade zone incorporating all the countries of a broader region from North Africa to the Middle East.<sup>56</sup> Although such a region it is not homogeneous, the geographic proximity makes an approach considering MENA countries as a whole entity unavoidable to Europe.

This view helped shape a long-term security policy that assumes the importance of key element of local political economy along with regional politics in approaching instability problems, by acting from inside and not from outside the region. EU policy has produced an alternative security strategy in joining geo-economic and geo-political factors in the core of the ME region<sup>57</sup>.

The faith in the strategic force of this kind of project came directly from the European long-term experience. Since stability for Europe came through economic cooperation

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<sup>55</sup> Within this last range of activities Commission Delegations have a direct role in supervising and implementing diplomatic relations with Mediterranean partners in the area. Three are the institutions involved in the EU foreign policy, the European Council and the Council of the European Union with the function of decision-making and the European Parliament more functional for providing political impetus: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/)

<sup>56</sup> The MENA project includes around forty countries with 800 million people.

<sup>57</sup> Sven Behrendt and Ch.-P. Hanelt (eds.) 2001: Bound to cooperate. Europe and the ME.

such a free trade zone transposed to the ME, this represented the opportunity to project a successful model for reforming political values outside Europe<sup>58</sup>.

Nevertheless, a real strategic force of the EU model lays in the possibility of including in the initiative key regional actors fundamental to security in the region<sup>59</sup>. The project, in this light, could also represent an important opportunity to gain benefits for Israel together with Arab countries<sup>60</sup>.

The Peace Process that began in Oslo made possible these developments favouring and strengthening the EU political role in the Mediterranean area and the ME. This role became progressively oriented towards the projection of an integrative European model that used economic means to reach political aims.

In this regard, the growing economic power of the Union has proved to be the most effective means to promote its strategic influence beyond its borders. If it has been primarily through its economic resources that the EU has gained influence in the region, the policy promoted by the EC first and the Union after Maastricht has always been attentive to the major political issue generating instability in the ME.

Thus, in the historical contingencies more favourable during the 90s, the Union deployed the guideline elements of a long-term policy for security in ME whilst also enhancing its role in the region, by redefining the nature of the conflict; assuring support to Palestinian rights for self-determination; and playing its traditional diplomatic function

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<sup>58</sup> Rodney Wilson 1998: Middle Eastern Trade and Financial Integration: Lesson from the European Union's Experience, 184-205.

<sup>59</sup> Behrendt and Hanelt (eds.) 2001: op. cit., 19. See also Emily Landau and Tamar Malz 2003: Culture and Security Policy in Israel, at [www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publications.asp](http://www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publications.asp)

<sup>60</sup> See Shimon Peres with Aryeh Naor 1993: The New Middle East.

in multilateral negotiations and connecting economic to political principles in order to promote a comprehensive peace process and a status of collective stability<sup>61</sup>.

Since the 70s, the EU's long term strategy in the ME has been based on the aim of reaching this point: the establishment of solid and closer ties with the Arab neighbourhood and the solution of the regional conflict that represented a major constraint challenging the political cohesion inside the Union by enhancing the risk of fragmentation among European countries.

For this main reason, a stronger political role for the Union in the region was tied to promoting a model of economic integration between MENA countries. The projection of this model also signifies the deepening of Union political influence in the region that would ultimately result in fostering emancipation from the US.

In fact, the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had an essential political function in defining the lines of a distinctive European foreign policy. As much as the Palestinian issue was at the centre of a comprehensive ME peace process, possibilities to solve the European dilemma in the region were enhanced. In the aftermath of the second Gulf war, the EC-EU partnership with the Arab world became a practicable program in the climate of détente that spread after the Madrid initiative. The model for regional integration had a hidden significance -because of alternatives to the US historical role- the political concept of stability and security showing the strategic nature of the interests targeted by the Union with respect to the growing importance of the Mediterranean neighbourhood.

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<sup>61</sup> See, above all, the initiative of the Euro-Mediterranean Charter on Peace and Stability (within the Euro-Mediterranean Conflict Prevention Centre –EMCPC ): Roberto Aliboni 2000: Building Blocks for the Euro-Mediterranean Charter on Peace and Stability, at [www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publications.asp](http://www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publications.asp); Stephen C. Calleya 1999: The Establishment of a Euro-Med Conflict Prevention Centre, at [www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publi\\_artigo](http://www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publi_artigo)

Finally, through this view, a common sphere of political interests is configured between the Union and the ME. The model of regional integration came to represent not only the opportunity for gaining economic advantages, but of reaching stability and security in a way alternative to that assured by the presence of military forces and the use of force to solve regional crises.

#### **4. In the wake of the Third Gulf War: New EU Interests in the ME**

This section is concerned with the identification of a comprehensive range of interests binding the EU to the ME in that these interests have acquired a definite and vital importance with respect to the EU project for political integration. If one considers that for European mainstream countries, this process may correspond to a kind of “supra-national interest”, the analysis should focus on those factors in the ME that are obstructive and limitative to such an objective<sup>62</sup>.

Considering that the effects of changes in the world system<sup>63</sup> and the progressive advancement of the Union process<sup>64</sup> have produced major changes in the quality of EU

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<sup>62</sup> If we focus on factors stemming from external-relations as they can influence the creation of an European supranational entity it is also known that especially with regard to supranational foreign and security policy EU member-states support such developments sometimes in very different way: these variations are explained above all with differences in relative power capabilities and peculiar national interests in foreign policy. See Mathias Koenig-Archibugi 2004: Explaining Governments Preferences for Constitutional Change in EU Foreign and Security Policy, 137ss.

<sup>63</sup> In post-Cold War European-security, for instance, important dynamics of changes have emerged within the existing security structures: new programs (like the Eurocorps, and the Combined/Joint Task Forces) have been initiated following the changing landscape at eastward borders. Catherine M. Kelleher 1995: The Future of European Security: An Interim Assessment, 54.

<sup>64</sup> Especially during the 90s after Maastricht (1993: institutional reforms), the Amsterdam Treaty (1997: enlargement to Austria Finland and Sweden), the Treaty of Nice (2001-04, eastward enlargement) and the initiative taken at Rome (2003, draft constitution and European Security and Defence Identity) the EU has showed to be constantly in a status of institutional progress and, nevertheless, in the need always to reform its own structure following the dynamics of its progressive “enlargement policy”: Mark Gilbert 2004: A



external-interests, it is important to note that in some cases the EU project has enhanced the significance of certain issues, reducing in parallel the importance of others, and while it has even “transformed” the conceptual assessment behind some traditional strategic objectives such as that of security.

As discussed in the previous paragraph, the system of security promoted by the EU in the ME has been based on the projection of a model for regional integration through economic development and cooperation, instead of a hard security system grounded on military force. Even before the transatlantic crisis over Iraq reached a climax in 2002-03, some analysts pointed out the European Union’s inability to translate its economic power into real political influence in the ME<sup>65</sup>.

In mainstream analysis, EU political weakness was explained by structural deficiencies due to the lack of an effective institutional mechanism for the development of a common foreign policy. By consequence and most important, the EU system proved not to have the capacity to form a military force in order to project its power outside its borders.

In this regard, guidelines of the Union policy adopted in the text of the Euro-Med project are emblematic of a political will that has been expressly devoted to avoiding the use of any terminology recalling issues of “hard security”, substituted by broad expressions such as “political and security partnership”. The lack of a military dialogue within the Barcelona process is not coherent with the recent developments leading to the

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Fiasco But Not a Disaster. Europe’s Search for a Constitution, at [www.worldpolicy.org/journal/articles/wpj04-1/Gilbert.pdf](http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/articles/wpj04-1/Gilbert.pdf).

<sup>65</sup> One of the last comprehensive works on the role of the EU in relation to the ME is edited by B.A. Roberson: the main thesis of the book sustains that this role has been expression of a specific power deficit in ME. However, by giving special attention to the economic futures that deeply characterise the relations between Europe and the ME, the book also confirms the relevance of these relations. B.A. Roberson (ed.) 1998: *The Middle East and Europe. The Power Deficit*.

declaration on a common security and defence policy of the Cologne European Council after the Amsterdam Treaty came into force in 1997. The same cautious approach has been used to draft the *Charter for Peace and Stability in the Mediterranean* where no mention of military dialogue or other kinds of military measures can be found<sup>66</sup>.

Nevertheless, if security, in line with the EU approach at the Barcelona process, could never be construed as meaning "hard security", non-proliferation and self-defence are concepts contained in the Barcelona declaration.

Indeed, although the substance of the project is clearly intended to address problems on security issues and although a web of bilateral agreements exists, a major constraint for the advancement of a clear policy on hard security issues remains the existing ME conflict that hampers advances in possible multilateral military dialogue. This applies for example to the case of Syria and Lebanon as partners of the project that cannot take part in multilateral military dialogues for obvious reasons due to ongoing disputes with Israel<sup>67</sup>.

The EU has progressively deployed an alternative strategy for security in the region focusing political efforts, above all, on the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the principal means to deepening political influence in the region. The use of soft power in promoting a model of regional cooperation has been central to the system of EU foreign relations and represented a viable solution to problems of collective security. This system, however, shows its main limit in the fact of not being sustainable in circumstances of deep crisis and open conflict, when military capability becomes a major instrument of power projection and deterrence.

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<sup>66</sup> Martin Ortega 1999: Military Dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean Charter: an unjustified absence, at [www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publications1.html](http://www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publications1.html)

<sup>67</sup> Martin Ortega 1999: art. cit., *ibid.*

Moreover, attempts at forming an effective and autonomous WEU military power would be highly problematic and seriously destabilize the terms of transatlantic relations. The American role in the development of a European defence force, has been decisive as much as ambiguous in supporting the endowment of modern military capabilities while at the same time, obstructing the emergence of a strategic power independent of the NATO system<sup>68</sup>.

The event of the third Gulf war and the status of instability enhanced in the region by the regime change in Iraq have undermined prospects for the success of the European strategy in accordance with the policy pursued during the 90s. Above all, the crisis and the following war have revealed existing divergences within the transatlantic partnership not limited to the definition of strategies, but also to the identification of priorities. For instance, among the EU objectives promoted by a solid German-France alliance, the political willingness to intensify relations with key ME countries such as Iraq and Iran<sup>69</sup> has progressively emerged as a guideline to addressing ME instability. Thus, leading EU countries have deepened the quality of their sphere of interests in the region and the Union has become politically active in some key-ME issues that traditionally have been under US supervision. Historically this phenomenon of emancipation is connected to the advancement of the European project of political Union. Since western European countries have reached a considerable level of economic and cultural homogeneity - especially with the introduction of the Euro currency in 2002- the priority of intra-regional politics has been the creation of a supranational institution that could result

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<sup>68</sup> Nicole Gnesotto 2004: ESDP: Results and Prospects, 23ss.

<sup>69</sup> Steven Everts 2003: Two Cheers for the EU's New Security Strategy, 6.

effective in foreign policy<sup>70</sup>. Moreover, trends in European affairs have showed important developments in this direction. The process of the European Capabilities Action Plan is envisaged to be expanded and transformed into a fully-fledged system for the harmonisation of military capabilities<sup>71</sup>.

Other important issues such as that of “terrorism” and “Islamism” have also become factors of concern in the European view of security with respect to the ME and have produced a major shift in the political focus from oil resources to these major issues<sup>72</sup>.

All these parameters of change, in any case, have just augmented the necessity of rebuilding and stabilising the nature of European-Middle Eastern relations and, thus, have increased the search for political alliances with key-Arab countries.

### *Geography at stake*

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<sup>70</sup> The draft of the European constitution is the last and comprehensive initiative for stabilizing an effective European Common Foreign and Security Policy (Chapter II): The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by, and designed to advance in the wider world, the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law; even the existing jurisprudential system of the European high Court of Justice is a main indicator of the advanced level of regional integration. Last and major innovation is the Union's Foreign Minister, to be appointed by the European Council in agreement with the Commission President (also in charge of being the Commission's Vice-President). Moreover, the same article III provides for the establishment of a European Armaments and Strategic Research Agency. See Convention Meeting 2003: Institutions, foreign and defence policy, at [www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/](http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/) and Conference of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States 2004: Provisional consolidated version of the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (Article III-193), [http://europa.eu.int/constitution/futurum/constitution/part3/title5/chapter1/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/constitution/futurum/constitution/part3/title5/chapter1/index_en.htm)

<sup>71</sup> In this respect, the future the “Intergovernmental Agency in the field of defence capabilities development, research, acquisition and armaments” will add real value to the progress of a European military power. Burkard Schmitt 2004: European Land Armaments: Time for Political Will, at [www.iss-eu.org/menue/fnewe](http://www.iss-eu.org/menue/fnewe)

<sup>72</sup>Ghassan Salamé 1997: Torn Between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, 30ss.

In the assessment of EU/ME relations, the geographical factor constitutes an important source of analysis. The geographic proximity of the two geo-political realities has produced a common background of deep historical relevance. We may recall here the definition of the region itself - the “Middle East” - a definition relative to the Eurocentric view of the globe. Conversely, to confirm the interplay within such a historical background that has interested the Mediterranean area as a whole, it is worth remembering that the appellation of Europe itself stems from a “cultural mythology of the South” that, with the given differences, refers nevertheless to a common substrate of Mediterranean civilizations<sup>73</sup>.

All in all, the importance of giving a name to a “new” geographic entity is part of the process of cultural conquest and, above all, it expresses the function of excluding possible competitors from the space of conquest. In this regard, the USs recent project for a Greater Middle East<sup>74</sup> by introducing a new definition for a geographic entity, proposes an “Americentric” view opposed to the Eurocentric “Middle East”.

Geographic proximity contributes to making the ME so important to Europe that its influence largely surpasses that exercised towards the US, in particular when such influence may produce negative effects.

Thus, although the geographic link has always induced a special dealing with the ME, especially in the course of the last decade, geographic proximity came to represent a specific source of concern for the Union, in particular for the governments of those countries facing consistent difficulties along the borders of South Europe.

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<sup>73</sup> See Roberto Calasso 1988: *Le nozze di Cadmo e Armonia*.

<sup>74</sup> See Chapter III: 3.1

The evaluation of the importance of this aspect and its consequences led to a major change in terms of security matters. This change has been particularly evident in the agenda of meetings of EU Foreign Ministers, which no longer focused on political-military issues -as during the Cold War period- but were devoted to discussing problems characterising the regions on the periphery of Europe<sup>75</sup>.

The Union has been concerned with border problems that became a common source of concern particularly with respect to ethnic conflicts. As trends in the late 90s have show<sup>76</sup>, as much as governments have produced repressive measures to face the uncontrollable flow of illegal immigrants and refugees, the social and political instability in the ME and Mediterranean area risks destabilising European domestic policies based on democratic standards and common agreements<sup>77</sup>. In parallel, repressive measures have enhanced the power of local criminal organizations<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>75</sup> After the end of the Cold War, instability for EU is represented almost by ethnic conflict and by a vast range of socio-economic deficiencies such as low economic growth, high debt, poor infrastructures that have concurred to shape a radically altered security environment producing specific elements of instability in the periphery of Europe. Cameron 1999: op. cit. 69ss.

<sup>76</sup> Elvira S. Mateos and Gemma Pinyol 2003: European Perceptions of Southern Countries Security and Defence Issue. A Reflection on the European Press, at [www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publications.asp](http://www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publications.asp)

<sup>77</sup> The most high profile case of EU government's illegal action has been the main deportation, occurred in October 2004, of 1,000 people sent by the Italian government to Libyan authorities. The operation is part of a wider initiative that in the declaration of Italian ministry of Interior Pisanu "permitts the repatriation to the countries of origin of many thousands of illegal aliens, of whom 4,500 headed for Italy" (cited in Espresso 17 March 2005). Nevertheless, Libyan acceptance of deportees from EU members is not explained only by the fact that the country is not a signatory of the Geneva Convention, but above all because is an active participant -together with Morocco- to the bilateral German-Italian agreement reached in summer 2004, for which financial and material assistance is granted to the Northern Africa countries where special camps for deportees are settled. The policy of bilateralism for solving security problems in Europe is showing to over passing EU existing norms on asylum. See Liza Schuster 2005: The Realities of a New Asylum Paradigm, 1-25.

<sup>78</sup> Organized criminal networks, in the whole Mediterranean region, include local EU criminal groups -like Italian Mafia- that work in complicity with non-EU organizations and make increasingly lucrative business in southern European countries serving as preferential door for illegal immigration to Europe. Italy, for example, has become primarily a country of destination for trafficking in human being involved in the commercial sex industry, clandestine immigration, counterfeiting of documents and money, illegal currency export transactions, and trafficking in drugs and children. John Salt 2000: Trafficking and Human Smuggling: A European Perspective, 31-42.

In this sense, the principle of security has been changed before being included in the draft of the constitution as an issue relevant to Union policy. This change underlines the importance of social outcomes and the necessity of cooperating in order to face such challenges<sup>79</sup>. The quest for social stability in the neighbourhood became a compelling interest for domestic European security and an objective towards which the foreign policy promoted by the Union had focused its attention in order to preserve political stability among its members<sup>80</sup>.

The development of an interrelated security system between the two regions could not have the chance to advance without preserving circumstances of *détente* and peace which are the sole conditions allowing the Union mechanism to be influential in the region. Thus, since the overall capacity of the Union to be effective on security matters is heavily undermined by circumstances of conflict<sup>81</sup>. In the wake of the Third Gulf war, a paramount objective in EU foreign policy was identified with the need to maintain cooperation in the Mediterranean at a sustainable level especially for protecting peripheral borders of Southern Europe.

Social instability is a source of geo-political instability. Low performance in the quality of sovereignty powers allows the proliferation of illegal network activities and tends to extend their operational space at the trans-regional level.

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<sup>79</sup> Politically it is the European Council the main body in charge of identifying the strategic interests and foreign policy. See Article III-193 (a): safeguard its common values, fundamental interests, security, independence and integrity: Draft of the European constitution: Provision having general application: Provision Having General Application, cit. *ibid*.

<sup>80</sup> See The European Security Strategy 2003: A Secure Europe in a Better World, at <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>.

<sup>81</sup> See the case of the Balkan crisis -even if geographically and historically influent for Europe - has been indicative of the EU inability to face international crisis directly relevant for the EU security “in timely and decisive fashion”: Michael J. Brenner 1993: The EC: Confidence Lost, 24-43.

The prolonged war in Iraq is showing, for instance, the real geo-political vulnerability of Mediterranean countries as demonstrated by the terrorist attack that occurred in Madrid on 11 March 2004. In his first video after 9/11, Bin Laden evoked Andalusia to express the rhetoric of re-conquest of lost territories<sup>82</sup>. In March 2004, the continuing status of war in Iraq, the Spanish participation in the US coalition and the coming national elections in Spain allowed Al-Qaeda networks to use Spain as an effective and sensitive lever in their strategy of terror<sup>83</sup>.

### *Challenges to a European security strategy from the Iraqi crisis*

The lack of a homogeneous answer of European countries to the Iraqi crisis has renewed scepticism about the possibility of framing a “European strategy” in terms of an effective European foreign policy in circumstances of crisis and conflict. Fragmentation in EU countries’ responses would indicate a lack of a common strategy in critical foreign policy issues.

Nevertheless, the EU is endowed with an institutional framework expressing the main lines under which national policies of European countries are in *bona fide* bound to cooperate. Thus, it would be a limitation not to consider the policies formulated in the official reports and treaty agreements that have marked the progressive advancement of the European Union towards the harmonization of both intra-regional and external policies.

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<sup>82</sup> See The Middle East Media Research Institute 2004: The Full Version of Osama bin Laden's Speech, Special Dispatch Series - No. 811, at <http://memri.org/archives.html>

<sup>83</sup> See Jason Burke 2004: Iraq one year on, The Observer: 7 March.



Among these treaties, the draft of the constitution -as the last act still *in fieri* but comprehensive of previous steps - summarizes the basic principles on which the Union system intends to work as political entity.

The draft of the European constitution does not clarify goals and priorities for a common agenda in international relations and does not specify a character unique to the European political role in the global system<sup>84</sup>. This is, however, due to the nature of the constitutional treaty itself, whose purposes are not those of defying specific objectives and strategies but of regulating the use of means serving political participation. In other words, the text provides the conceptual tools indicating lines of action for which the Union is legally entitled to response to challenges posed by international crises.

Article III-193 (c) for instance, states that the preservation of peace, the prevention of conflicts and the strengthening of international security must be pursued in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and with the aims of the Charter of Paris, including those relating to external borders<sup>85</sup>.

The concepts of peace and international security here are not identified as absolute principles formulated *ex-novo* by the Union. Instead, they are presented as concepts relative to the purpose of existing international bodies and Union treaties with respect to a mechanism that allows political compromise and power balancing under multilateral negotiations.

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<sup>84</sup> Cameron 1999: *op. cit.*

<sup>85</sup> Draft of the European Constitution: *cit. ibid.*

Consequently, the weakening of European Union political cohesiveness corresponds to the weakening of existing international organization<sup>86</sup>.

The refusal of Germany and France to take part in the US led coalition out of the UN Security Council approval appears in line with the policy promoted throughout the EU institution for which the UN is the preferred instrument entitled to settle international crises and eventually, to engage in military operations<sup>87</sup>.

This approach represents a constitutional result stemming from already consolidated national approaches in international crisis management. It is not a supranational imposition on national interests and, thus, when there is a breach of it there is also a breach in the national legal and political system.

A key country of the Union, as in the case of Italy for example, has assured the presence of its troops in Iraq by overcoming constraints posed by the national Constitution. Here, the government did not have the legal power to go to war against a sovereign state in that the nation was bound by international treaties and bodies in order to settle international disputes<sup>88</sup> such as the third Gulf crisis. Formally, the Italian

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<sup>86</sup> It is important to our discourse remembering that European countries have intervened in Kosovo under the framework of NATO (being the UN Security Council at the first important stage of its crisis) with the perspective to consolidate a “cosmopolitan principle” that calls for the right to intervene in case of crimes against humanity; what is relevant to the analysis is to see that a paramount element in the strategy of EU mainstream countries vis-à-vis the challenge of international crisis is the necessity to act within institutional framework in order to preserve multilateral approach. Jürgen Habermas 2005 (2004): *Der gespaltene Westen. Kleine Politische Schriften X* (tr.ingl. *The Divided Western*), 75.

<sup>87</sup> Although the debacle in the Iraqi crisis, the EU strategy for strengthening the UN system (and vice versa) has continued with a specific focus on issues regarding crisis management leading to the “Joint Declaration on UN-EU Co-operation in Crisis Management” signed in 2003. Joint Declaration on UN-EU Co-operation in Crisis Management, New York September 2003, at [http://europa.eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_2768\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu-un.org/articles/en/article_2768_en.htm)

<sup>88</sup> Art. 11 of the Constitution : L'Italia ripudia la Guerra come strumento di offesa alla libertà degli altri popoli e come mezzo di risoluzione delle controversie internazionali; costante, in condizioni di parità con gli altri stati, alle limitazioni di sovranità necessarie ad un ordinamento che assicuri la pace e la giustizia fra le Nazioni; promuove e favorisce le organizzazioni internazionali rivolte a tali scopi. (tr. in. Article 11 Repudiation of War. Italy shall repudiate war as an instrument of offence against the liberty of other peoples and as a means for settling international disputes; it shall agree, on conditions of equality with other states, to such limitations of sovereignty as may be necessary to allow for a legal system that will

government has therefore not financed an operation of war in the Iraqi territory, but is supporting an operation of peace in the framework of the legally ambiguous category of “humanitarian intervention”<sup>89</sup>.

Thus, in order to identify a core European strategy in Iraq with respect to the Union’s official policy, it is necessary to focus on the German-France approach to the “Iraqi problem” in as much as this approach expresses the logic endowed by the EU’s treaties and practices.

Characteristic aspects of this policy did not emerge as a new factor in the European agenda of 2002/03. Since the development of the second Gulf crisis, strengthening the UN as a means to resolving international conflicts has been a paramount objective of European states, not least because of the need to contain possible developments in American unilateral trends after the demise of the Soviet Union.

The EU strategy of security adopted in December 2003 reconfirms, for instance, *the appropriate ways in which the Europe can contribute to building a world that is more united, safer and fairer. A more united world can only be achieved through effective multilateralism. No single country is able to tackle today’s complex problems on its own. International cooperation is a necessity. This is why the development of a stronger international community, well functioning international institutions and a rule-based*

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ensure peace and justice between nations; it shall promote and encourage international organizations having such ends in view: av. at [www.vescc.com/constitution/italy-constitution-eng.html](http://www.vescc.com/constitution/italy-constitution-eng.html))

<sup>89</sup> With 3000 soldiers the “Old Babylon” mission was operative in Iraq under the US-led “Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance”. The Italian approach at the conflict, however, has not avoided consequences stemming from the real state of war and insecurity in the Iraqi territory for which Italian troops result ambiguously committed to engagement’s rules not compatible in practice with their tasks: harsh political debate over such rules, in fact, has followed the fight of **Nassyria** in summer 2004 and more recently to the accusation of the Italian general under trial for having target ambulance. Italian Ministry of Defence 2003: Comunicazioni del Ministro della Difesa sull’impegno di un contingente militare in Iraq, at <http://www.difesa.it/Ministro/Compiti+e+Attivita/Audizioni/Comunicazioni.htm>;

*international order remain among the principle strategic objectives of the European Union: strengthening the United Nations Organisation is a European priority*<sup>90</sup>.

In the second half of the 90s, in parallel with the progressive weakening of the UN system, economic engagement of the Union's countries within the MENA region has grown considerably together with the advancement of MEPP's initiatives. Looking at the nature of EU/ME relations, commercial interests have been of increasing importance. Trends shows that trade relations with ME partners have reached even higher levels than those of the US since when, from the mid-90s, EU countries have started to import double the amount of oil than the transatlantic partner<sup>91</sup>.

The sale of military and civilian goods, to the purchase of oil supplies, makes trade the principal means of assuring the intra-regional stability key to the advancement of the Union project. Moreover, while the level of competition became enormously suffocating because of the entrance of other out-of-area key powers (as Chine and Asian countries<sup>92</sup>) in the region, the Union's need to maintain stable market relations with ME countries has become a matter of survival not strictly in the light of individual national interests, but more specifically with respect to the EU project aimed at maintaining a stable balance in European economic growth. The balanced grow of economic capability is an essential factor without which the political objectives of the Union have no chance of continuing.

In the specific case of the EU project the role played by outcomes of political economy are a fundamental means for the balancing of intra-European politics and the projection of political power as a global player outside regional borders.

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<sup>90</sup> Javier Solana 2004: art. cit. *ibid*.

<sup>91</sup> Phebe Marr 1997: *The United States Europe and the Middle East*, 74-103.

<sup>92</sup> The acceleration of the process of global integration has enhanced the complexity of trade relations in ME and explains Chine and India increased level of trade with ME.

In summary, the nature of EU/ME relations expresses a main concept formulated in the EU security strategy for which the internal and the external aspects of security are fundamentally linked.

Divergences that emerged between the US and the German-France alliance on how to approach the Iraqi crisis mirror the importance of these aspects in building a realistic game for which the Union sought to protect, if not to enhance, its new role in the region by searching a more balanced partnership with the US.

Iraq has been central to this “emancipation strategy”. In fact, while the US was deploying coercive diplomacy and a sanctions policy to isolate Iraq –and Iran<sup>93</sup>, EU mainstream policy favoured constructive engagement with these countries through economic relations and deepening political influence in the regional system of power.

Specific trade policies of the EU towards regional partners such as Iran, for instance, led American legislation to issue the Iran-Libya Sanction Act in 1996 directed against EU trade initiatives<sup>94</sup>.

Elements clarifying the Iraqi case became evident after 1998 when France, in particular, started to call for softening sanctions against Iraq within the UN framework.

Considering the political relevance of the Union at the time of its highest level of engagement in the region through the promotion of the EuroMed-MEPP strategy, the perspective of reopening trade relations with Baghdad must be seen together with the possibilities envisaged by the EU policy to extend diplomatic relations inclusive of key regional actors fundamental to the security of the region.

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<sup>93</sup> See the dual containment policy: Chapter II

<sup>94</sup> US House of Representatives: Iran-Libya Sanction Act of 1996 Congressional Report, 18 June, at [http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/1996\\_cr/h960618b.htm](http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/1996_cr/h960618b.htm)

In 2002 the EU Council called for swift progress in association agreements with Lebanon, Syria and Egypt<sup>95</sup>. The aim of the Council was to reinforce the role of the European Union as a regional actor and widen its room for manoeuvre to play a significant political role in the area.

Moreover, preferential relations with Iraq could become a concrete nightmare if and when the regime in Baghdad would opt for the use of Euro currency instead of US dollars to sell Iraqi oil. Saddam announced the switch in oil sales from dollars to Euros in November 2000. The regime's decision was intended to answer to Washington's hard-line on sanctions while encouraging Europeans to challenge it<sup>96</sup>.

Automatically, transatlantic divergences on how solve the “Iraqi problem” were translated into the institutional crisis that has progressively annihilated the UN system. Simultaneously, the Iraqi problem revealed its real nature, in which a “regime change” in Baghdad, an issue that was still under the control of a multilateral approach during the second Gulf war, lay at the heart of the problem.

In a certain way, the more European policy was withdrawing support from the American embargo and sanctions policy, the more the specific objective of regime change became central to the US view for the solution of what, in Washington, was perceived more and more as compelling the Iraqi problem. In this light, rather than definitive Iraqi disarmament, it seems that regime change in Iraq has been the long-term objective for limiting EU mainstream countries’ aims at engaging constructive relations

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<sup>95</sup> Council of the European Union 2002: The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Adoption of the EU guidelines with a view to the fifth Conference of the Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers, at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/med\\_mideast/intro/gac.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/med_mideast/intro/gac.htm).

<sup>96</sup> The steady depreciation of the dollar since 2001 (euro gaining 17% against dollar) allowed Iraq and the Oil for food reserve fund profiting the same percent value since the switch. See W. Clark 2003: The Real Reasons for the Upcoming War With Iraq: A Macroeconomic and Geostrategic Analysis of the Unspoken Truth, at [www.stern.nyu.edu/globalmacro/cur\\_policy/iraqcurrencyregime.pdf](http://www.stern.nyu.edu/globalmacro/cur_policy/iraqcurrencyregime.pdf)

with Iraq because of the possibility that such relations would boost the relevance of the EU political role in the whole regional system of power.

This reasoning raises two considerations. Firstly, normalising relations throughout trade with Iraq meant giving the country -governed by a regime hostile to the US- the chance to improve domestic capabilities and to enhance the possibility of projecting its power at the regional level, not without great concerns for the US and its allies in the Gulf.

Secondly, the aspect at the stake in transatlantic divergences about Iraq and the respective strategies for regional security, also reflects the asymmetric division of tasks between the US and the EU. While the Union was acquiring political benefits from its double policy of trade and diplomatic relations with the promotion of an inclusive approach towards repressing those countries “contained” by American foreign policy, at the same time, the US was still carrying the major burden of military expenses for maintaining the system of security in the Gulf.

It is evident that if the US administration would have preferred to share more budgetary responsibility with the Union, European mainstream countries -strengthened by a discrete successful policy in ME- would also have preferred to share more responsibility in decision-making extended to security matters in *stricto sensu* not only on budgetary issues.

Indeed, the American unilateral approach represented the only way to face the burden of this asymmetry, allowing it on the one hand, to pursue the main objective of the war - the change of regime- and on the other, to share military expenses by keeping control of strategic leadership at the same time.

This perspective explains why, although European countries have always been dependent on a US military presence in the Gulf, an overall EU strategy was interested in enhancing EU political power in decision-making. This aim was primary in leading the German-France alliance to refuse support to US security policy in the region.

EU policy-makers indicate this asymmetry of tasks through a traditional concept in IR calling for a more balanced relation with the transatlantic partner<sup>97</sup>. Equally, EU chances to be effective as global player on the basis of political and economic projects promoted in regions vital to European security depends on a more balanced transatlantic partnership (that is, with a sharing of decisional responsibility for the EU). The EU, despite the violence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has continued to fulfil its commitment in the region to the point that the level of financial commitment in the MEDA project increased from 26% in 1995-1999 to 37.6% in 2000 and 53.1% in 2001<sup>98</sup>. After the EU had invested financial and political resources in its policy in the region, the US strategic objective of regime change in Baghdad would have introduced conditions of deep and, above all, prolonged instability in the region, seriously challenging the promotion of an effective EU foreign policy for the long term in the ME.

In fact, while the EU was stressing the importance of maintaining the momentum of the Barcelona Process at a time of political tension in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the destabilization of a key country like Iraq – above all throughout territorial fragmentation and ethnic-religious criteria<sup>99</sup>- signified halting Union aims in the region. Thus, a main challenge of the third Gulf war has been the “regime change” option especially because

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<sup>97</sup> In the words of Solana “if the transatlantic partnership is defined as irreplaceable is also true that the effectiveness of the alliance depends from a more balanced relation”. Solana 2004: art. cit., *ibid*.

<sup>98</sup> Council of the European Union 2002: cit. 9.

<sup>99</sup> See below chapter III, the terms of the new Iraqi Constitution: <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2002/issue4/jv6n4a1.html>



the presence of foreign troops in the country is perceived as a factor challenging the EU's main interests for stability in the ME<sup>100</sup>. The conjunction-timing between the failure of peace talks in the final status negotiations of the Oslo agreement at Camp David and increasing tension within the UN on the issue of Iraq may suggest the existence of a political connection between the two issues.

Indeed, the crisis of opposition between the French-German axis and Washington did not prevent the US administration from using its political and military power to act unilaterally. Nevertheless, it enhanced the diplomatic costs of the operation and above all, assured European mainstream countries of the relative political advantages gained from part of the Arab community.

Moreover the lack of homogeneous support for the US initiative showed the importance of the European experience in dealing with regional actors, when the US found major difficulties in receiving support both inside the Iraqi territory and on the level of regional politics. In the case of Turkey for instance, the influence of mainstream EU political standing has affected the decision of Ankara to maintain a neutral position that, in practice, resulted in a refusal to support US military intervention<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>100</sup> In the case, as events have showed the war became extremely bloody, both for the invading forces and Iraqi civilians. The war conducted for replacing Saddam's regime, far from being a mean to impose stability, has produced harsh internal conflicts over power and national resources leading the country into a status of civil war: see especially The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) 2005: Human Rights Report (November 1 – December 31), av. at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/document/2005/1231unami.pdf>

<sup>101</sup> Ziya Önis and Suhnaz Yilmaz 2005: The Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?

The association made by American opponents to the war between the challenges encountered in Vietnam and in Iraq, recalls an aspect inherent to a wider risk of “imperial overstretch”<sup>102</sup> in the face of which European policy has sought to gain political benefits.

Hence, if the Bush Junior administration considered that the asymmetric share of decisional power is justified by the fact that the EU has little to offer militarily,<sup>103</sup> it is also true that European model of intervention in crisis management will have great relevance in the stabilisation and reconstruction of post-war Iraq<sup>104</sup>. As much as US policy-makers agree on considering the EU interest in playing such a role independently of whether Washington involves them in the policy-making process or makes important concessions to win their support<sup>105</sup>, mainstream European countries may also have refused to participate in the military operation in Iraq based on the same consideration. EU involvement is essential to the task of reconstruction and peace keeping<sup>106</sup>, even more so after the UN diplomatic and monetary crisis.

Having considered these points, the last important factor in defining EU interests in the ME lies in the view that mainstream EU countries have of the US leadership in the region. Since both France and Germany came to represent a real political power within

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<sup>102</sup>Kennedy’s theory of historical decline of great powers inherent to the risk of “imperial overstretch”. Paul Kennedy 1988: *The rise and the fall of great powers*.

<sup>103</sup> For this reason the US should determine its Iraq policy alone: Charles Krauthammer 2002: *The Myth of “UN Support”*, *The Washington Post*: 4 October.

<sup>104</sup> See the model for reconstruction of the post-war Iraq: [www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/after/2003/04governiraq.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/after/2003/04governiraq.htm); However, in contest of insecurity and civil war the European model cannot work as proved in the failed experience in Afghanistan where, in fact, limitations placed on the peacekeepers provided under a NATO umbrella contribute to lack of interoperability between forces. The ad hoc manner in which the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has moved outside Kabul highlights this further, with each country-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) a fortress unto itself. This is partly due to the UN’s coordinating role and the sheer scale of U.S. military and development involvement. A “European” model could not only help strengthen coherence but also influence the role of PRTs. See International Crisis Group 2005: *Rebuilding the Afghan State: The European Union’s Role*, at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.htm>

<sup>105</sup> Robert Kagan 2002: *Iraq: The Day After*, *The Washington Post*: 21 July and William Safire 2002: *In Material Breach*, *New York Times*: 28 October.

<sup>106</sup> International Crisis Group 2005: art. cit. *ibid*.

the core of Europe<sup>107</sup>, a latent interest of this alliance is the acceleration of the historical process for decreasing American leadership, starting with the promotion of a differentiated-obstructionist policy.

## **5. Conclusions: Building the Power of Identity through Alternatives on Security**

The present chapter sought to define a range of European interests in the ME in the light of those elements of novelty characterising both the nature of the European regional system and the international system following the end of the Cold War.

We first clarified that, although the EU is not a national actor it is, nevertheless, an existing and self-determined global actor. As such, it is endowed with both economic and political capabilities to reach its goals and interests in world politics. In this regard however, we have posed the problem of how the nature of these interests can be qualified, especially when an analysis focuses on foreign policy issues. The analysis has referred to a constructivist theory to provide an answer that could include aspects of both material and ideal capabilities.

An element characterising the EC-EU behaviour since the end of the Cold War has been the aim of shaping a European political identity on the basis of foreign policy matters.

This process is in nature long-term, and based on continuity and reflexive mechanisms for developments. It finds its basic qualitative meaning in the production of self-identity through a steady strategy of alternative solutions to ME critical outcomes.

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<sup>107</sup> The concept of “core Europe” is a reality formally introduced after Nizza treaty that calls for a structure of strong regional cooperation.

For this reason, a mainstream EU strategic objective has been that of re-shaping the concept of security vis-à-vis its transatlantic partner.

In order to draw the line of this progressive development the analysis has focused, in particular, on specific political outcomes emerging during the second and the third Gulf crises. Positions assumed in relation to these outcomes, however, were in line with previous attempts at constructing a European political identity, such as the Schumann Paper, London Declaration and even the Euro-Arab Dialogue<sup>108</sup>.

All these steps have been directed toward the same political objective: decentralising political tension from the core Arab/Israeli-US block -highly problematic for the political unity of the community- towards the redefinition of the nature of the conflict on the basis of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian national identity.

Within this long-term process the second Gulf crisis has represented a turning point for overcoming a European major dilemma: the risk of fragmentation and the containment of external pressure and challenges vis-à-vis the transatlantic ally.

In this respect, we have argued that an opposing stance against the policy formulated in Washington was not, at that stage, a concrete objective of the Community. Given the weakness of the EC political framework under a deep and prolonged US political influence and military leadership within the transatlantic alliance, we have presumed that EC founder-members were conscious that a regional framework could not provide them with the political strength to directly assume an opposing role against the US.

In force of a realistic evaluation, the EC faced the second Gulf crisis not with the aim of initiating a crisis with the US. Instead, a predominant concern in Europe was that of

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<sup>108</sup> See above: 1.2, Significance of the ME to a European Political Identity.

consolidating a cooperative-transatlantic way for dealing with the ME and its status of structural instability.

This aim implied investing political resources in a long-term security strategy in the ME whose one important purpose was to contain the hegemonic tendencies of the sole remaining superpower in the international environment capable of acting unilaterally.

For the same reason, a concrete objective of European mainstream countries since the second Gulf crisis was to limit these tendencies by bounding the ally politically to the legacy of international military operations under a multilateral approach<sup>109</sup>.

An important aspect emerging from the analysis, thus, is that the second Gulf crisis has been a turning point in the perception of priorities in IR shifting the focus from a general economic involvement with the ME towards definite political aims in the region and in the system of international relations.

In fact, although inter-regional frameworks of cooperation on economic and diplomatic fields were created since the 70s, just in the event of the second Gulf crisis European countries have reiterated and fostered a distinctive approach towards the ME politics leading to concrete political achievement during the 90s. Hence, beyond the domestic factor of fragmentation, the crisis and the diplomatic standing of mainstream European countries have initiated a path to important developments for the role of the Union in the Mediterranean and the ME region.

The EC diplomatic standing and the subsequent financial tasks assumed by the EC during the war, showed that direct opposition to the US strategy of intervention was not

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<sup>109</sup> Above: Second Gulf Crisis Revisited: economic interests of the Community towards political interests of the Union.

an objective but instead, that the shaping of a preferential political understanding with Middle Eastern partners<sup>110</sup>.

Politically speaking, this diplomatic meaning has been mirrored by the centrality of the Palestinian issue attributed to the general status of instability by the French standing during the crisis. Again, the nature of the ME conflict and the understanding of the causes of regional instability were reiterated as essential aspects in the definition of a European identity, promoting alternative solutions for regional security in the post-Cold War era. The political standing towards this issue has served as an effective means of projecting an alternative power in world politics and seeking emancipation from a solely economic role as it was imposed during the bipolar system.

A true strategy of emancipation had to pass through the construction of a political resolution of the factors of instability in the neighbouring region since these factors represented a serious challenge to European political stability itself. Although two main crisis in the 60s and 70s are commonly considered important because of their economic impact on the EC, a deeper understanding of inter-regional relations is made possible just in the light of the political challenge represented by the ME conflict to European Unity<sup>111</sup>.

For this main reason, during the Cold War a major dilemma in Europe was balancing the interests in transatlantic relations and the effects of ME instability. The Israeli-American answer at the Schumann Paper is an emblematic example of the tension existing in the EU-ME-US triangle<sup>112</sup>. This tension has kept European countries divided between economic and political interests, thereby limiting progress in the legitimacy and

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<sup>110</sup> Above: Strengthening European-ME Relations.

<sup>111</sup> Above: Fragmentation.

<sup>112</sup> Above: Political Approach..

strength of the regional institutional framework. The 1990-91 war demonstrated that with the end of the Cold War the European project for economic and political union was at risk of fragmentation if confronted by a situation of conflict and, vice-versa, in a favourable position when dealing with the situation of peace process management. Hence, the second Gulf crisis can also be seen as a factor that historically has enhanced the necessity of advancing a stable political identity in Europe.

Overcoming this dilemma became central through the instrument of long-term initiatives for regional cooperation and integration, a necessary answer as an alternative to short-term military initiatives highly costly for Europe in political terms.

This perspective gave substance to a full characteristic EU policy in the ME with the primary advantage of building a valuable political identity in the post-Cold War era.

Financial assistance for the promotion of regional integration –through EuroMed initiatives- has been used to emphasise same general objectives, including the creation of a stable mechanism of regional integration and cooperation aimed at granting a system of inter-regional security.

The EU policy has produced an alternative security strategy in joining geo-economic and geo-political factors in the core of the ME region. The model for regional integration has a hidden significance -because in contrast to the US historical role- this political concept of stability and security showed the strategic nature of the interests targeted by the Union with respect to the growing importance of the Mediterranean neighbourhood. Most importantly, the real strategic force of the EU model lies in the possibility of including in the initiative key regional actors fundamental to the security of the region.

All in all, with the reunification of Germany, the second Gulf crisis and the subsequent advancement of the process of the European Union, there has been a progressive change in the quality of European-Middle Eastern relations.

The establishment of the Union,<sup>113</sup> far from being just a mere institutional achievement has changed the view of its members-states and has introduced new political priorities.

During the 90s, the nature of inter-regional relations between the EU and the ME has widened not only in terms of intensity but above all, in terms of quality.

In summary, a multifaceted character of such relations with respect to a complex set of issues from economics to politics has emerged in the course of this analysis: the significance of the ME in the shaping of a supranational interest for political union in Europe; the importance of political economy in identifying a starting point in the European development of a long-term foreign policy<sup>114</sup>; the relevance of a European political tradition serving the projection of a European model of regional integration; and the progressive construction of a European identity through the transformation of the concept of security.

With specific reference to this last issue, as discussed above, risks stemming from instability in the neighbouring region have driven Western European powers more decisively in the direction of a stable institutional framework in order to overcome difficulties and obstacles posed by the EU structure split between the fragmented European Council of Foreign Ministers and a weaker European Parliament.

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<sup>113</sup> Although resistance to economic and political union the historic treaty of Maastricht was signed in December 1991 to build lasting union when economic growth of the EC members could grant optimal conditions. (Successor to the Common Market launched in 1958 and the integrated customs union of 1987. If EC members proved to be divided with respect to two basic issues; compact commitment on monetary integration by decade's end and transfer of portion of national sovereign power to authorities in Brussels) members states had to overcome divisions. See Walter Goldstein 1992: Europe after Maastricht, at [www.foreignaffairs.org/19921201faessay5907/walter-goldstein/europe-after-Maastricht.html](http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19921201faessay5907/walter-goldstein/europe-after-Maastricht.html).

<sup>114</sup> Above: The Long Way to MEPP's Strategy: an Alternative Model for Security.



Since the end of the Cold War, at a time when military power seemed to lose its significance in the politics of international relations, the EU as an economic global player acquired strength in pursuing a differentiated political approach in the ME. A properly contradistinctive aspect has been to advance a global perspective of ME problems in such a way that economic development and regional cooperation in the region should not be separated from security issues<sup>115</sup>.

The economic giant started to deploy a strategy driven by political values under which the EU-ME relations, although always in line with economic means, had to be oriented.

Moreover, if it is true that the ME was crucial to Europe stability, other concerns of a vital nature emerged within European borders. Such concerns were almost related to the new global environment of the 90s: the institutional developments of the EU, the prospects for managing the eastward enlargement, and last but not least, the colossal Euro monetary policy, were principal issues dominating the EU agenda. For these reasons, some analysts have argued for a shift of attention from the ME towards East-Europe and domestic issues. Certainly the bigger the European Union has become, the more the space of problematic issues has widened too. What cannot be shifted, however, is the dimension of “geography of neighbourhood” that ties Europe as a political continent to the ME and North Africa as regions at the borderline of essential geo-political functions. This geo-political function can show either powerful or weak sides of the same face. What really makes the difference is the political landscape of power relations and instability versus balancing growth and stability. Security in the ME mirrors a key aspect of the perception of self-identity in Europe and shared knowledge. Within this knowledge driving the projection of an alternative model of security outside EU borders is the transformation

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<sup>115</sup> Above: On the wake of the Third Gulf War: new EU Interests in ME.

and sharing of new meaning that is important because illustrates the power of a common evaluation of reality and finally, the understanding of solutions and expectations.

Given that the present war in Iraq with the specific goal for regime change has created the conditions for a long-term status of instability, challenges to a European strategy from the Iraqi crisis's are intuitively clear.

The constructivist effect stemming from the ME appear evident, firstly, as a means to protecting national identity and secondly, as a source driving the development of the European project toward the creation of a more definite strategy in both regional and foreign policies.

We have found that the projection of an alternative model of security in the ME has been at the top of the foreign policy agenda. This ongoing initiative has been formalized throughout the well known EuroMed initiative.

Thus, the EUs external relations have focused mainly on the South Mediterranean and ME regions considered vital to the geo-political landscape of the old continent. Region-building in the Middle East was viewed as a long-term process that must be based on a new balance of interests, above all, between transatlantic partners.

## **Chapter II**

### ***The US Paradigm of Global Hegemony:***

#### ***Contradictions of Security***

## **2. Introduction. Effects of systemic changes: Reassessing the US Leadership**

The present Chapter focuses on the construction of a new world order doctrine and its progressive deployment since the end of the Cold War in the light of the US policy adopted in the ME during the two main Gulf crises of 1990 and 2003.

Following a neorealist perspective, we assume that in the case of a state actor such as the US, hegemonic behaviour and enlarging alliances are two principal means for promoting changes in the state of the system to the advantage of national power<sup>116</sup>.

Political outcomes, on the one hand, are helpful in explaining attempts to maintain a hegemonic role in world politics starting by relevant changes occurring in the system of alliances of the ME since the second Gulf war.

A focal point of the analysis however, is the role of ideological power that has been attributed to the concept of security following the demise of the Soviet Union and the construction of a new order in the system of international relations.

As Waltz argues, security is the instrument for the maintenance of a certain order<sup>117</sup>. With respect to this view of what security means, a crucial interest for the US has been the world-order theme understood as the maintenance of international security with concern for the state of the system.

Hence, in the following sections, the analysis intends to underline the interactive relationship between changes at the systemic level and changes in the concept of security since we presume that the rhetoric and establishment of “world order doctrine” has to re-address this last concept and the means to exercise it.

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<sup>116</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz 1979: Theory of International Politics, 100ss.

<sup>117</sup> Waltz 1979: op. cit.

With specific reference to the ME, the disintegration of the Soviet Union has given the US more room for manoeuvre in deploying a strategy of security without fear of competition from the former political and military antagonist. American policy makers in the 90s have debated basic questions on how to advance national goals and when to use force to protect national interests in the new international environment. In official discourses, the goal of containing the threat of Russian expansionism left space for other concerns, among which the threat of proliferation and sharper economic competitiveness were viewed as central issues<sup>118</sup>.

If with respect to the post-Cold War system, different paradigms were provided with different explanations in the academic field<sup>119</sup>, the assumption at the base of US foreign policy has remained that idea that international engagement was necessary in maintaining the role of leadership if US interests around the globe were to be preserved.

Ideologically speaking however, this role has been endangered by the ideological collapse of the Soviet threat that served as antagonist-order in the logic of the bipolar system. All the same, the threat represented by the antagonist also had a functional significance in keeping the Western alliance reasonably solid and relatively predictable. For instance, while exercising hegemonic behaviour, a superpower's goal is to limit the rival's possibilities of expansion and altogether maintain the leadership role in the spheres of military-security and political-ideology inside its own coalition.

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<sup>118</sup> Robert H. Pelletreau 1997: US Policy toward the Middle East: Steering a Steady Course, 245-53.

<sup>119</sup> Next to the optimistic view of the Fukuyama's work *The End of History and the Last Man* (reviewed by Roger Kimball 1992: Francis Fukuyama and the End of History, at <http://www.newcriterion.com/archive/10/feb92/fukuyama.htm#top>) other paradigms were proposed focusing on the growing status of anarchy related with the emerging of regional ethnic conflicts (see the case of Yugoslavia: Yahya Sadowski 1988: *Ethnic Conflict*, 1-23), or on the theory of the "clash of civilizations": Samuel P. Huntington 1993: *The Clash of Civilizations*, 22-28; contra see Shibley Telhami 2001: *American Foreign Policy Toward the Muslim World*, at [www.brook.edu/views/interviews/Telhami/20010921.htm](http://www.brook.edu/views/interviews/Telhami/20010921.htm).

Thus, while the Cold War, throughout the policy of containment, Western allowed the US to maintain its leadership on political and strategic issues among Western powers, the end of the bipolar antagonism opened the path of a crisis within the Western system of power together with its main ideological and institutional instruments.

A deep crisis in the concept of order based on the Cold War's alliance system has progressively shaken the terms of transatlantic partnership especially when the alliance was confronted with ME key issues for the stability of the region, such as the case of Iraqi and possible solutions after the dual containment policy.

In this regard, we intend to verify if the dual containment's policy can be better explained following the perspective of out-of region dimensions represented by the transatlantic partnership.

More specifically, it is important to outline an existing relationship between the state of a long-term instability in a key country such as Iraq, and a policy of continuous expansionism pursued by the US. The ideology of exceptional measures for the maintenance of the security of the state of a democratic worldwide system, for instance, provides solid ground for such analysis.

This policy, nevertheless, has to continuously confront its legitimacy to act in the region with the European ally especially since the EU, as seen previously, intensified the quality of political interests in the region.

A neorealist insight would underline that in a multi-polar order, one great power can eliminate other states by defeating them in war. Considering that in the case of the transatlantic alliance this option is remote, other means of intervening in order to re-confirm and re-establish a leadership role must be taken into account. We argue that the

means envisaged by the US in reassessing a leading role in world politics are: (a) the ideology of legitimacy to exercise military power and (b) the strategic control of energy resource transportation.

The relevance of ideal and material capabilities are equally matched in the outcomes related to the development of the third Gulf crisis.

In the words of Waltz “wars that eliminate enough rival great powers are system-transforming wars”<sup>120</sup>.

The perspective adopted in the analysis recognizes both the second and the third Gulf wars as system-transforming wars. However, it intends to demonstrate that by examining the ideology and the politics of the US during the 90s, the identification of the “rival” is to be found in the emergence of the EU as a global actor and the prevention of differentiated opportunities constructed by this actor in order to consolidate preferential relations with key players in the ME.

In this reasoning, there is a need to define the term “rival” before framing an analysis. We introduce a category that intends to overcome limits posed by a theory reducing the concept of ally-rival to the necessity of death and life, as with Schmitt’s category of friend-enemy<sup>121</sup>. In Schmitt’s concept, what it is analysed under the realm of politics becomes a matter of purely existential concern, in that the rival-enemy can pragmatically kill anyone.

The crisis mentioned above instead reinstates the ideological and political meaning in the definition of the ally-rival category because, although the material possibility of killing is at the centre of the outcome of a war, it is always by a matter of ideal perception

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<sup>120</sup> Waltz 1979: op. cit. 199.

<sup>121</sup> Carl Schmitt 1996 (1932): *The Concept of the Political*, 88ss.

that actors operate a choice in the definition of what can threaten their survival. That is why it is fundamental to our analysis to gain an insight into the US political and ideological reshaping of the concept of security as an answer to the construction of alternative security policies stemming from a deeper involvement of the EU in the ME.

## **2.1 The crisis of energy resources as a means for leadership and the Second Gulf War**

Since the development of the modern mode of production, oil and gas resources have been central to the assessment of interests enabling alliances between leading world nations<sup>122</sup>. Not differently from other Western powers that have colonized the region since 1918, the US administrations also have considered the ME and the Gulf region vital to the preservation of national interests. The description made by the US State Department in 1945 of the Middle East for example, defines the region as “a stupendous source of strategic power” in relation to its oilfields<sup>123</sup>.

In the case of a nation-state that was acquiring the status of superpower, a paramount objective in foreign policy has been to use the value of energy resources in order to guarantee the leadership in the game of alliances in international relations. With the Truman doctrine, the US has undertaken strategic and military responsibility in securing all Western interests in the region vis-à-vis the antagonist superpower<sup>124</sup>.

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<sup>122</sup> See, for example, the geo-strategic consequences stemming from the process of decolonization initiated by Roosevelt with the Atlantic Charter in 1941 and the consequent liberalization in the post-war order of world's natural resources previously subject to imperialistic system. H. Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 391 and 401ss.

<sup>123</sup> Quoted in Joyce and G. Kolko 1972: *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy 1945-1954*, 242.

<sup>124</sup> Suez Crisis being the cornerstone confirming the US leadership within the western front: Douglas Little 2003: *American Orientalism. The United States and the Middle East since 1945*, 124.

The legitimacy of this responsibility, however, entered into crisis, as discussed above, when the Soviet threat to Western interests was formally over.

Nevertheless, the Gulf region and the political alliances with nations bordering its coasts have continued to represent a source of strategic power in granting the US a leadership role in security and military issues.

In the wake of the second Gulf crisis, officials of the Bush Senior administration pointed out the necessity of preserving -economic- national interests related to region's oil reserves. They explicitly referred to the Gulf resources as important factor in the evaluation of the Gulf crisis that was threatening these interests<sup>125</sup>.

Indeed, oil has been central to the US view of the second Gulf crisis. However, reasons for undertaking military intervention cannot be reduced exclusively to economic interests because military dominance is not necessary to secure the flow of oil at a reasonable price<sup>126</sup>.

What cannot be underestimated however, is the relevance of political alliances with main oil producers not lastly because such alliances are a source of mutual interests and help maintain stable prices in connection with planned production. This is a factor that can be used as a lever in the context of high political tension as it was demonstrated, for example, on the occasion of the threat of an oil embargo in 1973<sup>127</sup>.

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<sup>125</sup> See in particular the speech to Congress of 11 September 1990 of Secretary of Defence Richard Cheney, reported in: US Senate Committee on Armed Services 1991: Crisis in the Persian Gulf Region: US Policy Options and Implications, 8-22.

<sup>126</sup> Telhami critic to imperialistic theory focuses on the assertion that reasonable prices in oil exports are regulated by market mechanism independently from military and political dominance. Nevertheless, if national markets are not liberalized political choices of governments affect economic trends. Telhami 1993: Explaining American Behaviour in the Gulf Crisis, 154.

<sup>127</sup> 1973 Crisis: was this embargo really "manoeuvred" by the US against European countries? Antonio Negri 2003: L'Europa e l'Impero. Riflessioni su un processo costituente, 33.



We may recall Gramsci's definition in which the concept of *hegemony* indicates the capacity to exercise the role of leadership, which is finally the result of a status of alliances that does not allow political competitors to reach the power (block system)<sup>128</sup>. The consolidation of political alliance and military hegemony in areas on which countries rely for their economic -and political- stability is a source of intra-alliance authority and deterrence that enables a superpower to pursue a strategy of what we can call "necessary hegemony".

We can talk of the strategic value of US economic interests in the Gulf in this sense. However, with the end of the bipolar system of power, the logic for securing oil and energy resources to the west has lost its terms of reference and function as a means for exercising political leadership within the Western front.

Hence, the 90s began with a crisis in the Gulf and with the US Presidency announcing a new world order<sup>129</sup>. Yet, if the aims of the Bush Senior administration's policy cannot be considered "new" as such<sup>130</sup>, what were relatively new were the context and possibilities of action given to the victor of the Cold War, especially with respect to Soviet ex-allies present in the ME.

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<sup>128</sup> Luciano Gruppi, *Per un avvio allo studio di Gramsci*, 7-52.

<sup>129</sup> Indeed, prior to the Gulf crisis, the notion of a new era was the focus of the debate about post-Cold War issues (see the Malta Conference); but the Gulf crisis allowed the concept of new world order to be developed and above all executed. On September 1990 the President explicitly referred to a new world order in a crucial meeting with Gorbachev in Helsinki, while finally the substance of the concept was articulated and integrated in the outcomes of the Gulf crisis on September 11 when the US President asserted in a famous speech that the United States, in addition to its four key objectives in the crisis, had a "fifth objective" of producing a new world order. Totally Bush senior used the expression at least forty-two times from the summer of 1990 to the end of March 1991: the crisis, indeed, secured the US a sort of monopolistic use of the new world order's rhetoric. Data from Eric A. Miller and Steve A. Yetiv 2001: *The New World Order in Theory and Practice: The Bush Administration's Worldview in Transition*, *Presidential Studies Quarterly* March, at <http://unitedelitelite.net/bush.html>

<sup>130</sup> Previously the expression of new world order has been used in connection with the Woodrow-Wilson system at the end of WWI during the period of transition (from colonialism to imperialism) initiated by the foundation of the League of Nations and its specific aims. For important aspects of this transition see Roger Heacock (2006) : *Le Systeme International aux Prises avec le Colonialisme : les Deliberations sur la Palestine dans la Commission des Mandats*, at <http://www.birzeit.edu/research/rheacock.html>;

Together with the demise of Soviet influence, the strength of the Iraqi/Syrian/Russian alliance also came to an end. As Saddam Hussein noted in a famous speech given to the Arab Cooperation Council in Amman in 1990, the collapse of the Russian Empire would enhance the strategic power of the US in the region orienting US efforts toward the control of Gulf natural resources<sup>131</sup>.

During the same speech, the revival of elements of pan-Arabism is relevant not because of the immediate and realistic feasibility of the ideology, but because of the questions hidden behind the reasoning: *“all of us are strong as long as we are united and all of us are weak as long as we are divided”*.

In the very simple search for redefining the logic of alliances in the region, there is the quest on the part of a weak actor for a system that can grant security for ex-Soviet allies possibly under a leadership assuring at least national survival. In fact, the bargaining position of Iraq was different from that of Syria at the time of the Taef accord<sup>132</sup>. The regime in Baghdad had lost, above all, its political relevance in the US policy for supporting the regime as an instrument of deterrence against Iran<sup>133</sup>.

Behind fears for oil reserves, American policymakers were concerned with avoiding the two principal countries of the region opposed to the US -Iraq and Iran- from reaching a

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<sup>131</sup> Nora Boustany 1990: Doctrine, Dreams Drive Saddam Hussein, Washington Post Sunday: 12 August..

<sup>132</sup> US acceptance of Syrian presence in Lebanon will grant the important support of Syria in the management of the second Gulf crisis. After the "national reconciliation" conference of Lebanese parliament members in Taif (October 1989), under the mediation of R. Hariri the delegates, Arab states and Western powers formally accepted the new political structure of Lebanon and its Syrian control: Syrian forces entered in Beirut in October 1990 after which the ex-leader General Aoun -backed from Saddam- was definitely overrun. Peter Mansfield 1992: A History of the Middle East, 321ss.

<sup>133</sup> After the Iranian successful offensive against Iraq, the US shifted its neutral policy in favour of Baghdad following the Reagan's view of the ME formulated in the 1982 National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM 4-82): Iraq was removed from the State Department's list of states supporting international terrorism and in 1984 formal relations with Iraq were restored providing Iraq with financial assistance through American and international loan programs. See Joyce Battle (ed.) 2003: Shaking Hands with Saddam Hussein: The U.S. Tilts toward Iraq 1980-1984, avail. at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB82/>

politically relevant position in the shaping of new alliances, in particular, with out of region powers that were likely to emerge in central Asia such as that effectively instated in Afghanistan with the Taliban regime in 1992<sup>134</sup>.

Nevertheless, in the specific case of the Iraqi regime –whose political tradition is grounded on a laic form of sovereignty<sup>135</sup>- European mainstream countries would have remained the preferential out-of-region auditors and allies.

Such an alliance could have undermined the US role of leadership in strategic and security matters. In the wake of the “new world order” a weak Iraq searching for support in new alliances could represent a threat to the US politics of hegemony in the region.

In the event, the objective of the second Gulf war was not yet the change of regime in Baghdad, but the containment of a threat until such a time when the global circumstances and new regional alliances would have permitted a better solution to the problem.

The second Gulf war, therefore, was organized in order to also serve this long-term goal. For the first time since the beginning of the Cold War, the American administration was able to pool together an international coalition against Iraq under the aegis of the US.

At the same time, the scheme of military intervention produced the extraordinary result of reversing the alliance system in the ME by bringing Israel and Arab states together on one side against a common enemy<sup>136</sup>. The military intervention against Iraq in 1991 softened the terms of regional fragmentation –an old dilemma for the US in the region<sup>137</sup>-

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<sup>134</sup> For Iran the establishment of the Taliban regime has been a victory in the aftermath of the Cold War: Fred Halliday, *Western Europe and the Iranian Revolution*, in Roberson (ed.) 1997: op. cit., 137.

<sup>135</sup> See Helen Chapin Metz (ed.) 1988: *The Iraqi Communists and Baathist Iraq*, U.S. Library of Congress in <http://countrystudies.us/iraq/113.htm>.

<sup>136</sup> Walid Khalidi 1991: *The Gulf Crisis: Origins and Consequences*, 5-28.

<sup>137</sup> For almost fifty years three fundamental aspects have characterized the range of US interests in ME: Soviet containment, support for Israel and Gulf oil resources; politically speaking these last two can be translated in that paramount dilemma limiting the US foreign policy in ME for overcoming the which the

and the US leadership showed itself to have the capacity to form a multilateral front for which Arab countries and Israel could share the same interest in containing a key regional player.

## **2.2 From containment to enlargement**

The identification of a common threat in the region has been central to the American approach to ME politics not only in the exceptional context of the multilateral coalition of the second Gulf war but, above all, in the policy pursued in the aftermath of the war.

The formal failure of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process at Camp David gave the green light to reopen a new round of instability in the region which ultimately led to the second *Intifada* in September 2000.

However, long before the *Intifada* started, the US administration had already defined the dual containment strategy presented in 1993, in which Iraq and Iran were identified as principal enemies in the region: *As the sole superpower, the United States has a special responsibility for developing a strategy to neutralize, contain and, through selective pressure we maintain alliances and deploy military capabilities sufficient to deter or respond to any aggressive act.. We seek to contain the influence of these states sometimes by isolation... The United States is also actively engaged in unilateral and multilateral efforts to restrict their military and technological capabilities*<sup>138</sup>.

The dual containment policy proved essential to following the line of continuity marked by American administrations in the 90s until the strategy entered into a new phase in 2003. The strategy, above all, sought to redefine a global system of alliances

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regional peace process, for example, was strongly supported and initiated by Nixon and Kissinger. Michael C. Hudson 1996: *To play the Hegemon: 50 years of U.S. policy toward the Middle East*, 329.

<sup>138</sup> Anthony Lake (Advisor in the Clinton's Administration) 1994: *Confronting Backlash States*, 45-55.

under US leadership: *There are few "backlash" states: Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Libya. They lack the resources of a superpower... These nations exhibit a chronic inability to engage constructively with the outside world, and they do not function effectively in alliances...*<sup>139</sup>.

The American policy of the 90s, far from aiming at pursuing regional stability, had the specific objective of enhancing general conditions of uncertainty especially in the borders of the region throughout the substantial pressure exercised by the sanctions policy against Iraq and the progressive weakening of the Saddam regime<sup>140</sup>. The steady pressure exercised against the Iranian regime was also an important factor here.

In both cases, the mainstream EU countries' willingness to normalize relations with the two regimes was obstructive to the US policy of isolation.

Moreover, inherent to the containment policy is the outcome regarding military resources important to deploying the strategy on the ground and, thus, underlining key factors driving the dynamics of the extension of support and alliances in the region. After the *Desert Storm* operation, while containment intensified the need for a stronger military presence in the Gulf, traditional US allies in the region were facing domestic economic difficulties especially as a consequence of the war expenditures<sup>141</sup>.

In that context, the US focused its policy on the necessity of extending support in order to face wider military posture and expenses. This led to the joint contribution of Egypt, Turkey and Israel, although their support was softer than that given by the

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<sup>139</sup> Lake 1994: art. cit. 50.

<sup>140</sup> Eric Watkins 1997: *The Unfolding US Policy in the ME*, 1-14.

<sup>141</sup> Austerity programs were introduced by most of Gulf States and particularly by Saudi Arabia. Elaine Sciolino and Eric Schmidt 1994: *Saudi Arabia, its Purse Thinner, Learns How to Say "No" to United States*, New York Times: 4 November.

GCC<sup>142</sup>. The extraordinary result of bringing together Arabs countries on one side and Israel on the other under US leadership was not an extemporaneous objective limited to the 1990-91 war emergencies therefore.

The war has been the exception initiating a gradual and steady plan for enlarging the alliance front in the region against Iraq - and not secondarily against Iran. Thus, the status of containment in the post-war context has granted the maintenance and intensification of the same principle at the basis of American internationalism after the end of the Cold War: redesign a new space of alliances and power relations in a bigger region, from Egypt to Turkey in one direction, and from Afghanistan to Iraq in the other.

In this regard, although the pursuit of the dual containment policy had to face difficulties especially with respect to budgetary issues, it has functioned as a successful framework for intensifying Israeli-Turkish military ties in particular between 1996 and 1997<sup>143</sup>.

Indeed, mainstream EU countries have especially criticized the dual containment policy, underlining the costs and risks in pursuing a policy destabilising the whole system of alliances, and that finally had to be measured by the relative interests of regional key-actors<sup>144</sup>.

While the EU was advancing its project of eastward enlargement, the European unhappiness for the American policy of regional destabilization in the ME reached a

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<sup>142</sup> This policy was initiated soon after the end of the Gulf war by the President ME advisor Martin Indyk. Martin Indyk 1993: *The Clinton Administration Approach at the Middle East*.

<sup>143</sup> Marr 1997: art. cit. 77.

<sup>144</sup> See for example the most difficult position of Egypt, whose willingness to enhance its role among Gulf States was also limited by the reluctance to pursue a strong policy weakening Iraq vis-à-vis Iran. Z. Brzezinski, B. Scowcroft, R. Murphy 1997: *Differentiated Containment*, 20-30.

climax when it became evident that the time for a multilateral approach of post-Cold War politics, granted by G. Bush Senior in 1990, was over.

With respect to the US aim of weakening the Iraqi regime, the sanctions policy has been at the core of intense criticism both in Europe and also in the US. In particular, the American school of realism has explored the problem from two perspectives, one examining the necessity to cut high budgetary expenses for maintaining the policy, and the other concerning the risk of further alienating governments, leaving the regime in place however<sup>145</sup>.

Moreover, since the mid 90s, economic sanctions became increasingly costly especially with respect to diplomatic pressure that US policy –strongly supported by the UK- has encountered in world public opinion. Dramatic consequences derived both from the use of uranium during the war and the prolonged economic embargo on civilians deprived even of basic medical equipment<sup>146</sup> have not produced a softening of the American approach towards the containment policy however. Even the attempt to reduce the impacts of the embargo through the Oil for Food Program was revealed to be a scandalous failure<sup>147</sup>.

On the contrary, the containment policy by weakening Iraq above all weakened the power of the UN and prevented the multilateral body from being effective in the management and solution of international crises, a task for which the organization was

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<sup>145</sup> Richard N. Haass 1997: *Sanctioning Madness*, 6.

<sup>146</sup> John Pilger 2002: *The new rulers of the world*, 51ss.

<sup>147</sup> Involving both UN staff and European politicians, moreover, the U.N. Oil For Food program suggests that there was never a serious possibility of getting Security Council support for military action because influential people in Russia and France were getting paid off by Saddam: *The Washington Times Editorial 2004: The U.N. Oil for Food scandal*, *Washington Times*: 22 March at <http://www.washtimes.com/op-ed/20040321-101405-2593r.htm> *Washington Post* 28 January 1999.

supposed to be not just the preferential instrument, but which served as its key reason for existing.<sup>148</sup>

While in 1998, UNSCOM had officially declared Iraq's biological and nuclear weapons program dismantled,<sup>149</sup> the UN, which was entitled to govern the tool of sanctions, became ungovernable after a series of high-profile resignations<sup>150</sup> gave way to the final earthquake in 2002-3.

Considering that during the Cold War, the US was able to maintain a certain predominance in the politics of the Security Council<sup>151</sup>, it is worth noting that the progressive –or better the retrogressive- role of the crisis inside the UN institution evolved in parallel to the progressive escalation of American unilateralism that ultimately characterised the nature of the Third Gulf war.

The UN crisis is relevant especially because it frames the core elements of continuity in the US strategy from the second toward the third Gulf war, particularly in relation to the interests of European mainstream countries vis-à-vis their approach to an “inclusive solution” of the “Iraqi problem”.

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<sup>148</sup> The UN crisis and the harsh debate on reforms are still open: after the Millennium Declaration (2000) the United Nations World Summit (September 2005) intended to review progress including, among others, the “new” issue regarding the UN reform that previously General Secretary Kofi Annan already had called for in the report “In larger Freedom”. The outcome document is considered very weak under many issues: Proposals to widen the Security Council are blocked because no one can agree on who should join and what happens to the veto. Plans to strengthen the right to intervene to prevent genocide are being resisted because of fears that the US would use them to invade wherever it pleased. Clare Short 2005: *Depression and Mistrust Prevail at the UN*, *The Independent Thursday*: 15 September..

<sup>149</sup> Pilger 2002: op cit. 59.

<sup>150</sup> Pilger 2002: op. cit. ibid.

<sup>151</sup> For a realistic approach at the UN charter and its power's system see A. Ross's analysis of the Charter contra an idealistic-normative tradition: Carl Landauer 2003: *Antinomies of the United Nations*; Hans Kelsen and Alf Ross on the Charter, 767–799. During the Cold War USSR's patterns of obstructionism through veto system did not impeded a certain predominance of the US politics in the Security Council; see in particular the UN approval of the intervention in Korea with which the UN endeavours the US doctrine of containment. C. Bown and P. J. Mooney 1987: *Cold War to Détente 1945-85*, 46-56.



When France, representing the political interests shared by European core countries in 1998, began intensifying requests for softening sanctions against Iraq, it was clear that the objective was to normalize relations with Iraq. From the EU perspective, such relations were important not just for commercial reasons, but also in terms of political benefits and contextual stability essential to the Union project in the region.

With respect to the growth of transatlantic divergences and political competition – especially in the management of security issues in the ME - an important aspect has been the definition of a kind of special national interest, which emerged in the US rhetoric and practice during the period between the two main wars against Iraq. This interest involved the consolidation of exceptionality as a rule granting the US the possibility of withdrawing from any multilateral agreement<sup>152</sup>, because it obstructed the traditional strategy of enlargement.

In this light, the war against Iraq in 2003 cannot be considered solely as the evidence of a change of the dual containment strategy, but rather its intensification and subsequent end, for which the definitive elimination of the regime and, in parallel, the intensification of pressure against Iran became a solution to the political competition with the role of the EU in the ME.

Finally, in both cases, divergences with EU countries became indicative of an important degree of competition not only with respect to the means (for very different traditions of political schools) but with respect to the aims of relative geopolitical priorities for expansion. In the environment immediately following the end of the Cold

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<sup>152</sup> The US has withdrawn from ABM Treaty in 2001, from the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court in 2002 and the Bush Administration, in particular, has rejected the convention on the Prohibition of Landmines, refusing to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts: [www.hrw.org/press/2002/05/icc0506.htm](http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/05/icc0506.htm)

War, an isolated but still potentially powerful Iraq searching for new support was viewed as a challenge to the US aims of redistributing alliances from the ME to the Eurasian region. At the beginning of the 21st century, a fragile Iraq weakened by almost ten years of sanctions and bombings also became a threat to US national security. Following the logic of deterrence in the use of force, one may consider that if the regime in Baghdad would have had military capabilities to the point where it became a serious challenge to the US, there would not have been the possibility of engaging in military intervention inside the Iraqi territory.

Not surprisingly, official explanations of the Bush administration's main goals in Iraq have appeared contradictory. The US President and the Secretary of State C. Powell took the line that fulfilling UN resolutions for Iraqi disarmament would also change the nature of the Iraqi regime<sup>153</sup> while senior American officials, including Vice-President Richard Cheney and Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, showed great scepticism that weapons inspections could ever provide enough assurance of Iraqi disarmament to make an invasion unnecessary<sup>154</sup>.

For the Iraqi regime the fact of being too weak in practice while being potentially a key ally for out of region players, put the regime in a highly unfavourable position from the perspective of the new world order's objectives for enlarging the US sphere of influence from the ME to Eurasia.

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<sup>153</sup> Bush speech at Cincinnati, av. at <http://news.cincinnati.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article.htm>; See also Colin Powell 2002: Disarmament, Not Hussein's Removal, Is Top U.S. Priority on Iraq', The Washington Post: 20 October.

<sup>154</sup> In August 2002, Cheney argued that A return of inspectors would provide no assurance whatsoever of [Saddam's] compliance with UN resolutions. On the contrary, there is a great danger that it would provide false comfort that Saddam was somehow back in his box (from Cheney's speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, in In Cheney's Words: The Administration Case for Removing Saddam Hussein, New York Times: 27 August 2002); similarly Rumsfeld questioned whether inspections could ever contain Iraq's pursuit of WMD (testimony to the Hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, 18 September 2002, quoted in Anthony Lewis 2002: Bush and Iraq, 4-6.

### **2.3 Geopolitics of the Third Gulf War: Establishing a New World Order**

At least three main classes of explanations are given in identifying the reasons for which the US administration opted for military intervention against Iraq in March 2003.

(1) The first theory explains the war as necessary in answering to the global threat of terrorism. This explanation refers to official discourses that, especially after September 11, characterize declarations and documents produced in the framework of the American national security policy. At the beginning of 2002, Iraq was identified as part of a red wire connecting Iran and North Korea in the axis of evil<sup>155</sup>. Just after the war started and one year after the attack of September 11, a first document was produced identifying three global challenges to US national security: terrorist organizations, the threat of WMD and the challenge represented by “Rogue States”<sup>156</sup>. In summary, the war against Iraq became, in this view, unavoidable because Saddam Hussein’s regime was considered a source of support for the activities of international terrorist organizations threatening US national security, such as the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and al-Qaeda network involved in the Twin Towers attacks. Therefore, the (supposed) acquisition of WMD by the regime in Baghdad was central in the evaluation of challenges to US national security represented by the Iraqi regime. While this theory is relevant with respect to the ideological values that characterise the “soul” of American internationalism after the

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<sup>155</sup> See the Bush’s speech on Axis of Evil: President Delivers State of the Union Address (January) 2002, av. at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>

<sup>156</sup> US National Security Strategy (September) 2002: Rogue states doctrine, at [www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html); commented by John Ikenberry 2002: America’s Imperial Ambition, 44-60.

demise of the communist threat<sup>157</sup> it lacks concrete adherence to the facts however. Even considering the always ambiguous gap between the quality of information provided by national security institutions and the identification of aims in national security<sup>158</sup>, the supposed ties between Saddam's regime, global terrorism and the attacks of September 11 have undoubtedly remained the object of supposition<sup>159</sup> while evidences for the presence of WMD in Iraq has never been provided<sup>160</sup>. All in all, a kind of strategy for overextending media information has gained a certain success in creating confusion as to the evaluation of the realistic threat when the question of proof against the Iraqi Regime came into focus. This perspective of analysis offers the opportunity to look at one issue, among others, which is important not firstly for the outcomes related to the status of international law but also to the strategic meaning of the US policy of interventionism.

One of the principal aspects stemming from the circumstances, in fact, is that the third Gulf war opened a crisis in the practice of the *jus ad bellum*. The right to attack a nation-state in self-defence has been "adapted" to the Bush's administration's need -and

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<sup>157</sup> For a clear prospect of this ideological substitution communism/Islamic threat see the Thatcher's article: Margaret Thatcher 2002: Advice to a Superpower, The New York Times: February 11; Toby Harnden 2002: Thatcher urges Bush to 'finish business of Iraq', The Daily Telegraph: 12 February, at <http://www.news.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml>

<sup>158</sup> The misleading use of erroneous information has produced one of the most serious crises for the US Presidency: see the CIA leak scandal Gate Previously same kind of scandal had invested the UK's leadership that, however, has been able to overcome the parliamentary crisis. The September Dossier Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government The scandal, nevertheless, sow the BBC journalist involved in the affair loosing his life: Searle Sennett, Stephen Frost, David Halpin 2005: Our doubts about Dr Kelly's suicide, The Guardian: 27 January; Joseph C. Wilson 2003: What I Didn't Find in Africa, The New York Times: 6 July; Tanya N. Ballard and Kevin Dumouchelle 2005: Key Players in the Plame Affair, Washington Post: 20 October.

<sup>159</sup> Among others, see the misuse of evidences made in the book The War against America: Saddam Hussein and the World Trade Centre Attacks, supporting the theory that links Saddam to the attack of September 11, reviewed by J. S. Yaphé 2004: Iraq Considered, 295; Laurie Mylroie, The War against America: Saddam Hussein and the World Trade: A Study of Revenge, HarperCollins 2001.

<sup>160</sup> To the CIA gate is connected the "Nigerian Affair" with which the US administration -together with the Italian security services- is involved in production of false documents in order to prove Saddam's attempts at acquiring from Nigeria the necessary instrument for WMD. See the series of articles issued between September and December 2005 by Panorama and La Repubblica, in particular: Carlo Bonini and Giuseppe D'Avanzo 2005: Roma sapeva dal 2003 che non c'erano super-armi, La Repubblica: 1 Novembre; Bonini and D'Avanzo 2005: Nigergate, riparte l'inchiesta, La Repubblica: 8 December.

advantage?- to territorialize a kind of asymmetric war (for which high military technology is opposed to unreachable networks) that could not be territorial because of the nature of the groups acting through trans-national network systems<sup>161</sup>.

These groups, in fact, remain non-state actors without aspirations for territorial sovereignty, and this substantial point makes them and their aims very different from resistance movements historically tied to specific territorial identity and acting under the goal of national independence.

Indeed, the identification of a sovereign regime on an equal basis with the activities of non-state actors has also favoured the media policy that the Israeli PM A. Sharon has pursued with particular success in the politics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, leading to the progressive isolation of the Palestinian leadership during the second *Intifada*<sup>162</sup>. Nevertheless, if there was a tie between the Saddam regime and non-state actors, this was limited to the dynamics of regional politics and the specific case of financial support given to Palestinian resistance movements especially in the course of the first *Intifada*<sup>163</sup>.

(2) The focus on the context of ME politics introduces the second class of explanations. Here, on the one side, the security of Israel is seen as main reason for intervening against Iraq, in that the Saddam regime is one of the historical enemies of Israel in the region.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> See Habermas 2005 (2004): op. cit. 87ss.

<sup>162</sup> And, of course, to the weakening of its party with its laic tradition; The Israeli strategy for isolating Arafat and weakening the political force of the PNA by the use of media propaganda has started since the negative development of the Camp David negotiations after which the responsibility for its failure has been in toto attributed to the Palestinian leadership: see Helga Baumgarten 2003: *The Myth of Camp David and the Distortion of the Palestinian Narrative*.

<sup>163</sup> Iraq until 1982 was included in the US State Department's list of states supporting international terrorism because of its ties with non Islamist Palestinian nationalist groups. After the uprising of the first Intifada (December 1987), funds to Palestinians were pledged by all Arab governments as political result of the meeting of Arab FMs in Tunis on January 1988. Lamis Andoni 1988: *Solid Arab backing*, 7-8.

<sup>164</sup> Dore Gold 2004: *Wartime Witch Hunt: Blaming Israel for the Iraq War*, at <http://www.jcpa.org/brief/brief3-25.htm>.

On the other side, the pressure exercised by Jewish lobbies inside US domestic politics<sup>165</sup> is also considered as a leading factor in the war.

Both of these perspectives –one regional and the other domestic- produce elements enlightening the significant conjunction of US and Israeli national interests<sup>166</sup> rooted in the history of the Jewish State since the shaping of a defined foreign policy looking at tied relations with the US as a principal out-of-region power indispensable to the survival of the nation in the ME<sup>167</sup>.

This analysis, nevertheless, is supported by historical patterns: the second Gulf war halted the flux of financial support arriving from the Gulf region and deprived the Palestinians of their remaining, principal supporter still left in the region after the Egyptian-Israeli bilateral agreement at Camp Davis in 1979<sup>168</sup>. Subsequent to the weakening of the regime in Baghdad, the overall situation facilitated the opening of the peace process leading to the Oslo Declaration of Principles that was particularly

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<sup>165</sup> Jewish-Americans count the 30% electorate for presidential elections; however, the most interesting factor is the emerging of a political force represented by the new alliance between the Jewish and rightwing Christians. Tony Smith 200: Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Policy.

<sup>166</sup> A recent study of John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt 2006: The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy, av. at [www.lrb.co.uk](http://www.lrb.co.uk).

<sup>167</sup> After the end of Israeli-URSS countries relations – such as Czechoslovakia- Ben Gurion was the first to open the path for a privileged relation with the US (Rabinovich Itamar 1991: Early Arab-Israeli negotiations). With the end of the Cold War and after the second Gulf war, the substance of the Israeli-US alliance is not changed although the perception of common threats in the region induced to different terminology as stated by the Israeli Gen. Shlomo Gazit, former head of Military Intelligence and West Bank Administrator, in 1992: “after the Cold War Israel's main task has not changed at all... Its location at the centre of the Arab Muslim Middle East predestines Israel to be a devoted guardian of the existing regimes: to prevent or halt the processes of radicalization and to block the expansion of fundamentalist religious zealotry”: quoted in Noam Chomsky 1996: The Middle East Settlement: Its Sources and Contours, in *Power and Prospects*, 165.

<sup>168</sup> The Gulf War severely weakened the PLO already suffering from having lost financial and diplomatic support from the USSR; Gulf monarchies expelled more than 400,000 Palestinian workers, whose remittances to their families in the territories and refugee camps had been essential to Palestinian economic life. Paul D'Amato 2001: U.S. Intervention in the Middle East: Blood for Oil, in [www.isreview.org/issues/15/blood\\_for\\_oil.shtml](http://www.isreview.org/issues/15/blood_for_oil.shtml).

favourable to the Israeli side<sup>169</sup>. Although the theory rightly assumes that the elimination of the Saddam regime was a common objective of the national security policies of both Israel and US, there is no need to assume that the conjunction of national interests also determined a superpowers' choices to be dependent on a relatively weak actor whose political strength is, on the contrary, tied to the alliance with the US and not the opposite<sup>170</sup>.

(3) A third explanation is provided by the traditional imperialistic school -as well as its post-modern branch- assuming that control of Iraqi oil resources is the principal goal driving the American policy of military intervention in Iraq. This kind of analysis, however, by reducing the aims of the third Gulf war to the control of Iraq's energy resources is simplistic and misses, above all, the important focus on the strategic global issues characterising the system of international relations especially after the crisis of the Soviet sphere of alliances. Nevertheless, the relevance of Iraqi resources has to be kept in great consideration if framed in the range of means with an essential role as a source of national (for the Iraqi capabilities) and global power (for US leadership).

Although each of these theories provides the analysis with elements that may have played a role in the making of US politics leading to the occupation of Iraq in 2003, they do not offer alone the possibility of coordinating a set of factors characterizing the meaning of the third Gulf crisis. Such a theory would connect these recent events with those that emerged previously under a homogeneous theoretical framework considering

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<sup>169</sup> For harsh critic to the map of the Oslo Peace Process see Edward Said 2000: *The end of the Peace Process Oslo and After*.

<sup>170</sup> Israel's choices, for instance, are not always in line with US interests and preferences in specific contest critical for the success of American policy in the region: in particular during the second Gulf crisis, when Saddam opted for political linkage of Gulf-Arab/Palestinian security - the massacre of the Temple Mount (8 October 1990) enlightened a source of persistent tension in US-Israeli relations. See Avi Shlaim 2001 (2000): *The Iron Wall. Israel and the Arab World*, 476ss.

of two different levels of analysis, regional/global and ideological/strategic. This approach would explain a fundamental linkage between ideological and material outcomes through the identification of geopolitical interests. In this way, the range of the US interests in the ME are defined with respect to a space of power having reached a form in which the four traditional sources of national power (economic, political, ideological, and diplomatic) are all considered and homogeneously integrated.

The importance of space, in fact, is central to our discourse because it includes a fifth element that deeply characterises the dynamics of global politics since the demise of the Soviet empire. Instead of nuclear age's futures, the relevance of the geographic factor is revived in light of its relation with the emergence of new political entities, both national and regional. This is particularly evident from the fact that with the emergence of independent political spaces in central and west Eurasia the purely realistic game of alliances has regained vitality. Moreover, with the attempts to shape a EU political identity enlarged to its eastern borders, factors of political antagonism between global players has also reappeared, together with competition over strategic goals for the expansion of the respective spheres of influence.

#### *The new world order: Economics*

At the end of the 90s, experts of EU-US relations focused attention on the unequal division of roles and tasks that was growing between transatlantic partners in the ME. For instance, the situation saw European countries increasing their profits from trade relations



with the region, while the US was assuming major responsibility for defence by covering the costs of military presence in the Gulf<sup>171</sup>.

The total amount of US commercial interests with these countries was lower than that of the Union countries. In 1995 for example, while Western Europe imported 5.5 million barrels of oil daily (bpd) from MENA countries, the US imported 1.8 million bpd. European trade with the Middle East also exceeds that of the US. EU exports amounted to 18% of all its exports to developing countries while US exports amounted to 8.8%<sup>172</sup>.

Given this disparity, bringing advantages to the EU and placing burdens on the US, some analysts predicted that the American administration would have called for security costs to be shared with the EU to a greater extent<sup>173</sup>.

Yet, facts have demonstrated that while the EU advanced requests for more sharing in decision-making on security issues<sup>174</sup>, the US has clearly shown its preference for keeping decisional control over strategic matters, and being able to rely on its own supremacy in military capabilities that allow unilateral action<sup>175</sup>.

This choice, however, considerably increases the burdens of military expenditures and consequently, also negatively affect the US national deficit. In 2004, after one year of war in Iraq, the US trade deficit reached the historical high of 5.3 % of GNP<sup>176</sup>.

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<sup>171</sup> For the costs of military presence in the Gulf see Martin Van Creveld 2006: Costly Withdrawal Is the Price To Be Paid for a Foolish War, at <http://www.forward.com/articles/6936>.

<sup>172</sup> EU imports from the region represents 15% of imports from developing countries, while US imports represented only 6%. Data from Europe and Israel: Where Politics and Economics Do Not Meet, at [www.adl.org/international/EU-2-EuropeMiddleEast.asp](http://www.adl.org/international/EU-2-EuropeMiddleEast.asp).

<sup>173</sup> Marr 1997: art. cit. 98.

<sup>174</sup> See France in the UN: above Chapter 1: 4, Challenges to a European security strategy from the Iraqi crisis.

<sup>175</sup> American troops in the Gulf are structurally organized for the eventuality to act alone: Department of Defence 1997: Annual Report to the President and the Congress.

<sup>176</sup> Equal to 618 billion of dollars, while in the same year the balance also reached the 3,6% of GNP. The US deficit, to which experts refer as the “twin deficits” (trade and balance of payment) has become “structural” to American economy that, in practice, is based on the subsistence of financial international

In parallel, the “Euro-dollar war” has become the mirror where the structural weakness of American system of production is reflected not only at the expense of the European economy, but even at the challenge of intra-European political dialogue for shaping a stable system of welfare within the Union<sup>177</sup>.

Indeed, if American national security policy after September 11 and during the war in Iraq have considerably enhanced the costs of the military budget on the one side,<sup>178</sup> on the other, the striking deficit making the dollar so weak on the international market is the easiest answer to affording military expenditures by maintaining a good standard of living and ultimately, by placing the burden of real production on European Union countries<sup>179</sup>.

This strategy is not without risks because the “survival” of such a system depends on the continuity of international investments which is making the US economy more and more dependent on Chinese and Japanese investors and governmental banks<sup>180</sup>.

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investments. Nevertheless, Bush administration has inherited a exceeding balance from his predecessor Clinton. See Ibrahim Warde 2005: High Price of the Cheap Dollar, *Le Monde Diplomatique*: March 2005.

<sup>177</sup> American analysts have transported the core of the debate about dollar’s weakness from economic issues (inherent to a problematic American economy) into choices of political economy that Union countries are warmly suggested part to take: “The long term solution to this (the strong Euro) is for these countries to move to a privatized, fully funded pension system ... and abandon the public sector pension systems originally invented by German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who now threatens to damage Europe in the 21st Century by this invention as much as he damaged it in the 20th by his other invention of a militarized German super-state”: *Washington Times* 2003: 21 December, at [www.washtimes.com/upi-breaking](http://www.washtimes.com/upi-breaking).

<sup>178</sup> Costs of the war are increased especially by the costs for reconstruction, estimated at \$30 billion dollars: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments 2003: Potential Cost of a War With Iraq and Its Post-War Occupation, at [www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com).

<sup>179</sup> Warde 2005: art. cit. 6.

<sup>180</sup> A further stage characterizes the international economic structure emerging in the 21century: Asian giants such as China and India are threatening preferential western market of oil in ME. With respect to these changes, the US economy result more and more dependent from external economic trend especially from Chinese and Japanese policies: the capacity to conduct war unilaterally in case of fierce competitive circumstance may result essential to US national interests. The objective is to replace in the future the shortage of financial capital that till now Asian economies have provided to cover the growing American deficit caused by the discrepancy between low capacity of production and high rates of consumption in US society. Assured by foreign economies the flow of capital to US, for its nature, is already instable and not automatically under US control. Warde 2005: art. cit. 7.

However, these risks seems more apparent than real and they open the margins for a “balanced” -although under many respects ambiguous- relation with a global competitor such as China which is the other important player on the East side of the Eurasian game of alliances after the EU on the west.

It may be said that the structure of the American economy is not that of a traditional economy of production but a model of “military economy” organized in such a way as to serve the necessity of using the powerful military machinery as an instrument of power in the planning of a global strategy of hegemony while the traditional system of production is left to other economies.

#### *The concept of order. Politics*

In modern political thought, the concept of order is related to the concept of sovereignty. National sovereign power is founded on the relationship between space and people inside determined territorial borders; the stronger this relationship is, the more stable the sovereign power. The third Gulf war has deepened a kind of crisis that, by directly affecting the relationship between the Iraqi territory and its people, it indirectly affects the concept of sovereignty in international relations. Two elements concur in the nature of this crisis: the change of the Iraqi regime as a specific aim of the third Gulf war and the American politics of unilateralism.

The structure of American military forces in the Gulf was set to provide “the capability to act unilaterally if necessary”<sup>181</sup>. The US, in theory and practice, is the only country that can lead military intervention unilaterally. If the US administration had the specific goal

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<sup>181</sup> US Forces Defence Department Report 1997 quoted in Marr 1997: art. cit. 74.

of dismissing the regime in Baghdad acting against the principle of sovereignty<sup>182</sup>, unilateralism was the only way to reach this aim.

The third Gulf war serves to consolidate the US position in the new world order based on the centrality and authority of its role as the sole superpower capable of acting unilaterally after having carried out a series of military interventions in this direction.

Although neoconservatives in the US explain that invading Iraq is a first step towards creating a democratized and ‘better’ Middle East<sup>183</sup>, the illegitimate and unilateral war is a way, firstly, of consolidating the legitimacy of a unilateral approach when the circumstances of self-defence were not in place, and secondly, of weakening the multilateral instrument of the UN in which the veto system outside of the Cold War bloc became an obstacle to US interests.

Thus, hegemonic behaviour, especially through the future of unilateralism, characterizes the aims of the intervention in Iraq in March 2003.

### *The concept of order. Ideology*

The decision to solve the Iraqi crisis with military intervention was put into practice after a long diplomatic battle at the UN (1998-2002-2003). In the end, in order to answer to the absence of evidence motivating military intervention against a sovereign state, the US administration produced a package of ideological arguments serving a new policy of “pre-emptive-automatic intervention”, also used in the related cases of Afghanistan and Iraq. A formal policy was presented only in 2004, that is, three years after September 11.

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<sup>182</sup> Different are the circumstances of the intervention in Afghanistan, for which the US could provide the international community with more defined proves that allowed the US the practice of its right of defence. See Habermas 2005 (2004): op. cit. 43.

<sup>183</sup> A good example of neo-cons thinking about the issue see: Ronald D. Asmus and Kenneth M. Pollack 2002: The New Transatlantic Project, Policy Review, October/November.

The doctrine of pre-emptive war introduces a new codex of jus ad bellum the rules of which are difficult to imagine at the disposal of any other nation out of the military support and political approval of the ideological father of the doctrine. The expression “with us or against us”<sup>184</sup>, in fact, runs in parallel to the basic source of the pre-emptive norm for which the principle has become “kill in order not be killed”, a reversal image of a social norm calling for “do not kill in order not be killed”.

The order established by the doctrine of preventive war is, therefore, selective and hierarchical in practice<sup>185</sup>. Its theorization calls for an unconventional war against an unconventional threat and, indeed, is the cornerstone reversing the power relations with other global actors and components of the IR structure.

The XXI century American ideology for world geo-political supremacy has to pass through the annihilation of the UN balancing role and the restoring of a full and factual balance of national powers. This comes together with the containment of the regional hegemonic tendency of others and the prevention of new alliances hostile to US interests.

In this respect, by citing military intervention in the arbitrary evaluation of threat and its elimination as the main reason for the preventive war allows an aggressive policy justified by the search for new ideological spaces of national survival<sup>186</sup>, a strategy that brings to mind the bellicose narrative in the pre-World War II period in Europe<sup>187</sup>.

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<sup>184</sup> Bush’s speech at the UN, January 2003: av. at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/news /releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html)

<sup>185</sup> In the analysis developed by the Historian and Political Scientist Emmanuel Todd the US social structure shows itself to be progressively oriented toward a oligarchic order and inequality system; in his theory this domestic phenomenon has great part in explaining the US progressive withdraw from multilateralism and the search for a special position within the system of IR throughout unilateralism and militarism. Emmanuel Todd 2003: *After the Empire: The Breakdown of the American Order*, 33.

<sup>186</sup> National values are extended and applied to universal dimension.

<sup>187</sup> Although to westerns –European- experience it may appear excessive, the American preventive war has facilitated a widespread view in the Arab world of an existing analogy between Bush junior’s and Hitler’s approach at relations among nations. A series of articles issued by Egyptian mainstream –and not- press is a

It is possible to see, in fact, some structural similarities of world politics between the post-Cold War period and the pre-World War II period, that is, when the failure of a multilateral framework and the emergence of a too-powerful nation broke up the system of balance between European states-empires. The main characteristic of our contemporary circumstances, however, is that the space of the conflict is rigorously transported outside of Western borders.

From this perspective, it is also worth underlining the presence of the anti-Semitic elements dominant in the ideology of self-defence and “pre-emptive war” during both periods -first the Jewish-Hebrew and then the Arab-Muslims<sup>188</sup> - serving as a source of political power in building the alliances’ system and retaining a dominant position within it<sup>189</sup>.

The relative innovation of US strategy in promoting a new world order, therefore, is not the identification of terrorism as a threat for global security<sup>190</sup> but the use of ethnic-religious futures to construct an internationally valid ideology because without sovereign borders and thus it results functional to assure a system of tied alliances extendible to all fronts of world politics, including those countries also ruled by Islamic government such as, for example, Pakistan.

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comprehensive example: comparing U.S. President George W. Bush's policy to Adolf Hitler's Nazism: Amin Huweidi (former Egyptian Minister of War) 2003: Nazism Threatens the World Anew, *Al-Ahali*: February 3; Kamal Abd Al-Raouf 2002: Rumsfeld is a new Hitler, *Al-Yom*: August 17; describing the treatment of the Al-Qa'ida and Taliban prisoners as “worse than prisoners under the Nazis” see: Anis Mansour 2002: America is Worse than Hitler, *Al-Ahram*: January 26, at <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi/>.

<sup>188</sup> The perception of Islamic activities connected with the religion or with intra-minority relations (such as charity networks) gives space to the most common anti-Semitic topics (as “the danger of being conquest by them”, “the growing power of Islamic networks” that works as reach lobbies etc...): Exemplar compound of the use of these anti-Semitic propaganda see Orianna Fallaci 2002: *Race and Pride*.

<sup>189</sup> For the political role had by anti-Semitism in the Third Reich policy of expansion and hegemony by requesting allies to submit at the same ideology and laws see Hannah Arendt 1991 (1963): *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 299ss.

<sup>190</sup> For example, during Reagan’s presidency terrorism has been also central issue in international security. However, for the well known contradictions in Regan’s fight against the Evil Empire see Eqbal Ahmad 2001: *Terrorism. Theirs and Ours*, Open Media Pamphlet Series, Seven Stories Press, New York.

Nevertheless, an absolute novelty of the approach lies in a synthesis of different traditions of American foreign policy. Under the Bush Junior presidency, the US policy refers, in theory, to the liberal school of Wilson tradition and, in practice, acts in line with the neo-conservative approach to international relations<sup>191</sup>.

Thus, the US administration has re-articulated an American doctrine of foreign policy since 1993 when the “doctrine of enlargement and re-regulation” was announced<sup>192</sup>. This approach was based on the view that the doctrine of containment should be followed by the “doctrine of enlargement”: enlargement of the world's free community of market democracies.

In that the US was the victor of the Cold War, *enlarging democracy* came to qualify a paramount American interest essential in the restructuring of the international relations and alliances system after the collapse of the communist block.

Shared interests for democratic values, political freedom and free markets are the complementary level of the political ideology on which alliances with other Western powers are historically grounded since the beginning of the Cold War, through the strategy of containment applied in the ME with the Truman doctrine<sup>193</sup>.

Under many regards, principal outcomes of the Cold War are still in place especially with respect to an ideology based on the spread of traditional free market and democratic values complemented, nevertheless, by the new futures inherent in the logic of pre-emptive war.

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<sup>191</sup> “The problem for the Bush junior administration was that it thought and acted like Nixon, but borrowed the rhetoric of Wilson and Carter”: Joseph S. Nye 1992: What New World Order?, at [www.foreignaffairs.org/1992/2.html](http://www.foreignaffairs.org/1992/2.html).

<sup>192</sup> Statement of the National Security Adviser Anthony Lake's, September 1993.

<sup>193</sup> The necessity to contain Soviet tendency to expansionism as it is well known was first formulated by Kennan. G. Kennan's Telegram to President Truman and the president speech on US leadership of a free world on 12 March 1947.

On the eve of the invasion of Iraq, in February 2003, the US presidency set out the ambition to spread democratic values in the Middle East.<sup>194</sup> After the first two years of military occupation of Iraq however, results confirmed the preponderance of the so-called democratic paradoxical phenomenon<sup>195</sup>.

The substance of such a paradox concerns not only the radicalization of those phenomena that were intended to be neutralised, but even the emergence of undemocratic standards within Western political and jurisprudential system.

This contradiction is properly reflected in and expressed by the complementary doctrine of “the state of exception” synthesizing a characteristic future in the construction of the new world order under a mechanism that tends to establish a permanent relation between necessity as a source of law enabling political action.

The state of exception has been put into practice with the American 'military order' issued in 2001 – the Patriot Act- and 2006<sup>196</sup>. These military exceptional measures provide “legal ground” for subjecting non-citizens suspected of terrorist activities to indefinite detention and military tribunals. Together with the systematic use of torture in the Abu Ghraib Prison<sup>197</sup>, the “Guantanamo model” creates a new category of detainees classified as legal under the “war on terrorism” while international law is seen as being

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<sup>194</sup> A presentation of the salient aspect of the programme of democratization was previously reported by Victor Davis Hanson 2002: Democracy in the Middle East: It's the hard headed solution, The Weekly Standard: 21 October.

<sup>195</sup> In an article on US strategy, Sherle Schwenninger, co-director of global economic policy at the New America Foundation, pointed out that "the essence of US policy over the last three decades has been adversative to Arab democracy and self-determination". Sherle Schwenninger 2003: Revamping American Grand Strategy, at [www.worldpolicy.org/journal/articles/wpj03-3/Schwenninger.html](http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/articles/wpj03-3/Schwenninger.html).

<sup>196</sup> October 26, 2001 and. The new aspect introduced with it, thus, is the creation of individual-entities that could be neither named nor classified by the Law, because excluded from the status as Prisoners of War defined by the Geneva Conventions, they do not correspond to any jurisdiction set by American law and are radically eradicated of any legal status. For Agamben this is the most recent of state of emergency measures that open a no-man's-land between the political and the juridical. Giorgio Agamben 2005 (2003): State of Exception, 1, 3-4.

<sup>197</sup> See Red Cross report on Abu Graib tortures avail. at [ww.cbsnews.com/htdocs/pdf/redcrossabuse.pdf](http://ww.cbsnews.com/htdocs/pdf/redcrossabuse.pdf)  
Abuse Of Iraqi POWs By GIs Probed



incompatible with national security objectives<sup>198</sup>. A special program for selected prisoners was approved in Washington in 2001 during the war in Afghanistan and, most importantly, activated through logistic support in different countries<sup>199</sup>.

The measures undertaken during the state of emergency are built on the claim of legal power of sovereignty but in actual fact, the state of emergency is fully understandable as a political phenomenon stemming from political crisis<sup>200</sup>.

Since it produces an exceptional suspension of the law, formally, it is a phenomenon instating a legal void in order to face certain critical circumstances in the realm of politics.

In the state of exception a basic problem concerns the limits between the realms of legal and political orders that come to be confused under their functions and purposes. In the political disorder of the state of exception sovereignty finds its source of power within a legal void.

The Italian philosopher Agamben, in this regard, sees the contemporary world order through two basic relational paradigms, one indicating a status of progressing “global civil war” and the other “the state of exception” corresponding to a predominant model of sovereignty that came to characterize a constant pattern in systems of democratic governance<sup>201</sup>.

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<sup>198</sup> Memorandum issued by the US Department of Justice in 2003 and published one year later, on 9 June 2004: available at [www.wallstreetjournal.com](http://www.wallstreetjournal.com)

<sup>199</sup> US Defence Ministry and National Security Advisor: see Seymour M. Hersh 2004: *The Gray Zone*, The New Yorker: 15 May.

<sup>200</sup> “The exceptional measures undertaken during the state of emergency are the result of periods of political crisis and for this very reason must be understood through the terrain of politics rather than through the legal terrain”: Agamben 2006: *State of Emergency*: Lecture given at the Centre Roland-Barthes, Université Paris VII, Denis-Diderot, av. at <http://www.generation-online.org/p/pagamben.htm>

<sup>201</sup> “Today, in the face of the continuous progression of something that could be defined as a “global civil war,” the state of emergency tends more and more to present itself as the dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics”. Agamben 2005: *op. cit.*, 2, 4ss.

More specifically, Agamben defines the state of emergency as the predominant and characteristic ‘un-legal’ means used in our contemporary politics made up as a contest of global civil war: in other words, a general situation in which the exception became the rule.

What becomes even more relevant is that a characteristic of the current application of the state of exception doctrine includes the necessity of imposing it on all belligerent nations involved in the war. This is a main political meaning of the state of exception that recalls the introduction of special laws during the Nazi strategy of expansionism as a means of enlarging alliances<sup>202</sup> and, thus, defining the enemy and friend.

Indeed, two characteristics for which the doctrine is effective include the fact of being widespread in space and prolonged in time in opposition to a formal necessity of exceptionality and provisional measures as it was in the roman *Iustitium*.

What is a predominant future in the ideology of the new world order doctrine therefore when confronted with the Agamben approach?

A permanent status of emergency shapes the overall order and, in substance, it is the ruled *anomy* –void of law- that creates the *nomos* -order.

The basic function of actions made within this new space of “disorder” can be explained, in turn, using a third category of violence which Benjamin calls "pure" or "revolutionary"<sup>203</sup>. It is a violence that is exterior to the legal order and incompatible with its purposes, having neither the finality of stating conserving the law.

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<sup>202</sup> Harendt 1991 (1963): op. cit., 74ss.

<sup>203</sup> Walter Benjamin 1921: Critic of violence, at [www.generation-online.org/p/fpagamben.htm](http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpagamben.htm).

The proper characteristic of this violence outside the law is that it deposes it and by doing so, the purpose is to begin a new historical epoch<sup>204</sup>.

#### **2.4 Conclusion. The use of exceptionality in the US paradigm of the new world order**

In this section we have sought to redefine and analyse the ME security policy adopted by the US in parallel with the construction of a new world order doctrine.

One main aspect regarding the role of the ME in US hegemonic aspirations since the 90s world order, has been that factors of predictability in the regional and extra-regional system of alliances granted by the east-west confrontation<sup>205</sup> were nullified by the collapse of the ideological threat together with predictability in the terms of transatlantic relations.

The hypothesis aimed to link the emergence of a crisis in transatlantic alliance and the redefinition of an ideological and political order since the collapse of the Soviet threat to Western interests in the ME.

In that the defence of energy resources was a central theme in justifying a role of leadership in military issues and the decision-making process, the maintenance of such a role for the US reached a first stage of the crisis in 1990.

Contrary to what would have been a logical decrease in the importance of security issues, the concept of security, instead, has regained importance under the shaping of ideological and political aims.

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<sup>204</sup> Agamben 2005: op. cit. 53.

<sup>205</sup> The prevention of regional actors from reaching dominant position was also part of the Cold War system: see the role of Egypt during the first phase of the east-west confrontation in ME and the threat represented by Egyptian led pan-Arabism to western interests in ME during 1956-67: Mansfield 1992: op. cit. 245-79.

The concept of security played an essential part in the world order ideology by providing “new” meaning to the categories of enemy and threat, on one side, and legitimacy and sovereignty on the other.

The concept of security, here, has included important political aspects among which the fact of being itself a source regulating intra-alliance authority and the deterrence of extra-alliance relations.

The political weakness of the Iraqi regime at the end of the Cold War introduces a basic reason for which Iraq became a key country in the security of the region under the US perspective of a new world order. Throughout the dual containment policy, Washington has granted the isolation of a potential threat whereby the meaning of threat must be understood in the development of the enlargement policy that has followed.

Hence, the status of instability related to the “Iraqi problem” that has dominated the ME from the second to the third Gulf war functioned as a source of reasserting the US role of leadership. It was therefore beneficial to the enlargement of the US sphere of influence. In this regard, the construction of new coalitions –such as the intensification of Turkish-Israeli relations- and the status of containment in the post-second Gulf war have granted the maintenance and intensification of the same principle at the basis of the American unilateralism after the end of the Cold War: redesign a new space of alliances and power relations in a bigger region, from Egypt to Turkey in one direction and from Afghanistan to Iraq in the other<sup>206</sup>.

At the level of transatlantic relations, the containment policy was detrimental to the EU because the containment, by weakening Iraq, above all weakened the UN and prevented the multilateral body from being effective in the management and resolution of

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<sup>206</sup> See below: Chapter III.

international crises: a task for which the organization was not only supposed to be the preferential instrument, but on which its very existence was based.

The analysis recalled three mainstream explanations for the US occupation of Iraq in 2003, including the official discourse regarding the global threat of terrorism, the relevance of the ME context and the Israeli-US alliance, and the control of Iraqi oil resources. Nevertheless, we have used a geopolitical framework with a historical perspective to analyse fundamental futures emerging in the three realms of politics, economics and ideology in explaining the third Gulf war.

The importance of the concept of space was found in the linkage between ideological and material outcomes and, therefore, the extension of new geopolitical interest from national to “*global national interest*”. A kind of special national interest, thus, has emerged from US rhetoric and practice during the construction of the 90s world order and the two Gulf wars. The primary characteristic of this global interest is given by the consolidation of exceptionality as a rule granting the US the possibility of enlarging national sovereignty powers. The US progressive withdrawal from multilateral agreements is an instrument that has progressively served to the empowerment of the global national interest.

A principal aspect stemming from the practice of exception, for instance, is that the third Gulf war has opened a crisis in the practice of the *jus ad bellum*: the right to attack a nation-state in self-defence has been “adapted” to the American need to territorialize a kind of asymmetric war for which high military technology is opposed to unreachable

networks that could not be territorial due to the nature of the groups acting through the trans-national network system<sup>207</sup>.

These groups remain non-state actors without aspirations for territorial sovereignty, and this substantial point makes them and their aims very different from resistance movements historically tied to specific territorial identities and acting under the goal of national independence.

The third Gulf war and actions within it, on the contrary, are significant because of the exceptional nature of the legal terms on which the war was justified.

Hence, the new codex of jus ad bellum defined under the pre-emption strategy is selective and hierarchical because it is based on the imperative “with us or against us”.

This is why the construction of a category of enemy that could fit the post-Cold War order has proved to be essential in the deployment of a new political paradigm for the construction of coalitions and the legitimisation of military interventionism.

The analysis referred, for instance, to the fact that as much as anti-communism was not an end in itself but a means to maintaining an order<sup>208</sup>, the progressive identification of an “Islamist threat” assumed the same function in the new world order doctrine. In this regard the political function of properly anti-Semitic futures during the establishment and enlargement of the sovereignty space of totalitarian regimes in Europe, is a very useful comparative element that brings to light the political meaning of specific special measures adopted by the US presidency within the framework of the state of exception in the course of the Afghani and Iraqi wars.

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<sup>207</sup> See above: 3.

<sup>208</sup> Waltz 1979: op. cit. 200.

Within the structural similarities of world politics between the post-Cold War and pre-World War II periods, a dominant aspect regarding ethnic-religious futures in order to construct an ideology internationally valid both because without sovereign borders assuring a system of alliances extendible to all fronts of world politics.

What it follows is a “phase of enlargement”: enlargement of the world's community of free market democracies as one of the principal outcomes of the Cold War was still in place especially with respect to an ideology based on the spread of free market<sup>209</sup> and democratic values. Through the logic of pre-emptive war therefore, the process of “enlarging democracy” qualifies the *global national interest* essential to the restructuring of hegemonic aims.

While the nature of the war is exceptional, permanent effects of the third Gulf war are globalised at the level of quality, space and time. The phenomenon of the democratic paradox is well known having negative effects on those countries where democracy is supposed to be spread. What is at the stake in our analysis is the second level of the paradox for which the ideology of global democracy implies the ramification of undemocratic standards within the Western constitutional and jurisprudential system. This process confirms that the definition of the nature of the state depends on the means used to deal with challenges posed to the state of the system.

In this perspective, it is clear that the 2003 war is serving the transformation of the state of the system through the suspension of democratic principles and standards simply because these cannot allow a process of transformation outside the culture of multilateral compromises. The transatlantic crisis, in this regard, is no more about means of politics

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<sup>209</sup> See Chapter IV for the conclusive remarks related to the economy of the Third Gulf war in transatlantic perspective.

than it is about the nature of politics, and together with the nature of politics, comes the nature of sovereignty.

From an ideological perspective, the idiom "world order", especially with respect to its actual ideological components, remains indicative of an ambiguous project comprising two very different ideological concepts: one self-determinant and it refers to freedom-democracy shaping a constitutional order, while the other results deterministic because it refers to powers-relations for establishing an outsider constitutional order.

The new world order ideology is introducing a transformation of three basic categories: the identification of the enemy; the construction of the friend; and the legitimacy of sovereignty. The global national interest aims to save the nation as a constituent power for global sovereignty and no longer as a constituted power of representative sovereignty. This entails a basic change in the nature of power enabling sovereignty. This change is mirrored, in fact, in the change that occurs in the construction of the source providing legitimacy to go ahead with war, from the realm of legacy to the realm of political-ideology.

This has been the result of a long-term process. With the third Gulf war in particular – and to a certain extent with the intervention in Afghanistan<sup>210</sup> - the doctrine of world order has revealed the substance of its geopolitical meaning as a result of the policy of containment as an exceptional measure and the ideology of order set since 1990-91, including the definition of enemy and threat.

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<sup>210</sup> The war in Afghanistan was fought without NATO but by "floating" coalition "of the willing" (German, French, Italian), introducing a model for future conflicts "that will," according to Rumsfeld: "evolve and change over time depending on the activity and circumstances of the country". Coalition's members could not share decisional responsibility neither on military or political matters. Given the actual status of instability in the country is still under questioning the US and capability to translate its military power into a political success.



As much as the ideological shaping of a new world order has been central to the US view of world politics, the ME has been central to this doctrine serving the deployment of the special measure of containment targeting the two Middle Eastern regimes. In fact, although the expression “new world order” was first coined by G. Bush on the occasion of a regional crisis, according to the US President, the war in the Gulf implied a broader view of a world order that “expressed the larger goals important for *public support* when a liberal *democratic state goes to war* within the *fundamental shifts* in politics, that is the end of the ideological communist threat”<sup>211</sup>.

This sentence clearly synthesizes a key point of analysis: the most important future of the period defined under the doctrine of new world order is not the status of war in itself but the condition of legitimacy necessary to the structure of international relations after the ideological collapse of the category of the enemy. The US as a victor of the Cold War, lost a main reference of legitimacy justifying military interventions in foreign countries and a leadership role in global security supported by a solid transatlantic understanding.

That is why in the wake of the second Gulf war, the expression also indicates the necessity to reach consent with Western allies in forming a multilateral coalition against Saddam. After the war, however, the central aspect of the doctrine has remained the necessity of legitimizing the system of sanctions that has targeted leading ME regimes and Arab countries including Libya at detrimental to ME-EU relations<sup>212</sup>.

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<sup>211</sup> “Toward a New World Order”, Bush’s speech to the Congress (11 September 1990); Eric A. Miller and Steve A. Yetiv 2001: *The New World Order in Theory and Practice: The Bush Administration's Worldview in Transition*, at <http://unitedelite.net/bush.html>

<sup>212</sup> This western-American approach characterized by the use of diplomatic coercive measures against ME countries has produced the growing feeling among Arab populations that the new world order is aimed against them. Mohammed Sid-Ahmed 1994: *Toward a Floating World System: An Arab Reading of a World in the Making*, 258ss.

Finally we focused on what Agamben defines as “the strategy of exception” in order to find a central aspect in the realm of contemporary politics drawn by the practice of US foreign policy and the establishment of the new world order doctrine.

A critical question stemming from Agamben’s identification of the state of exception as grounded on the roman institution of *Iustitium* is, obviously, about the nature of the purposes: why the new world doctrine needs a space of legal void in order to assert a state of security.

We presume, first and logically, possibility for enlargement is based on the existence of a void. The ideology of a legal order based on the instatement of a void space in the law itself mirrors the logic of “pre-emptive” war on *global* terrorism serving as instrument for political power in order to extend the space of governance.

The enlargement is a phase that follows the creation of a void, for it pre-emption recalls the etymology of making empty before (pre-emptere). In this sense, the state of exception is fully a strategy of hegemony that inactivates itself when the stage in the degree of hegemony enters a new circle: the ideological narrative of pre-emption –make void first- covers the function of founding a new circle in the shape of the order which, in practice, refers to political reality.

Second and conceptually, the exception is necessary when this space of enlargement intends to go outside the national border of sovereignty, that is, to add a global dimension at the national realm. This can also explain a future of the dual structure of an existing but suspended constitutional law together with the instatement of a state of exception,

following a paradigm that, as it is well known, has characterized the constitutional and political nature of modern totalitarian regimes<sup>213</sup>.

The state of exception, therefore, is essential in the paradigm of the new world order because it functions for the introduction of changes in the system by deposing the existing law and creating a void in the jurisprudence. The void allows to the resolution of political crisis by means that lie beneath the realm of force. In other words, exceptional measures need a rule outside of where they exist. Since the institution of a new codex of law would need a constituent process, a permanent state of exception does not aim to substitute the existing law, but to coexist next to it. In this light, the politics of unilateralism could be the sole possibility of engaging in a change of sovereign regime as a specific aim of the third Gulf war.

Finally, we may see how the ideological construction of a world order doctrine serves as a political instrument for a global dimension of the US geo-political interest.

The war on *global* terrorism offers the unconventional ground on which the US approach to international relations has organized its ideological power in order to extend the space of its military posture in key-countries from the ME to central Eurasia countries -within or outside of the NATO framework- vis-à-vis political competitors such as the EU, or former antagonists such as Russia.

The third Gulf war is the emblematic passage of this approach to IR and introduces a set of outcomes from which it is possible to see the strategic goals of the US in world politics, especially with respect to the greater Middle East project.

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<sup>213</sup> Agamben study on the distinction between formal dictatorship and historical totalitarianism underlines the political significance of the state of exception as a special instrument of government in modern “dictatorship”: Agamben 2005: op. cit. 48ss.

## Chapter III

### *The Significance of the Eurasian landscape*

#### **3. Geopolitics of new world order**

A key outcome related with the political-ideology of the new world order consists in the relevance given to the geopolitical factor, in which American view of its post cold war role is framed within a sphere of influence encompasses to the entire world. This is reflected in maps issued by American policy-makers whereby the geography of the world is defined by the political orientation of individual nations, which they group in “democratic” and “not democratic” nations<sup>214</sup>. To a certain extent, the redefinition of this global sphere of influence mirrors a crisis inherent in the relationship between territory

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<sup>214</sup> Freedom House produces the “Map of Freedom” in which the advancement of American geopolitical expansion was represented by 88 countries defined to as “free”, 55 as “partially free” and 49 as “not free” in 2003, compared to 72 free, 53 partially free and 49 not free in 1993 : see data in [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)

and political order under defined borders on which the modern concept of sovereignty is grounded.

The progressive “deterritorialization” of the political space of sovereignty runs in parallel to the emergence of other spaces of power through which global sovereignty is exercised by the superpower. According to this paradigm of “global sovereignty”, there are three main spaces of power: military power, technology, economy and communications<sup>215</sup>. Non-state actors, lacking the capabilities of a nation state, are unable to compete with the superpower in the first two fields. Together with the construction of ideological values however, they can be effective thanks to communication networks and profit gained from financial markets<sup>216</sup>.

In this international environment however, the superpower retains a certain supremacy in all the four spaces of power. It is especially through the possibilities provided by its military capabilities that the relation between geography and politics is also established a capability that the EU for example is yet to develop.

The effective supremacy in this sphere of power grants the US the basis for unilaterally assuming the right to promote and defend “democratic values” outside its borders of sovereignty as a form of national interest, thereby excluding other global players from autonomously advancing their goals and interests in the same space of power<sup>217</sup>.

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<sup>215</sup> Antonio Negri 1995: *La crisi dello spazio politico*, 68-70.

<sup>216</sup> See financial speculations tied to terrorist attacks, especially that of September 11: [www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/10\\_09\\_01\\_krongard.html](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/10_09_01_krongard.html).

<sup>217</sup> The involvement of NATO in Bosnia is exemplar because the US has bounded a regional competitor such as Germany and in general the European Union to make use of the military framework of which it detain the control. Vassili K. Fouskas 2003: *Zones of Conflict. US Foreign Policy in the Balkans and in the Greater Middle East*, 40ss.

The geopolitical value of the Eurasian region has re-emerged as a central issue in world politics together with the strategic function of the Greater Middle East project that has become essential to the US vision of a global strategy following the military occupation of Iraq in 2003. The ME corresponds perfectly to the concept of rimland around the central area of interest<sup>218</sup> – the heartland being Eurasian ex-Soviet countries - where the US has enlarged and reinforced its military-strategic alliance during the period of the dual containment policy. It has done so by strengthening the role of Turkey-Israel relations vis-à-vis Iran, the other principal competitor in the rimland's border, with a view towards central Asian countries.

While the US' primary interest in the area lies in the possibility of expanding and consolidating US global hegemony, the strategic value of the rimland mainly derives from its function as an area of containment, and as a military foothold. As such, control of this area may also bring with it supremacy over the heartland.

In this regard, Brzezinski has introduced a new definition of the ME, which he refers to as the "Eurasian Balkans"<sup>219</sup>, underlying the importance of the region with relation to Eurasian politics following the demise of the Soviet empire.

### **3.1 The Greater Middle East: The Global Source of Strategic Power**

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<sup>218</sup> In the words of Spykman: Who controls the rimland rules Eurasia; Who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world. With regard to Mackinder –the "father" of the geopolitical analysis based on the division between hearthland powers and sea powers – Spykman has overcome this division focusing, instead, on the centrality of rimland's control in the shaping of alliances systems. Nicholas J. Spykman (1944): *The Geography of the Peace*, quoted in Douglas E. Streusand 2004: *Geopolitics Versus Globalization*, 36ss.

<sup>219</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski 1997: *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*.

This paragraph seeks to analyse the major strategic goal of the third Gulf War as the creation of a wider geopolitical entity that, far from being a homogeneous cultural reality, is intended to serve as an enlarged space of alliances supportive of US global hegemony.

Such a space runs from central-east to western Eurasian countries, passing through the Middle East.

The corridors of a vast pipelines map that run from Afghanistan and that seek to reach a contended pro-western Turkey<sup>220</sup>, run through both Iraq and Iran which include key portions of territory essential to connect Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries.

Iraq in particular is essential to establishing strategic control over the entire Eurasian region.

Achieving this end requires a system of containment that limits an effective Iranian-Russian alliance. In parallel, the ideological value of this objective lies in the reorganization of the western system of power between the US and the EU under American military leadership. This leadership role is legitimated by the continuous state of preventive war against *global terrorism*, identified as the armed expression of political Islamism which aims to assume the status of sovereign actor in nation-state system.

The term "backlash states" has been used to express this new range of threats towards American interests, as a response to which the United States had to "devise strategies to contain and eventually transform rogue regimes"<sup>221</sup>. The aim of the dual containment in the ME policy was to "create a favourable balance of power in the region by relying on America's strengths and those of its allies"<sup>222</sup>.

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<sup>220</sup> Fouskas underlines the role of Turkey (together with the conflict over Cyprus) in the game of alliances opposing the US and the EU: Fouskas 2003: op.cit. 71ss.

<sup>221</sup> A. Lake (as advisor during Clinton Presidency) 1994: *Confronting Backlash States*, 45ss.

<sup>222</sup> Lake 1994: art. cit., *ibid*.

Nevertheless, although Iran and Iraq were considered to be “particularly troublesome since they not only defy non proliferation exports but border the vital Persian Gulf,” a key point has been the potential of their geo-strategic power in conjunction with new spaces of influence that have emerged in Eurasia: *The end of the Cold War and the emergence of newly independent states in eastern Europe have the potential to enlarge dramatically the family of nations now committed to the pursuit of democratic institutions, the expansion of free markets, the peaceful settlement of conflict and the promotion of collective security, but which choose to remain outside the family but also assault its basic values*<sup>223</sup>.

Therefore, the GME’s project’s foremost political advantage stems from the enduring status of a “world emergency” that allows the US to maintain its strategic supremacy among western powers in the post-cold war era, by securing the geographical means by which to transport energy resources.

### *Reality and Contradictions in the Greater Middle East project*

The invasion of Iraq has followed a Greater Middle East project presented for the first time in February 2003 as an unofficial working paper for the G8 summit of June of the same year<sup>224</sup>. The document introduced a comprehensive vision of a “new region” identified under the name of the political space (“the Middle East”) where American

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<sup>223</sup> Lake 1994: *ibid*.

<sup>224</sup> The text of the document was first published by Al-Hayat: 13 February 2003.



leadership is, to a large extent, already consolidated, and announced the extension of this space of power (“Greater”). The title of the document – “The *G8-Greater Middle East Partnership*” - intended to present the project as a joint Euro-Atlantic venture. The project recalls the existence of initiatives such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the US Middle East Partnership Initiative that, although rivals on the ground, are presented by the project as if they were complementary. Thus, with the underlying aim of reorganizing western initiatives under the US umbrella, the project refers to the necessity of developing a common plan for reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq based on “multilateral efforts”. War and the reconstruction of both Afghanistan and Iraq are therefore presented as part of the same policy.

The initiative also proposes the creation of a Greater Middle East Development Bank to work towards the economic transformation of the new region, similar to the process undertaken by the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe<sup>225</sup>. In substance, the initiative promotes the creation of a free market zone, hardly a new trend in the history of ME in that Arab countries have promoted several of these in the past, facing numerous obstacles in the process. As with the numerous attempts at political union that have been undertaken in the region, especially under the Pan-Arabism ideology, initiatives towards economic integration have also encountered serious difficulties, primarily because of the structure of domestic production which, at the present time, remains unfavourable to the development of intra-Arab trade<sup>226</sup>.

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<sup>225</sup> The bank is thought on the model of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development that however exist already -Afsed-. G. Achcar 2004: Fantasy of a region that doesn't exist. Middle East: the US plan, in *Le Monde Diplomatique*: April.

<sup>226</sup> Treaty of Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation in 1950, Intra-Arab Trade and Payments Convention in 1953, the Economic Unity Agreement in 1957, the Arab Common Market Resolution in 1964: these are the most important initiatives. See M. Bani Hani 1984: Obstacles to Arab Economic Integration, 177ss.

Due to the various political and economic structures of all the countries included in the region, criticism of the difficulties encountered by the GME project have tended to focus primarily on the definition of “a region that does not exist”. According to the project, the new region should include a vast range of countries from North Africa to the Persian Gulf<sup>227</sup> although there is no geographical nor cultural justification for such a grouping<sup>228</sup>. The problem with the project’s definition, however, lies not only in the aspect concerning geographical delimitation but especially in the requirement that the project’s regional partners should be agreed upon its objectives and on the policies adopted towards achieving these.

For instance, since the state of Israel is geographically and politically part of the region, the feasibility of the GME project is necessarily conditioned by the future development of the ME conflict. However, the project puts forward the integration of Israel into the region without mention of the Palestinian issue. Thus, a key factor influencing the success of the project implies a realistic solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on which the whole idea of regional integration is dependent. The relationship between the conflict and the evolution of the project, therefore, is an issue essential to redefining a common strategy of the western front. This is not a new factor in the structure of the region and any strategy that seeks to promote stability in ME must clearly confront this main constraint<sup>229</sup>.

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<sup>227</sup> With respect to the Atlantic view of the project a consensus is reached over the inclusion of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait. Ludger Kühnhardt 2003: System-opening and Cooperative Transformation of the Greater Middle East. A New Trans-Atlantic Project and a Joint Euro-Atlantic-Arab Task, at <http://www.euromesco.net/euromesco/publications>.

<sup>228</sup> Gilbert Achcar 2004: art. cit., *ibid*.

<sup>229</sup> Roger Owen 2003: State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East.

A new element has emerged in the nature of the conflict however, stemming from the dynamics of the initiative, and which arguably began with the occupation of Afghanistan. This dynamic is the mechanism of a project that tends to merge specific, complex problems under a wider system of classification in which the unique nature of the ME conflict is labelled as another threat of “global terrorism”. In this regard, some American and Europeans analysts believe the greatest danger for Western society is the threat of Islamism outside the West<sup>230</sup>, yet this theory was undermined by the attacks that took place in the heartland of Europe<sup>231</sup>. Instead, the principal reason for promoting this inter-regional network of relations is to address “all the root causes of terrorism and regime instability” that are viewed in relation to the fundamental crisis of modernization in the whole Arab world. This crisis is characterised by a lack of political freedom, corruption, economic stagnation, the absence of the rule of law and reliable legal systems, inappropriate market economies, insufficient education systems, and gender inequality<sup>232</sup>. In the face of such an immense task (from the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to the process of modernization of the Arab world, to the threat of global terrorism) an important question arises: why the necessity to enlarge the sphere of causes by enlarging the ground on which the problems spread? Indeed, the real problem in analysing the Greater Middle East project is that its range of objectives is simply too vast.

While apparently ignoring the incongruence related to the complexity of the ME and the Arab world, the GME project nevertheless seeks to create a region where an opening-

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<sup>230</sup> Ronald D. Asmus and Kenneth M. Pollack 2002: The New Transatlantic Project, in [www.policyreview.org/OCT02/asmus\\_print.html](http://www.policyreview.org/OCT02/asmus_print.html)

<sup>231</sup> In Madrid and especially in London activists are not extra-Europeans but European citizens. Some analyst, still tied with ethnic approach at the issue, describe the circumstance as “third phenomenon”. La rete funziona con gruppi locali in franchising nei quali i convertiti hanno un ruolo molto importante perche’ fungono da ponte verso altri ambienti. Jose Garcon 2004: Que représente encore Al-Qaeda? Liberation: 15 March.

<sup>232</sup> Ludger Kühnhardt 2003: art. cit., *ibid*.

system strategy based on institutional structures, governed by a “joint Western cooperation”, is applied. The grouping together of North African and Middle Eastern countries as MENA for example, is a reminder of an already-existing European project which was the result of a long-rooted interregional dialogue based on a cooperative, not a pre-emptive approach with Near and Middle Eastern countries. Thus, the first interesting feature of the American initiative lies in the attempt at embracing soft-power rhetoric and mechanisms in rivalry with EU expertise in order to shape an artificial geo-political entity.

The GME directly involves the redefinition of the trans-Atlantic partnership in terms of a new assessment of sectors of political influence. Although the initiative seems unrealistic, it is relevant in the sense that it has revealed the lack of homogeneity between transatlantic partners on the issue. In relation to the GME strategy, the most crucial question to be addressed is not about defining the nature of the main problem to be solved (i.e. if terrorism is the result of social inequality or a means to maintain social inequality; if terrorism is based in asymmetric conflicts that stem from social and political inequalities, but which is also explained by failures in international policies).

The most important issue, as in the case of the fierce transatlantic dispute over Iraq at the UN, is that the project covers the struggles for power over political leadership between the EU and US in East Europe, starting with the consolidation of hegemony in the rimland by the use of means that deepen the policy gap between leading EU countries and the US.

The purpose of the American initiative, therefore, is not a realistic appraisal of the project, but rather an attempt to address the divergences in the transatlantic sharing of

tasks, particularly enhanced by French and German aspirations for more proactive role in decision-making regarding political and strategic issues. Above all, this objective may find a major reason in containing those countries such as Germany and France, whose opposition to the invasion of Iraq boosted their respect and credibility in the Arab world. The project might serve as a mean to compromise the relations between European mainstream countries and the forces of change in the region, which consider the former important allies. The consequence for Europeans would be to “lose much of the political capital earned through their limited support of Arab rights and miss a historic chance for partnership with the forces of change in the region”<sup>233</sup>.

Even more striking, while the GME objective of regime change in Istanbul and Baghdad gave the green light necessary for advancing American strategic positioning in the region, the political purpose of the US administration is to bring the EU nearer to the US Middle Eastern policy concerning the management of post-war Iraq. This involves the redefinition of the transatlantic partnership in the context of a new ME with a new Iraq, and the role that should be played by the western partners in the region. In particular, it seeks to avoid conflicts of interests that are likely to emerge between the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Barcelona Process, complicating the delicate issue of stabilising and rebuilding Iraq<sup>234</sup>, the most relevant issue for a European Union policy in the ME. Competition between the EU and US in the Greater Middle East has emerged several times since the 90s -either directly through the EU or through the individual

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<sup>233</sup> See Nader Fergany’s most interesting critiques of the Greater Middle East project (chief editor of the Arab Human Development Report): Nader Fergany 2004: Critique of the Greater Middle East project: the Arabs sorely need to refuse a reform from abroad, Al-Hayat: 19 February. Such a project greatly facilitates the growth of extremist Islamist forces in reaction to a project imposed by external planning: Moncef Marzouki, 2004: The US project for democracy in the Greater Middle East -Yes, but with whom?, Al-Hayat: 23 February.

<sup>234</sup> Giacomo Luciani and Felix Neugart (eds.) 2002: The EU and the GCC. A New Partnership, 22ss.

attitudes of key EU members states<sup>235</sup>. As such, the results of the initiative are interesting in that they use the opportunity to re-establish transatlantic relations as a cornerstone of a world order whose focus is a new geo-political entity that ultimately seeks to merge the politics of the ME with those of the Eurasian region into one strategic block.

### **3.2 The Middle East as the Geopolitical Rimland of Eurasia**

Throughout history, the Eurasian region has always been a centre of political power contended by the Great Empires.

After the demise of the Soviet Union, a new aspect has emerged however: for the first time, an outsider power has begun to deploy a strategy for assuming the leadership of the “grand chessboard” or “world's axial supercontinent”<sup>236</sup>. Brzezinski’s theory posits the search for global dominance as the rationale behind the US interest for hegemony in Eurasia, in that the US is “the first and last truly global superpower”.

The region, in turn, can be considered as the worlds’ geo-political centre bordered by three current regional-leading players, the EU-Germany, Russia and China<sup>237</sup>.

The vast area of ex-Soviet influence - which is still in the process of domestic post-communist reforms and the focus of intra-regional conflicts<sup>238</sup> - came to represent an important source of global power for which a complex system of alliances remains uncertain.

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<sup>235</sup> Leon T. Hadar 1996: *Meddling in the Middle East: Europe. Challenges US Hegemony in the Region*, 40-54.

<sup>236</sup> Brzezinski’s definitions of Eurasia: Brzezinski 1997: op. cit..

<sup>237</sup> Brzezinski, while considering Russia the “preferential competitor” -because of its influential political role in the region and its domestic weakness, otherwise sees China and India as the truly potential political or economic challengers to American primacy. Brzezinski 1997: *A Geostrategy for Eurasia*, at [www.comw.org/pda/fulltext/9709brzezinski.html](http://www.comw.org/pda/fulltext/9709brzezinski.html).

<sup>238</sup> The first and complex conflict has been that between ex-former Yugoslavia nationalist-ethnic groups and Kosovo; especially, in central Asia three are the regional confrontations relevant to our discourse: Caspian Republics/Russia, Turkey-Iran and Armenia/Azerbaijan-Georgia.

The relevance of this fluctuating system of regional politics in Eurasia is enhanced by the presence of existing or planned corridors for the transportation of oil and gas from East to West, from Afghanistan to the Balkans, and most importantly, from East to Far East especially through the corridors connecting Afghanistan to Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan to Turkey and Kazakhstan to China (see map, fig 1).

The pipelines map illustrates the strategic importance of transportation corridors in line with a shift of attention from oil production systems in the ME to resource transportation corridors in central Asia, the Caucasus and the Balkans<sup>239</sup>. Any oil and gas supplies that lessen the political risk associated with OPEC-ME<sup>240</sup> can be considered a critical new source of strategic power making Eurasian politics central to the American search for global hegemony.

After the fall of the Taliban Regime in Afghanistan and with the occupation of Iraq in particular, the ME has acquired a new political and strategic meaning fully explained by the American project for a GME that makes the ME the political paradigm for the redistribution of power in Eurasia.

Russia and Iran represent the two regional players key to the formation of such a strategic map, where coordinated economic interests intersect with the competing political interests of local and powers outside of the region.

### *The Role of Iran*

While the US has opted for a policy of containment against countries such as Iran that are opposed to US regional policy, it has also shown itself willing to form ad hoc ties

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<sup>239</sup> Fiona Hill 2002: Seismic Shifts in Eurasia. The Changing Relationship Between Turkey and Russia and its Implications for the South Caucasus, 1-15.

<sup>240</sup> Stephen Blank 2003: The Post-Soviet States and the Post-Saddam Middle East, 57ss.

with these key countries that. This highlights that despite the growing constraint of American pressure in the region, such countries are still important points of reference in the regional balance of power.

Due to geographic and historical reasons for instance, Iran's regional and inter-regional policy has the greatest advantage in connecting ME and central-east Asian politics. Together with China, Iran has frequently voiced opposition to the US military position in Central Asia and the two countries are cooperating against US strategic interests there<sup>241</sup>.

Even more important is the recent India-Iran alliance that gives India "the right to use Iranian military bases in the event of a war with neighbouring Pakistan, in exchange for India providing Tehran with military hardware, training, maintenance and modernization support"<sup>242</sup>.

Yet, the issue central to Iran remains the political role played by domestic politics in Iraq. The historical visit of the Iraqi PM Jaafari to Tehran in 2005<sup>243</sup> underlines the fundamental importance of the creation of a quiescent Shi'a government in Iraq that can act at best, as mediator of American interests in the region. At worst however, it can also serve as an unmanageable ally of the new, hard-line Iranian presidency<sup>244</sup> looking to escape regional isolation and containment. Reactions in Washington have been critical of the Iraq-Iran initiative.

A Shi'a block outside of US control is a difficult challenge to the American management of a post-Saddam Iraq governed by an "ethnic-democratic" system of representation.

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<sup>241</sup> Bob Woodward 2002: *Bush at War*, 118-120.

<sup>242</sup> Vivek Raghuvanshi, 2003: *India, Iran Sign Strategic Accord*, *Defense News* 23 January.

<sup>243</sup> *International Herald Tribune*: July 2005.

<sup>244</sup> Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected Iran's President on June 2005. BBC News: Profile: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, at [news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4107270.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4107270.stm)



The meeting in Teheran apparently went beyond political matters and served to confront prospects for connecting the two countries with a corridor for the transportation of oil from Basora to Abadan<sup>245</sup>.

Basora's historical role is well known as being that of a key centre of both economic and strategic importance in that it serves as Iraq's only access to the Persian Gulf.

The city and its surroundings are also well known for their role in the making of the Iraq-Iran war when the district of Basora became a crucial point of military confrontations<sup>246</sup>.

In turn, Abadan - with its oilfields such as Kharramshahr and Ahvaz - was a major strategic objective leading Saddam Hussein to initiate the war against Iran in order to expand Iraqi control of the Šatt al-Arab, which lies between the two countries<sup>247</sup>.

The significance of a Basora-Abadan linkage is not limited to the sphere of economic relations however. The political relevance of the city was demonstrated when Basora became tragically famous in 1991 during the Shi'a revolt against the regime that spread throughout the south of Iraq. As the main of the revolt, the city was subjected to massive repression by the regime<sup>248</sup>.

The deal for the construction of a Basora-Abadan corridor, if based on American guidance, still represents a risky in the development of the relations between the Shi'a components of the two countries. Above all, such a possibility can also place Iran in the

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<sup>245</sup> IHT: art. cit. *ibid*.

<sup>246</sup> Bijan Zarmandili 2003: Iraq e dintorni: Bassora, porta dell'Iran, 77-83.

<sup>247</sup> The existing partition of the area was set in 1976 when an agreement was signed with the Persian Shi'a; Saddam thought to be able to conquest the Iranian side when the Iranian revolution had weakened the country's military capabilities.

<sup>248</sup> See also the role had by the Madan community in the rebellion: Farian Sabahi 2003: Storia dell'Iran, 55ss.

new light of a regional power as the real and undesired political victor of the Third Gulf War.

Alternatively, the new Iraq might play the role of a “Trojan horse” vis-à-vis the Iranian system of government based on the strict application of the *velayat e-faqih*.

Indeed, the model of a Shi’a “laic” exercise of sovereignty established in multiethnic Iraq is one of the greatest challenges to Iranian domestic stability<sup>249</sup>.

Reactions of American officials at the attempt to establish ties with the Iranian government are thus, are even more understandable in that the initiative was made during one of the most critical circumstances for the meaning and success of the US-led war in Iraq, i.e. before the final approval of the Iraqi constitution<sup>250</sup> and during the delicate planning phase of the multi-forces’ “exit strategy”.

This overall view can also be confirmed by the compliance that Iran’s former leadership showed in support of the American objective of regime change. This is evidenced in the decision to grant the Iraqi Shi’a representative in Tehran, Baqir al-Hakim, the freedom to deal with the Americans for the establishment of a “democratic” post-Saddam Iraq prior to the decision to invade Iraq was made official<sup>251</sup>.

However, although Tehran has shown a preference towards *real politik* as the example above illustrates<sup>252</sup>, the post-third Gulf War Iran opted to display the political capacity to confront American pressure by announcing the re-opening of the nuclear centre of

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<sup>249</sup> Ahmad Salamatian 2005: Iran and Iraq: the limits on Shia power, *Le monde diplomatique*: July 2005.

<sup>250</sup> John Anderson and K.I. Ibrahim 2005: Iraqi Constitution Appears Headed For Voter Approval, at [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/16/AR2005101600309.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/16/AR2005101600309.html)

<sup>251</sup> Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi declared that fighters of the Badr Corps (the military wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and headed by Shi’ite Iraqi opposition leader Ayatollah Baqir al-Haqim) would be free to cross the border if they chose to fight Saddam Husseyn’s regime: Reported by GlobalSecurity 2002: Iraq Report, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1 November, at [www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2002/36-011102.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iraq/2002/36-011102.htm)

<sup>252</sup> See Parviz Varjavand: GlobalSecurity 2002: *ibid*.

Isfahan before the US-backed mediation of UK-France-Germany could succeed in the advancement of negotiations<sup>253</sup>.

The EU-3G's proposal was finally refused by Tehran. To a certain extent, the issue of the proliferation program has become the sole lever of deterrence that Tehran has against the US politics of isolation and the occupation of the Iraqi territory.

The need to confront this isolation has forced Iran to look for alternative possibilities and build out-of-area coalitions that can compete with the US, as in the cases of China or Russia.

### *The Role of Russia*

On the level of inter-regional politics, relations between Iran and Russia became a source of balance against US interests in Eurasia, particularly with regards to Iraq. Russia's support of Iran's proliferation program<sup>254</sup> is highly problematic for American diplomacy<sup>255</sup> and not just because must protect the terms of alliance with its regional allies such as Israel, which has become the principal political subject of Iranian nuclear threats<sup>256</sup>.

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<sup>253</sup> In October 2003 EU FMs reached an agreement with Iran approved by the IAEA to submit nuclear project to international inspection, a victory for EU's soft power that has contributed to a breakthrough of the Iranian crisis. Following the Thessalonica Summit, for the first time a document defying the EU position on proliferation was approved and signed in December 2003. What characterized the EU approach at the mediation is the link made between Iranian nuclear policy and trade relations vital to Iran: Bowen, Wyn Q. & Kidd, Joanna 2004: *The Iranian Nuclear Challenge*. 257-276; Council of European Union 2003: *EU Strategy against Proliferation of WMD*, in *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, at <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>.

<sup>254</sup> Nuclear power industry contacts between Iran and Russia go back to 1992; from 2001 a renewed agreement between the two countries speeded the completion of the nuclear reactors built at Bushehr. See Globalsecurity.org 2006: *Bushehr*, at [www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/bushehr.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/bushehr.htm)

<sup>255</sup> Blank 2004: art. cit., 61.

<sup>256</sup> See in particular the Iranian President's declarations against Zionism of 26 October 2005: ISNA (Iranian News Agency): *Transcript of speech by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at "World Without Zionism" conference in Tehran*, at [www.iranfocus.com/modules/news/article.php](http://www.iranfocus.com/modules/news/article.php).

The American strategy of destabilization of traditional settings, which began with the occupation of Iraq, is not limited to the ME in that one of the principal strategic meanings of the GME is the expansion of US influence deeper into central Asia and west Eurasian countries.

The continuing status of emergency in Iraq allows the US administration to station permanent forces in Central Asia's ex-Soviet countries such as Azerbaijan and Georgia<sup>257</sup> where, moreover, a strategy of "democratic destabilization" took hold during the course of the "Orange Revolution"<sup>258</sup>.

Nevertheless, together with Turkey, the two countries also signed the "Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan anti-terrorist pact" in 2002, in the framework of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project to which the US has given discreet support<sup>259</sup>. The Eurasian map for resource transportation is therefore following the deployment of military forces and the building of political alliances, against which Moscow and Teheran emerge as poles of opposition against the US, albeit to differing extents.

Yet, since the US is likely to retain bases for air and ground forces in Iraq<sup>260</sup> this will grant a strategic position from which to consolidate its power in Central Asia at the expense of Russia's regional aspirations. The purpose of these bases lies in maintaining and augmenting force deployments throughout southern ex-Soviet countries and reinforcing them from Iraq or vice-versa<sup>261</sup>.

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<sup>257</sup> Richard Giragosian 2004: The War on Terrorism: Implications for the Caucasus, at [www.ancsf.org/files/essaysanalysis/The\\_War\\_on\\_Terrorism\\_implications\\_for\\_the\\_Caucasus.pdf](http://www.ancsf.org/files/essaysanalysis/The_War_on_Terrorism_implications_for_the_Caucasus.pdf)

<sup>258</sup> The strategy has become systematic (see also Lebanon): using frustrated components of civil society, media policy, ad hoc leadership, international pressure: Gilles Dorronsoro: Liberation 10 March 2005, quoted in Walid Charara 2005: Constructive Instability, *Le Monde Diplomatique*: July 2005.

<sup>259</sup> Fouskas 2003: op. cit., 11ss.

<sup>260</sup> Tim Ripley 2003: US and UK Reveal Plans to Set Up Bases in Iraq, *Jane's Defence Weekly*: 30 April.

<sup>261</sup> Stephen Blank, 2001: A Sacred Place Is Never Empty: The External Geopolitics of the TransCaspian, 123-42.

Moreover, the Iraqi resistance against American troops has also become a source of instability for Central Asia and the Caucasus<sup>262</sup>, threatening Russian political capability to be influential in the region through traditional and often repressive pro-Russian leaderships.

Indeed, the war in Iraq already has weakened Russia's strength in the region. President Putin has the difficult task of mediating between domestic pressure exercised by foreign policy and military elites that dislike American military access to Central Asian countries, and the presidency's policy of cooperation with the US.

This policy was initiated after September 11 and aimed, above all, at bringing the US nearer to Russia's interests to preserve some security control in its former areas of influence.

In fact, while the US is prolonging its deployments in Eurasia, Russian economic policy is seeking to maintain preferential agreements with the weakest countries in the region, as the new gas deal with Turkmenistan indicates<sup>263</sup>. Moscow has intensified pressure on Turkmenistan to conform its exports of natural gas to Russian preferences in order to realize its goal of a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) cartel for energy resources under Russian leadership<sup>264</sup>.

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<sup>262</sup> Kazakhstan, but above all in the Ferghana valley including Tajikistan, Kirghizstan and Uzbekistan: the revolt in Uzbekistan against Karimov's regime take place between 12-16 May 2005. Jeremy Page 2005 (20 May): Troops end Uzbekistan revolt and detain rebels, at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,3-1620110,00.html>

<sup>263</sup> With the highest rate of unemployment of the region, Turkmenistan is however rich of natural gas. Igor Torbakov 2003: Russian-Turkmen Pacts Mark Strategic Shift for Moscow in Central Asia, at [www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org).

<sup>264</sup> Oil and gas sector is the crucial sector of Russia's economy, providing almost 40 percent of Russia's hard-currency earnings and the basis of its foreign trade surplus. Ariel Cohen 2003: The Putin-Turkmenbashi Deal of the Century: Toward a Eurasian Gas OPEC?, Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, at [www.in.mis.ru/website/dip\\_vest.nsf](http://www.in.mis.ru/website/dip_vest.nsf)

Significantly, natural gas has acquired a renewed importance next to oil – and nuclear energy - especially since western countries have adopted a more balanced policy towards diversifying their energy resources in an attempt to circumventing the instability of oil markets instability<sup>265</sup>. Indeed, the US is supporting Moscow's search for alternative energy resources<sup>266</sup>.

The CIS however, is a Commonwealth project framed in the regional coalition of the Collective Security Treaty, for which Moscow has already grouped together Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia and Byelorussia, where it has deployed or reinforced its military presence<sup>267</sup>.

Yet, the American military status from the Caucasus to central Asia is no less important than the Russian presence, with US troops positioned in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (and obviously, in Afghanistan)<sup>268</sup>. The course and outcome of the third Gulf War therefore, is tied to an intensification of a US-Russia struggle for influence over the military and political destiny of Central Asia and the Caucasus<sup>269</sup>.

Nevertheless, the reconstruction of Iraq is also central to Russian national interests and consequently, to the future development of Russia-US relations.

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<sup>265</sup> Since 2001 when the military presence in the Gulf started to affect sensibly oil market price (adding \$14 bd) western analysts renewed the debate about the structural instability of energy supply and the necessity to find alternative ways such as the massive use of wind turbine. Nevertheless, this option enlightens both advantages and costs: above all because it implies expensive economic resources in the West front and, not lastly, would dramatically reduce the role of an essential market-resource in the ME front. See Simon Jeffery 2001: Military presence in Gulf 'fuels oil price', *The Guardian*: 30 October.

<sup>266</sup> Nick Mikhailov 2002: Russian pipelines set for expansion, 62-8.

<sup>267</sup> Russian troops were redeployed in Armenia since 2002 and are still present in Georgia and Abkhazia; in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan renewed bilateral treaties grant Moscow the use of local basis for Russian military and reinforced posture in Tajikistan while has anticipated the US in occupying the aero-basis of Kant in Kyrgyzstan. Blank 2003: art. cit. 57ss.

<sup>268</sup> US basis in Caucasus and Central Asia

<sup>269</sup> Igor Torbakov 2001: Moscow Seeks to Take Advantage of Iraq Conflict to Reassert Its Leadership in CIS, at [www.eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org)

Since the beginning of the third Gulf crisis, Moscow has tried to rely on the UN's power both to project its own influence inside the multilateral mechanism and to constrain and limit American unilateralism<sup>270</sup>.

Firstly, from the Russian perspective – as with that of the EU, France and Germany - the UN should have had the role of arbiter in any use of force by the US. The UN, in fact, would have assured that the US would not disregard other national interests so that Russian preferences would also have to be considered, especially with respect to post-Saddam Iraq<sup>271</sup>.

Even though the crisis over Iraq was likely to increase, from 1997, Russia has opened important deals with the Iraqi regime among which the most significant remains the lucrative accord obtained by the Russian Lukoil Company for the investment of billions of dollars in the south of Iraq<sup>272</sup>.

Russia has tied the future of an important part of its national economic interests<sup>273</sup> to a regime that most probably would not have had the opportunity to meet the terms of these engagements. Yet these investments in Iraq remain a valid bargaining chip with the US for the role Moscow wishes to retain in post-Saddam Iraq and in the new world order<sup>274</sup>.

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<sup>270</sup> Ferguson 2003: Russia: UN Should Have Central Role in Iraq, The Russia Journal: 11 May, at [www.russiajournal.ru/news/cnewsarticle](http://www.russiajournal.ru/news/cnewsarticle).

<sup>271</sup> Furthermore, the UN system offers the possibility to be integrated in what Russians call 'Western Civilization': Angela Stent and Lilia Shevtsova 2002-2003: America, Russia and Europe: a Realignment?, 129.

<sup>272</sup> \$ 6 billion for research in West Qurna-2 one of the major Iraqi oil fields; more lucrative accords were also signed after the Lukoil affaire. Afp 12/12/2002 ///

<sup>273</sup> Oil and gas sector is the crucial sector of Russia's economy, providing almost 40 percent of Russia's hard-currency earnings and the basis of its foreign trade surplus. Michael Wines 2002: Tempted by Oil, Russia Draws Ever Closer to Iraq, New York Times: 3 February.

<sup>274</sup> This expression before the American leadership has been used first by the Russian Presidency in 1990 in occasion of the Stockholm Summit.

The same bargaining game involves the controversial issue of Iraqi debt to the Soviet Union and to Russia, amounting to some US\$30 billion, a debt that has become almost unrecoverable since the long period of embargoes that followed the war<sup>275</sup>.

Indeed, the prolonged instability in Iraq raises the costs of reconstruction and delays Iraq's return to the market which represents is the one possibility for reviving the country's national economy.

At the same time, Iraq's return to full production and to the global market raises concerns in Moscow regarding the downward pressure on oil prices which is detrimental to the Russian economy<sup>276</sup>.

It is therefore worth noting that the US has initiated one of the most important deals with Russia for the sale and transportation of Russian oil to the US market<sup>277</sup>, an historic deal that passes through Croatia and the Atlantic would tie the national interests of the two former enemies and would recover at least part of Iraq's debt to Russia. This would provide the Russian economy with access to the most solid western market, whilst also marking a political victory for the Presidency. Moreover, opening the US American markets to Russia would allow the US to diversify its energy sources.

All in all, the American unilateral war in Iraq is more than the result of a failed UN system. Politically speaking, it is the new lever for building alliances and establishing a system of ethnic-religious blocks favourable to a balance of power under US control

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<sup>275</sup> Russia claims that since 1990 had lost about £30 billion: Wines 2002: art. cit. *ibid*.

<sup>276</sup> The risk explains the importance for Russia of investing in Iraq. See the opinion of Russian experts in [www.stratfor.biz/story.ne](http://www.stratfor.biz/story.ne)

<sup>277</sup> The two main projects (in Murmansk of Lukoil and in Druzba-Croatia of Yukos: see <http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/company/cnr34460.htm>) stem from the Houston Summit of October 2002: "We welcome the first delivery to the United States of Russian crude oil in July, and the proposal to build a deep-water port in Russia for energy exports". The White House: Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Vladimir Putin on Development of the U.S. - Russian Energy Dialogue, November 22, 2002 in <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/11/0021122.html>.



through a strategy of regional instability. The GME project has already begun functioning as a political framework for granting legitimacy to US strategic interests regarding energy resource transportation systems and the related issue of military security in the core of Eurasia.

### **3.4 Some Remarks on the Regional effects of the Third Gulf War**

One factor of the instability stemming from the war in Iraq is the progressive “regionalization” of the character of the conflict. This involves the participation of independent fighters from other countries of the region – a phenomenon known as the second front problem for the US. In this regard the geo-political role of Syria in terms of its lengthy border with Iraq, together with its protracted and deep historical control of the Lebanese political landscape<sup>278</sup>. The recent Lebanese crisis, in this light, may reflect the challenge of extending the threat of instability to a country still under the military control of one of Israel’s most powerful enemies, Hezbollah, whose ties with Tehran would be likely to strengthen in the face of possible Israeli-US pressure on both sides..

The creation of a Kurdistan region institutionalized within Iraqi territory may soften the minority’s aspirations for self-determination, but it is also likely to deepen tensions inside Syria<sup>279</sup>, where the Kurdish minority represents a powerful lever in any attempt to destabilise the regime in Damascus by means of domestic pressure.

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<sup>278</sup> Syrian regime, however, is showing the willingness to cooperate with American requests: in June 2005 the government launched a series of reprisals against internal and foreign “dissidents” supporting the flow of fighters toward Iraq. See [www.publiuspundit.com/](http://www.publiuspundit.com/)

<sup>279</sup> See the riots that kept the Kurdish city of Qamishli under the siege of national army in 2004. The Kurdish minority in Syria is subject to apartheid rules and political repression by Damascus government while its population occupies the strategically most important and richest portion of the northern region of the country. Trombetta 2005: Limes.

Finally, the relevance of the Turkish role in the new redistribution of power confirms the US's progressive aspirations toward newly independent Caucasian and Transcaucasian countries where Iranian cultural influence is traditionally rooted<sup>280</sup>.

### **3.5 Conclusions. The Paradigm of Ethnic Fragmentation**

This chapter has defined the third Gulf War as a system-transforming war. Having considered the institutional and ideological crisis that occurred within the western system of power during the 1990s, the military occupation of Iraq by the US-led coalition is serving to redefine an American sphere of influence which has been extended to the entire globe. Changes in world power relations have amplified the geopolitical function of the ME and its structural tendency towards instability, serving to advance the American strategy for a new world order.

The demise of the Saddam regime led the country into a status of chaos that keeps the entire region in condition of conflict, instability and uncertainty. With the aim of promoting a paradigm of global sovereignty based on both ideal and material sources of power, the geopolitics of the third Gulf War illustrate the fundamental linkage between the ME and the Eurasia regions, through Iraq. From this perspective, this chapter considered the ME and Iraq as the geopolitical rimland bordering a newly independent political landscape in Eurasia that represents the real center of interests between three global players: the US the EU and Russia. Thus, the strategic relevance of the third Gulf War can be explained by viewing the politics of Iraq as a means to extend the influence

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<sup>280</sup> Fred Halliday 1996: Iran and Transcaucasia, 35.

of the US leadership deeper into the Eurasian countries, at the expense of both the Russian and European political roles there.

The analysis of the GME project, announced prior to the invasion of Iraq, has demonstrated the factual inconsistency of the project itself. It nevertheless reveals the great significance of the political and ideological aim of reproducing an inclusive view of the region to compete with an already existing European projection of power in the ME and North Africa through the MENA initiative.

By using an ideology of democratic value together with military means, the Greater Middle East project means intends to establish a paradigm of ethnic fragmentation as a model of governance that allows the US to reassert political leadership and security hegemony over a vaster region than the ME.

For instance, the US military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq, together with the growing pressure of the containment and destabilization of Iran, has alarmed Russian military elites due to the perceived threat to its own regional geopolitics of security<sup>281</sup>.

With respect to the GME project initiated with the occupation of Iraq, Russia and Iran came to share similar security concerns in that they were both militarily surrounded by US forces and politically isolated by the American-led coalitions, including key east European countries. The development of the war, in this light, is likely to lead to an intensification of relations between the two countries, especially if Russia is dissatisfied by the American redistribution of power in post-Saddam Iraq.

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<sup>281</sup> In the words of the Russian military official Valerij Manilov "... the occupation of Iraq would make easier for American troops already in Afghanistan, in Turkey and in the same Iraq surrounding Iran and then isolating Russia from the South of its borders". Quoted in S. Sumbaev 2002: Possible consequences for Russia of the US intervention in Iraq, in *Krasnaja Zvezda*: December.

The Turkish-Israeli-Egyptian alliance promoted by the US during the 90s<sup>282</sup> has prepared the political ground for the US-led GME which is entitled to function in particular against Iran.

The progressive building of two blocs represents the salient aspect of the politics behind the third Gulf War and the GME project. This policy seeks to frame a system of alliances opposing Sunnis and others to Shi'a groups. It was formulated following the American neo-conservative's assumption that the Arab world as political entity was no longer viable with the start of the second Gulf War, when regional cohesiveness was broken for the first time<sup>283</sup>.

An example of an ME-Eurasia linkage enhanced by the war in Iraq is illustrated by the coalition of interests between Sunni and Turkish groups, mirrored by the ideology and politics of one of the most active Islamist groups present in the Caspian region. The object of repression from states-governments – often ruled by pro-Soviet leaderships - Hizb Al-Tahrir is a Sunni force that refers to pan-Turkism ideology and calls for the reinstatement of the Caliphate system<sup>284</sup>. Ideologically speaking, it is not dissimilar to the role played by the fight against the hereditary form of sovereignty in the Shi'a philosophy of the Iranian revolution introduced by Khomeini<sup>285</sup>.

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<sup>282</sup> See above: Chapter II.

<sup>283</sup> Bernard Lewis 1992: Rethinking the Middle east, at [www.foreignaffairs.org/19920901faessay5893/bernard-lewis/rethinking-the-middle-east.html](http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19920901faessay5893/bernard-lewis/rethinking-the-middle-east.html)

<sup>284</sup> It represents the bazaar class' interests in a country, like as Tajikistan, still ruled by a strong centralized apparatus. The group -that has Palestinian-Jordanian origins- from Tajikistan became popular in all Central Asia countries after September 11 and the strong repression imposed by local government against political Islam. The history of Tajikistan during the 90s is exemplar: after the civil war following the demise of the soviet empire (1992-1997) the parliament was opened to political Islam (Party of Islamic Rebirth) but, however, the absence of concrete political achievements and the growing state-repression instigated the spread of clandestine groups that for their activities have often crossed intra-regional borders even to be present in Afghanistan. Vicken Cheterian 2005: US, Russia and China: the great game, Central Asia's Five fragile states. Torn Between Nationalists and Islamists, Le Monde Diplomatique: March.

<sup>285</sup> Sabahi 2003: op.cit. 75.

A similar standing of opposing blocks is that produced by the contest of the Russia/Chechnya and Armenia/Azerbaijan conflicts, where both Saudi-Sunni (pro-Chechens) and Turkish (pro-Azeri) were involved against Russian interests. These conflicts are reminders of the importance of new projects for resource transportation that, next to the politics of the GME, serve to highlight its strategic relevance as source of global power.

Material and ideological powers together construct the global dimensions of the new world order pursued by the US to the exclusion of other global players, such as the EU.

The policy adopted against Iraq - as the first of the ex-Soviet allies to be targeted since 1990 - intensifies the aspect of exclusion and exclusivity in the new geopolitical game and underlies the importance of enlarging the space of influence unilaterally in order to increase US global power.

The weakness of the regime in Baghdad since the crisis of Soviet influence stands at the same level as central Asian and Caucasian countries where a fierce struggle for domestic power is ongoing on between former ruling classes and Islamist forces<sup>286</sup>. In this contest of instability, the Iraqi regime was an obstruction to a policy of enlargement in Eurasia in term of its political weakness in the chain of alliances. Iraq represented a threat to being a possible regional player promoting special relations with outsider powers. In the words of Waltz, “some states fight wars to prevent others from achieving an imbalance of power in their favour”<sup>287</sup>.

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<sup>286</sup> In May 2005 Andijon has been theatre of a harsh battle between protestors asking for the realising of Islamic militants jailed by the government and the police. The government has declared 173 people died, while eyewitness reports have suggested upwards of 700 protestors died. See [http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asiapacific/country\\_profiles/1295881.stm](http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asiapacific/country_profiles/1295881.stm).

<sup>287</sup> Waltz 1979: op. cit. 204.

Finally, this chapter dealt with (a) economic and political interests which lie at the heart of the causal relationship between the occupation of Iraq and the prolongation of oil transportation roads passing through the ME as part of the GME project; (b) the level of geo-strategic objectives making the occupation of Iraq central to the GME plan in that it allows the US to enhance the American military status in the region and project its power into Eurasian territory in order to establish a security system in Central Asia countries under US supervision.

## **Final Conclusions**

### ***The Third Gulf War as a Reflection of Weakness in Sovereignty***

#### **1. Comparing EU and US Paradigms of Power Projections in the ME**

A common view among realist scholars sees the “European” agenda restricted to a set of economic interests.

During the Cold War the process of regional integration in Western Europe focused primarily on a model of balanced economic development that has been at the top of EC countries’ priorities since then. From the Suez crisis onwards, Western European economic interests have coincided with those secured by the US in the ME. EC founder-members have broadly left the powerful victor of the Second World War the task of promoting initiatives and policies in the region, whether these involved trade sanctions or war. Thus, during the period of the East-West confrontation EC countries have generally opted for a policy of embedded cooperation with the US in the ME<sup>288</sup>.

Politically speaking, this choice has assured that EC countries have maintained some influence in the region under the common umbrella of a Western alliance, whose benefits are shared by transatlantic partners.

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<sup>288</sup>B. A. Roberson 1988: The Impact of the Superpowers on the Middle East, 23-35.

In a historical context dominated by specific factors of regional instability - such as the Israeli-Arab conflict - this policy of embedded cooperation has granted a system of Western security, which has given European countries the opportunity to invest resources in the development of the European project<sup>289</sup>.

In this regard, Kagan has defined the transatlantic partnership in the light of a functional division of tasks between the US and Europe for which the US has assumed the role of the “guardian” securing and granting European economic welfare. Kagan’s perspective, however, risks describing the transatlantic alliance as if its terms were the definitive and permanent nature of European-American relations.

For instance, it should be noted that other scholars have underlined the geopolitical relevance of Western Europe during the Cold War period for which the EC was at the center of equally fundamental interests for the US and USSR. In other words, this perspective tends to see the Cold War system more as “tri-polar” rather than “bipolar” as it allowed EC member-states to retain a certain strength in dealing with the transatlantic partner, as well as benefits for domestic welfare: “Europe, leaving much of its defence to the Americans, concentrated instead on its own social stability and economic prowess”<sup>290</sup>.

Thus, while losing a certain amount of geopolitical relevance, Western European countries have built a significant institutional framework in order to re-assess Europe’s role in the new world order, a framework that has been deployed in particular through a direct participation in ME politics.

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<sup>289</sup>Robert Kagan 2002: Power and Weakness, at [www.policyreview.org/pastissues.html](http://www.policyreview.org/pastissues.html).

<sup>290</sup>David P. Calleo 2003: Transatlantic Folly: NATO vs. the EU, 17-24.



An overall insight of transatlantic relations after the Cold War and throughout the two Gulf crises has shown that the nature of the transatlantic partnership came to be more and more dependent on, and qualified by the historical-institutional developments that began in Maastricht.

A constructivist approach is fundamental in underlining this aspect of change in the terms of transatlantic partnership and the progressive emergence of political divergences.

The ideological crisis stemming from the collapse of the Soviet Union allowed Western European countries to construct a new geopolitical role projected outside regional borders in a key region such as the ME, on which both the European process of regional integration and the new world order doctrine were dependent.

Just after the Cold War, Western European countries reached an important level of homogeneous welfare to which the reunification of Germany gave political stability next to economic strength<sup>291</sup>.

The construction of an emerging identity at the level of regional politics produced significant institutional change. Notably the reunification of Germany in 1990 together with the treaty of Maastricht in 1992-3, have changed the balance of power inside Western Europe. Core EC founder-members that played a decisive role in the process of economic and monetary policy also became decisive in supporting a model of political integration based on a supranational form of regional sovereignty<sup>292</sup>.

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<sup>291</sup> Germany had actually sought a special leadership role in the process: in 1992, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kinkel stressed his country's unique responsibility, as the most populated and economically strongest country in Europe, "to send a signal of confidence in a common future to our still-hesitant partners"; the German FM also claimed international responsibility for Germany especially between 1992-93: Jeffrey S. Lantis 2002: *Strategic Dilemmas and the Evolution of German Foreign Policy Since Unification*, 61.

<sup>292</sup> With the treaty of Maastricht, signed on 7 February 1993, two new areas (the so called intergovernmental cooperation pillars) justice and home affairs and a common foreign and security policy were added to the existing EC structure: [www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichttext.html](http://www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichttext.html);

Thus, inasmuch as the nation-state has remained a key actor in the formulation of foreign policies<sup>293</sup>, convergences of mainstream national interests at the level of regional politics have increased the need to deepen the harmonization of foreign policies.

In keeping with the fact that external political issues are relevant a input for structural development, the ME in particular has always played a crucial role in the European project of regional integration and not just because of its wealth of natural resources<sup>294</sup>.

With respect to the process of regional integration, the analysis sought to identify a new range of EU interests in the ME through the strategies adopted to enhance and preserve them vis-à-vis the policy pursued by the transatlantic partner in the neighboring region.

In the construction of an identity to advance an EU geopolitical role, a main concern of mainstream European countries during the second gulf crisis was to contain US tendencies towards unilateralism. This was done through strengthening the UN system and consolidating a multilateral approach that legitimized military intervention in the post cold war.

The collapse of the Soviet bloc, together with the end of the second Gulf War produced a set of circumstances under which the US has started to change the terms of alliances in ME and enlarge its military coalition. In parallel, the EU has concentrated its efforts on redefining a political role and an independent sphere of interests with regional partners<sup>295</sup>.

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<sup>293</sup> Mathias Koenig-Archibugi 2004: Explaining Governments Preferences for Constitutional Change in EU Foreign and Security Policy, 137-74. For (continental) institutionalist theory the process of regional integration reflects the same mechanism at the basis of nation-state building, especially with respect to the logic of treaty system.

<sup>294</sup> Indeed, western economic interests in southern regions reach of raw materials -such as the ME where oil was discovered in the late XIX century- have represented a primary source of interests in the age of colonialism driving the tendency to establish control over areas endowed with resources essential to western system of production. See Thomas Weiskopf 1974: Capitalism, Socialism and the sources of Imperialism, 57-136.

<sup>295</sup> See above Chapter I: Alternative Security Strategy.

The second Gulf crisis - despite a common view stressing the fragmentation factor as a predominant constraint for the effectiveness of a cohesive European foreign policy – nevertheless opened the path for a distinctive European role in the region.

This new space included the need to assure and protect trading interests and market shares in the region, which have continued to be relevant to EU policy in the ME and North Africa.

The analysis, however, illustrates the strategic meaning that economic relations have for the construction of a new concept of inter-regional security.

A common European policy has been heavily characterized by economic commitment under the framework of the Mediterranean partnership. The political involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process however, has also represented the driving force behind enhancing the EU's position vis-à-vis the partners in the EuroMed project. From this perspective, EU members' interests in the ME cannot be reduced to economic affairs per se. The Union has, in fact, been gradually testing its post-Cold War role as dynamic actor in world politics by redesigning a political strategy of partnership with the MENA region that started with diplomatic participation in the MEPP, as a guarantor for the Palestinians side.

This development in EU-ME relations represents a stage in the “emancipation strategy” from the US security umbrella under which the EC, as a comprehensive community project, was locked during the period of the “Soviet threat”.

Indeed, a reversal in the *quality* of transatlantic relations is not surprising and has, for instance, been under discussion by prominent realist and neorealist scholars such as Kissinger and Waltz since the 70s, when the EC began to advance a primal system of

intra-european coordination in foreign policy matters especially in response to the challenges stemming from ME instability which were critical to European interests<sup>296</sup>.

It is worthwhile citing the words of Waltz here on what the role of European countries should be from an American perspective: “Although the US policy-makers may have worked for a united Europe few have considered its unfavourable implications as a great power”<sup>297</sup>. This perspective, as it is well known, sees national-security as traditionally grounded in military capabilities and power relations, also characterising the nature of US hegemonic aspirations. Under the challenges of competition, the *American Imperium*, for Waltz, could not be constructed without a proper deal with *the European issue*. To address this problematic issue, Waltz stressed the importance of bringing European states separately under US influence<sup>298</sup>.

Most important to our analysis is the reason why the “European issue” has been perceived as a challenge. Although Waltz’s reasoning uses realist concepts and identifies the possible-future “enemy” as a *great-power*, that is, an actor endowed with hard capabilities, his prediction nevertheless emphasizes the efficacy of purely political means for describing a threat stemming from the European Union: “The principal pains of a great power ... arise from *the effects of policies* pursued by other great powers, whether or not the effects are intended. That thought suggests that a united Europe would be troublesome”<sup>299</sup>.

What to a neorealist perspective may appear a contradiction in terms of theoretical assumptions is instead clearly explainable using a constructivist analysis.

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<sup>296</sup> See above Chapter I: Significance of the ME to a European Political Identity.

<sup>297</sup> Waltz 1979: op. cit. 202.

<sup>298</sup> Waltz 1979: op. cit. 201.

<sup>299</sup> Waltz 1979: op. cit. 202.

Thus, if during the Cold War, the sharing of ideological values and main economic interests within the Western front constituted the basis for a compact range of mutual interests to defend in the ME, the EU sought to enlarge its sphere of political action with the shaping of a new world order that came to include specific strategic outcomes in the neighbouring region, such as political balance and security issues which had traditionally fallen under the military responsibility of the US leadership.

Since then, a distinctive European approach to ME problems has emerged and the role of the newly established Union deepened activities in matters of regional cooperation under an enlarged definition of security.

In this regard, it should be noted that the Cold War was not solely a system opposing the East-West fronts in the region. As a bloc system the Cold War also had the function of preventing imbalances of power from emerging even inside the Western front. In the words of the American historian Gabriel Kolko “...NATO, from its very inception, served Washington as an instrument for maintaining its political hegemony over Western Europe, forestalling the emergence of a bloc that could play an independent role in world affairs. Charles DeGaulle, Winston Churchill, and many influential politicians envisioned such an alliance less as a means of confronting the Soviet army than as a way of containing a resurgent Germany as well as balancing American power supra”<sup>300</sup>. After all, the European Community itself is an institutional framework that was created to safeguard a delicate balancing of national powers that re-emerged from two world wars, whose causes lay in the conflict of interests inherent to the system created by colonial empires.

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<sup>300</sup> See Gabriel Kolko 2004: Iraq, The United States and the End of the European Coalition, av. at [www.counterpunch.org/kolko1126.html](http://www.counterpunch.org/kolko1126.html).

The EU security strategy in the ME also included the necessity of “stabilising” relations with the US in the perspective of a harmonious sharing of influence in the area and, therefore, it had to be promoted in a way that would not conflict with those interests vital to the US.

Nevertheless, the period following the second Gulf war with the striking need to face the political and economic crisis in the ME also allowed Europe to facilitate the US position at the margins of diplomatic activities in some exceptional, but relevant cases such as the negotiations leading, first, to the Oslo Agreement and then to the Barcelona process. In parallel, US administrations during the 90s left the EU the task of redesigning the network of diplomatic relations in the region, while the American approach to foreign policy seemed to shift the focus of its priority from geo-strategic toward geo-economic activities, from ME to Far East<sup>301</sup>. This trend was reversed decisively again in 2003. However, this change in the American approach to the ME during the 90s is not radical or as definitive as it may have appeared, especially considering that from mid-90s onwards, American debates on foreign policy point out the necessity redefining it in favour of American leadership and “augmented realism”<sup>302</sup>.

Yet, one may ask if the EU and the US share a range of mutual interests in the region. During the first half of the 90s, both actors appeared to have a common view of strategic interests for which stability, throughout the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, was a main goal to achieve.

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<sup>301</sup> Marr 1994: art. cit. 80.

<sup>302</sup>Richard N. Haass 1995: Paradigm Lost, 47-58.

Today however, this approach to ME instability seems much more in line with the EU preference for a soft power strategy than that which has been put into practise by US administrations over the long term, connecting (from 1990 to 2003) the military interventions of the second Gulf war with the sanctions policy against Iraq and the military option adopted in the third Gulf crisis.

In the course of this historical development, two categories of factors have emerged as constraints for redefining an EU approach to the regional politics. One is related to the renewed role of the transatlantic partner, the victor of the Cold War, an increasingly stronger US in the region after the gap in power left by the collapse of the East bloc, and the other is related to the complex process of regional integration among European countries.

Not surprisingly, concerns for stability, whether they are perceived as focusing inside or outside European borders, became a common political dictate in the Union almost automatically.

Together with these circumstances, the asymmetrical division of tasks between transatlantic partners is a key factor in the development of two distinct and basically opposed paradigms of power projection in the ME. In fact, if the US's traditional role of leadership entitles it to provide most of the military capacity for deterrence, the EU projects its own role in the region as being the major trading partner of the ME.

As a result, the EU has become heavily dependent on the US security apparatus in the region that, during the last decade, became a key partner for European economic interests: "As the competition for Middle Eastern markets between the States and the

European countries intensifies this asymmetry has come to be increasingly resented on both sides”<sup>303</sup>.

What emerges as a crucial point here, are the negative implications of instability in the ME for the EU, which is proportionally linked to the enhancement of an US political leadership justified by the instability itself.

The analysis developed the idea that transatlantic cooperation during the 90s was not really based on the identification of mutual long-term interests. While stability in the neighbouring region is a compelling interest deeply tied to the success of the process of political union in an enlarged Europe, instability in the ME is also the instrument offering the US the means to reduce the European projection of political power and to enlarging its influence towards the Eurasian region.

Increased disagreements, therefore, have emerged over the assessment of regional threats to respective interests and appropriate means of dealing with them. The diversification of objectives in the first half of the 90s allowed an apparent level of transatlantic cooperation that finally ended when the Union policy became more directly interested in sharing decisional responsibility in the Gulf, in line with the multilateral instrument of the UN.

At the beginning of the third Gulf crisis, the EU had to face a new strategic dilemma in the ME because while the region kept its great economic relevance, it also became even more significant with respect to European geopolitical security.

From a European perspective the need to share political responsibility in the ME became essential to preserving political cohesion inside the Union itself, not only in the light of a Western European dimension, but especially in the newly enlarged Europe. The

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<sup>303</sup> Marr 1997: art. cit. 84.



prospect of eastward enlargement was declared in 1996 and the process itself coincided with tensions in transatlantic partnerships at the UNSC, ending with the decision to attack Iraq and the parallel enlargement of NATO.

It is, therefore, important to extend the meaning of the French-German alliance against the US policy to the outcomes that emerged during the second half of 90s and view the issue of regime change in Baghdad in the light of a Western European engagement for eastward enlargement.

With the advancement of the EU political project, the European view of an incontestable US leadership in world politics has changed<sup>304</sup>. The debate on whether the US is capable of eventually exercising such a role cannot dismiss what is in fact, one of its basic issues: terms and future developments in the transatlantic partnership have the power of affecting American possibilities to maintain a predominant role. Although based on powerful hard capabilities, in the long-run, American unilateralism if promoted without political support from a homogeneous European union would risk overstretching itself, directly affecting the ideal and not just the material sphere of sovereign capabilities.

We infer this prediction from a simple consideration of the concept of sovereignty in which, if it is true that it refers to the capacity of governing a space to the exclusion of others, it is also true that political next to military means play an essential part in the exercise of sovereignty, whereby the connection of these spheres of action is found in the power provided by the realm of legitimacy. In the long-run a world supremacy exercised without legitimacy will lose its main source of power.

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<sup>304</sup> Haass 1995: art. cit. 55.

## **2. Iraq, the US and the EU**

The factor underlining the difference between the second and the third Gulf wars is the development of the two international crises, which sheds light on the specific aspects of the nature of the two wars.

In 1990, the crisis was opened by Saddam's view of a post-Cold War order in the Middle East, a view that was translated into military action against Kuwait. The aggression of Kuwait was, indirectly, a challenge to the security system assured by the US in the Gulf<sup>305</sup> and a direct violation of the system of international law under the UN charter. In 2003, the crisis was brought to an end by military action against a sovereign nation -Iraq- in the absence of a proper *casus belli*, and against the whole system of international law.

An additional aspect, which is very much connected to the previous, regards the way in which the US faced the major political dilemma represented by the complex system of relations with Arab countries. During the second Gulf crisis, the Bush Senior administration needed to obtain at least partial regional legitimacy for deploying US troops and intervening in the area. Key-regional countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria were confronted both with internal hostility to the intervention of foreign troops against an Arab country, and at the same time, with the need to avoid suffering the negative consequences of a decision to stand against the US superpower without any other international power supporting their position.

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<sup>305</sup> However, it is well known that unofficial sources refer how the US Ambassador Glaspie left Saddam understand that the US would not be concerned by an Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The point behind this question is whether Saddam's major intention was an act of aggression primarily intended to challenge the US or just seeking to acquire more relevance in the regional contest. See Transcript of Meeting Between Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein and U.S. Ambassador to Iraq (July 25) 1990, av. at [www.totse.com/en/conspiracy/the\\_new\\_world\\_order/glaspie.html](http://www.totse.com/en/conspiracy/the_new_world_order/glaspie.html).

At that time, both the UN and the EC played a key role. For its part, the international community, through the body of the UN, provided an immediate solution to these political difficulties by providing the legitimacy necessary to justify the military intervention<sup>306</sup>. On the part of European countries, their involvement had the important task of managing financial issues and diplomatic relations with regional actors in order to pursue the overall strategy against Iraq<sup>307</sup>.

From this perspective, the structural weakness of the EC institutions in the 1990 Gulf crisis facilitated the prevalence of national interests among members-states. At that time however, at the level of transatlantic politics, *fragmentation* in Europe served as an instrument of flexibility in that face of US pressure.

The factor of fragmentation safeguarded prospects for the advancement of the European integration and the role of the Union in the ME in the post-second Gulf war period.

The condition for which European states have to be brought separately under US influence is a permanent factor of tension in transatlantic relations. Considering, with Waltz, that a European political union is a problematic issue to deal with, the process of the European Union that started after the second Gulf war represents a political obstacle to the US's maintenance of a new world order doctrine.

In particular, the analysis showed that the "Iraqi issue" has become central for the maintenance of a political lever of fragmentation that, since the country is located in a

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<sup>306</sup> See the unanimous and rapid adoption of the two Resolutions 660-661 (2-6 August 1990) condemning the Iraqi invasion and imposing sanctions against Iraq.

<sup>307</sup> European task, in fact, assured the Western alliance a successful dealing with Arab countries and, therefore, supported US administration overcoming difficulties in the regional dimension of the conflict by reducing diplomatic costs for the strategy of intervention. See above: Chapter I.

key region for the political interests of the Union, could be used in order to assert the US leadership role and limit the Union's political role in the ME.

This reasoning is particularly significant if one considers that the MEPP process was working, from a European perspective, in order to settle the historical challenge stemming from the ME conflict, which was perceived as a factor destabilizing European cohesion in foreign policy matters with respect to the ME dilemma, in that it was trapped between the Arab and American-Israeli positions.

Conversely, in the wake of the third Gulf war, given the nature of the harsh political disagreement between leading EU countries and the US, reactions in the region have also been different than in the second.

The Main reason for both the Arab and European political standing has been the US strategic objective for regime change in Iraq and, as a consequence, the deepening of the US military position in the region in the light of a foreseeable status of instability in Iraq.

For instance, relations with Saudi Arabia were also further complicated by the discovery of financial links between charity channels passing through bank accounts owned by diplomats and members of the Al-Saudi family in the US and Al-Qaeda components involved in the September 11 attacks<sup>308</sup>. The monarchy, thus, did not miss the opportunity to reconfirm its support of the US ally, providing its own navies for the provision of oil to the US when Venezuelan strikes for oil transportation coincided with the Iraqi crisis<sup>309</sup>.

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<sup>308</sup> Margherita Paolini 2003: In Medio Oriente il dopo-Saddam e' gia' cominciato, 21.

<sup>309</sup> Venezuelan President Ugo Chavez was also OPEC President during Clinton's administration years when Chavez granted stability in oil prices (between 20-30 dbd). Dick Cheney policy as Vice President is in line with profitable revenues stemming from higher prices in oil (higher price means more dollars circulation in international financial market). Greg Palast 2004: Dick Cheney, Hugo Chavez and Bill Clinton's Band: Why Venezuela has Voted Again for Their 'Negro e Indio' President Baltimore Chronicle: 16 August.

Indeed, although some of the US military bases located in Saudi Arabia were removed in 2003<sup>310</sup>, the role of Saudi Arabia in containing the risks to oil markets derived from the general state of instability in the region, has been supportive of US strategy. It is interesting to note that as much as the US economy is tied to Chinese and Japanese investors, since the beginning of the third Gulf crisis, Saudi Arabia has opened important deals with South Korea, China and Japan providing more than the 50% of the energy resources of the Asian market<sup>311</sup>.

With regards to EU-US relations, the terms of competitiveness were enhanced in the contest for a freer multi-polar system since the first half of the 90s.

The 2003 transatlantic dispute has being considered as a reflection of different choices in foreign policy and strategic orientations after the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>312</sup>. However, long before September 11, mainstream EU countries demonstrated a different view on how to approach ME instability, as in the case of the EU criticism of the dual containment policy and objectives.

For instance, great importance was given in Europe to the consequences of the American policy of instability introduced during a period of economic weakness in the region when austerity policies were adopted, especially among the Gulf States.

The economic crisis following the second Gulf war turned out to have negative effects on European trade interests. In the delicate balance of European economic policies for the harmonization of national interests, the post -war crisis in the Gulf represented a serious challenge to political homogeneity.

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<sup>310</sup> Alfred B. Prados 2003: Saudi Arabia: Current Issues and U.S. Relations, at [www.saudi-us-relations.org/newsletter/saudi-relations-interest-8-21.html](http://www.saudi-us-relations.org/newsletter/saudi-relations-interest-8-21.html).

<sup>311</sup> Paolini 2003: art.cit. 20.

<sup>312</sup> Roberto Aliboni et al. (eds.) 2003: North-South Relations across the Mediterranean after September 11. Challenges and Cooperative Approaches.

The contest of the 90s witnessed, on the one side, the US laying the groundwork for pursuing a long-term strategy of military expansion while, and on the other, the economic consequences of this process falling on both regional and European allies.

It is in great part because of this asymmetric distribution of hard and soft power that has produced the deepest crisis since the end of the Cold War, between the American and European governments.

The American dual containment policy since the beginning of its formulation has been aimed at weakening the central power of the Iraqi regime, while reinforcing extended regional support for the US role of political and military leadership.

By opposing the regime change, mainstream EU countries sought to limit the enlargement policy initiated by the US, with the redefinition of alliances changing the whole balance of power in the region, especially with the intensification of Israeli/Turkish relations.

The sovereignty of the Iraqi regime became the determining factor framing the competition between the EU-US over relative political, security and strategic objectives.

The policy initiated by France at the UN for supporting the normalization -and integration- of Iraq in the regional system, represented a source of political power for the EU and its role in the ME. The progressive emergence of this political standing played an important part in the US's preference for the use of military means and the regime change solution.

Through the Franco-German alliance, the EU sought to shape its security and defence policy focusing on the two neighbouring regions vital to the advancement of the Union project: the ME and Eurasia.

Iraq and the ME have been a fundamental source of power for the European projection of a political identity outside its borders.

In the course of the analysis, we have often considered the relevance of the “end of the Cold War” as the historical event after which the terms of relations between leading Western powers changed significantly.

With the demise of the “Soviet threat”, such a change has been particularly favourable to mainstream European countries –Germany/France - that give input to the project of regional integration throughout economic means but with more definite political aims in intra-European, as well as in inter-regional relations.

During the 90s, the European agenda has been enriched by issues over security matters showing the changing nature of EU ties with the ME next to the Mediterranean region.

Moreover, the eastward enlargement of the Union announced in the middle of the decade has qualified an objective essential to Union’s strategy with respect to a peripheral region that will come to represent a key aspect in the development of US foreign policy after the collapse of the Soviet Empire.

Indeed, in as much as the formal end of the Cold War has not altered the substance of the US’s tendency towards hegemony in world politics but has extended its possibility of action, the progressive consolidation of a European paradigm of power projection in peripheral regions such as MENA (with the MEPP) and Eastern Europe (with the enlargement) is the salient element of a new stage in transatlantic relations.

Iraq became the symbol of the changing nature of such a partnership vis-à-vis the US/EU geo-political objectives to expand their respective spheres of influence in a wider

region that, after the US political discourse has been referred to as the Greater Middle East.

Due to its geographic location, Iraq can no longer be considered solely in the light of regional balance of power restricted to the ME.

No differently from the case of Afghanistan, and under many aspects even more emblematic, the country governed by an exhausted dictatorship became relevant as a door to the politics of the Eurasian-Caspian region where the game of alliances –contested between Russia and the US- is still heavily challenged by the second country targeted in the dual containment policy: Iran.

At the height of the third Gulf crisis, the emergence of the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis standing against the US plan for a radical change of regime in Baghdad exemplifies the core of our thesis: the third war against Iraq has the primary objectives of (a) containing the growing influence of the EU in ME and Eastern Europe resulting from the deepening of the EU process of political integration led by the German-France alliance;

(b) Reducing the possibility for the emergence of a stronger EU-Russia convergence of interests obstructive to a major US plan of enlargement in Eurasia.

In this regard, we may note that the collapse of the Eastern order corresponds to the restructuring of the Western system of power, as shown by the crisis of the UN and the transformation of NATO from a defence pact into a political organization. The reforms allow the creation of ad hoc coalitions for military intervention. The enlargement of NATO -1999- integrating Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic- enlighten another chief purpose of the post-Cold War's phase of the organization, serving in particular the US's power projection in Eurasia.



At the same time, the “new strategic concept” of NATO prevents the EU enlargement from being an effective instrument for consolidating the central power of core EU countries and, in particular, avoiding EU-Germany privileged influence in Eastern Europe including Belarus Ukraine and Balkan States.

The state of insecurity in Iraq and the increasing US military presence in Central Asia entitle the US to build a security system for which a main strategic purpose is to assure the control of a vast pipelines map connecting Afghanistan to the Balkans.

### **3. Fragmenting and Connecting the ME to Eurasia**

The strategic importance represented by the inter-regional routes for resource transportation explains US hegemonic aspirations in Eurasia and its policies with leading players in the region, such as Russia and the EU.

In particular, the ambivalent nature of Russian-US relations after the third Gulf war in which the two countries have shown the willingness to cooperate with respect to the management of resource transportation networks, mainly because they have come to share similar national economic interests, something that in last analysis, is unfavourable to the deepening of EU-Russia ties.

An important aspect in Russian-US relations lies in the progressive enhancement of the American military posture in Central Asia and the consequent limitation of Russian aspirations in the geo-politics of its own region.

However, this kind of relationship, although it seems to reproduce the patterns of the Cold War, does not exclude a cooperative approach to the central Asia security system in

reality, above all because for both players, the antagonism of inter-regions political Islam came to represent the main source of instability for mutual strategic interests.

In this light, the GME discloses its functions as a genuine source for the redistribution of power among global players under the US favoured position acquired through the occupation of Iraq that has created a deeper connection between the ME and Central Asian politics.

Thus, it is in the development of ME-Iraqi politics that the global system of alliances has been shaped.

In the ongoing development of these new circumstances, Iran became politically relevant because of being a powerful regional player that is isolated in his own region however, and therefore, in a position to search for out-of-region allies, as the India-Iranian agreement clearly indicates.

Moreover, in that the EU is not in the position to be militarily relevant, Iranian security concerns and the prolonged instability in Iraq also gave Moscow the opportunity to regain bargaining points with the US.

Yet, Iran's defence strategy has first opted for a diplomatic coalition with the EU and Realpolitik choices in approaching the "Saddam threat" and Iranian leadership, in fact, has offered to cooperate with the US against the regime in Baghdad.

However, the third Gulf war has dramatically changed the conditions for establishing relations beneficial to Iranian national security concerns (such as with the EU) and has enhanced Teheran's needs to face the risks of being politically isolated in the region.

This concern is grounded in the progressive establishment of ethnic-religious blocs favoured through the US building of political-military alliances in the ME and Central

Asia, for which the GME project places Shia' and Sunni groups in opposition, a fragmentation reinforced by a constellation of significant allies (Israeli, Turkish, Azeri, Chechens, Kurdish, etc.).

A line of military-strategic conjunction between the two regions, thus, is strengthened by an ideology of ethnic fragmentation reflected in the contest of Russia/Chechnya and Armenia/Azerbaijan conflicts, where both Saudi-Sunni (pro-Chechens) and Turkish (pro-Azeri) were involved against Russian interests. The group "Hizb ul-Tahrir", for instance, is a Sunni force that refers to pan-Turkism ideology and requests the reinstatement of the Caliphate system in the Caspian region.

Nevertheless, Iran has significant chances in the management of post-Saddam Iraq through the Iraqi Shi'a leadership, although this leadership –whose security is tied to the US military presence in the country - may also represent a source of instability for the Iranian-Khomeini model of Shi'a government.

Moreover, the support of a Shi'a government in Iraq interested in maintaining good relations with the US, may play a fundamental role in the future management of politics in the Caspian region.

In a certain way, the role of Iraq in the GME recalls, *mutatis mutandi*, that of Germany following two world wars, when the German national entity had to be divided if Western Europe -at the expenses of its Eastern part- wanted to re-found its own regional identity, albeit from a new position at the margins of history and world geopolitics.

The strategy for controlling the German power –as in Iraq today- was due to its key geopolitical position and national structure, two factors that were the principal source of contradiction between hegemony and balance in European politics. The division of

Germany opened the way to a new balance of power among European nations leading to the EC-EU project<sup>313</sup>.

If in the US project of GME Iraqi territorial unity is officially assured, the strategy of ethnic-religious fragmentation through institutional reforms has already been projected into the Iraqi politics<sup>314</sup>. This strategy is, of course, the source of balancing power among regional forces especially through the deployment of a systematic policy of “constructive instability”<sup>315</sup>.

Although the association of the two concepts of balance and instability may appear contradictory, the US ability to maintain its hegemonic role in the GME is tied to the political ability of keeping regional players unstable, as the containment policy *docet*.

Instability is the first phase allowing the building of new alliance blocs. It is precisely this point of the US strategy that underlines the fundamental aspect of the EU-US conflict of interests and identity projection in the ME.

All these circumstances highlight two general objectives of the US strategy in Eurasia-Greater Middle East: the containment of Russia and Iran<sup>316</sup> and the maintenance of a subordinated cooperation with European countries.

If renewed Russian attempts at pursuing an imperial strategy could be overestimated<sup>317</sup>, it is more realistic to consider the existence of converging interests

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<sup>313</sup> Schulze reminds that the project of a federal Europe necessary to grant a lasting peace was already elaborated in 1943 by Karl Goerdeler, the officer mastermind of the failed plan against Hitler. Hagen Schulze 1995 (1990) : Il ritorno di Europa. La nuova Germania e il vecchio continente, 24.

<sup>314</sup> See the Full Text of Iraqi Constitution, av. at the [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/12/AR2005101201450.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/12/AR2005101201450.html).

<sup>315</sup> Robert Satloff 2005: Assessing the Bush Administration's Policy of 'Constructive Instability' (Part II): Regional Dynamics, at [www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2279](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2279).

<sup>316</sup> China, too, has been alarmed at NATO's rising profile in Central Asia, a factor in its decision to initiate regular consultations with that organization in 2002. Yet the Chinese government opposes the U.S. military presence in Central Asia, which regards as a threat to its increasingly important interests there: see in the pipeline map the corridor from Tengiz field in Kazakhstan to China: fig. 1.

between Moscow and core European countries for monitoring and limiting US aspirations of expansionism.

The crisis leading to the third Gulf war has shown that.

The US policy in Eurasia is driven by the aim of avoiding a stable relation between Russia and Western Europe throughout a strong policy of fragmentation in the rimland, where countries such as Iraq, and above all Iran, are also at the centre of US-EU divergences and competition.

In this light, the end of the Cold War did not mean the end of old geo-political rivalries among old and new global players<sup>318</sup>. Thus, if the main antagonistic ingredients of the Cold War still exist, the US has promoted a policy of progressive alliance with Russia through NATO since 2002<sup>319</sup>. This policy has limited the freedom of the core Eurasian nation to deepen relations both with regional states<sup>320</sup> and potential out-of-area allies – such as Iran and, not secondarily, the European Union, for which prospects for cautious cooperation are welcomed in Moscow under the aegis of a Russian leading role:

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<sup>317</sup> Brzezinski assumes that the real challenge is still the Russia and thus the US should impede Russian renewed attempts at pursuing an imperial strategy. Brzezinski 1997: art. cit. *ibid*.

<sup>318</sup> Blank 2003: art. cit. 57-67.

<sup>319</sup> See the NATO-Russia permanent Joint Council signed in 2002, before the third gulf war. As like as the role of Cold War institutions (including the policies of IMF and WB in the 80s) has been decisive for accelerating the collapse of the Soviet Union, they are still used by the US to exercise political influence toward Russia and its satellites countries. See the Joint Declaration on New U.S.-Russia Relationship Signed in Moscow May 24, 2002 by George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin, in <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/>

<sup>320</sup> Within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty signed at in May 2002 at the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) comprising Russia and Central Asian States, Moscow does not exclude possibility of cooperation with NATO in Central Asia (Blank 2003: art. cit., 60). However, inasmuch as Russia seeks to pursue an independent military policy of cooperation in the region the partnership with the US is at risk. On the one side, in fact, Russian military elites strive to create an independent military alliance –CIS- modelled after the USSR's relationship with its Eastern European satellites. Such an organization would preclude effective Western bilateral or multilateral cooperation with the armed forces of member states. By such measures Russia may try to reduce the US involvement to train local forces in these countries, one of the main purposes of the American military presence in the area: Sami G. Hajjar 2002: U.S. Military Presence in the Gulf: Challenges and Prospects, 19-29.

*As a world power situated on two continents, Russia should retain its freedom to determine and implement its foreign and domestic policies, its status and advantages of a Euro-Asian state and largest country of the CIS. The development of partnership with the EU should contribute to consolidating Russia's role as the leading power in shaping a new system of interstate political and economic relations in the CIS area... [Russia] would oppose any attempts to hamper economic integration in the CIS, including through 'special relations' with individual CIS member states to the detriment of Russia's interests<sup>321</sup>.*

Thus, a third and foremost important strategic objective behind the implementation of the GME project -as a basis for enlarging the American sphere of influence in Eurasia- is the prevention of closer EU-Russia ties that would be a real and powerful challenge to US policy for global dominance.

The so called “stick and carrot” strategy toward Russia, therefore, also allow the US to limit EU political freedom to promote members countries’ interests independently of a US-led security system in the vast oil and gas pipeline map of Eurasia that connects the Balkans and the GME<sup>322</sup>. The US strategy aims to extend its military position from Iraq to Ukraine and, in parallel, lend vigorous support to the newly independent republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

While Russia’s national power is overshadowed by regional instability<sup>323</sup> and domestic economic weakness<sup>324</sup>, European countries have instead, the capacity to project their

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<sup>321</sup> Statement of the Russian government in the 1999 official submission to the EU Strategia 2000-2010, av. at [http://www.in.mis.ru/website/dip\\_vest.nsf](http://www.in.mis.ru/website/dip_vest.nsf); see Hannes Adomeit and Heidi Reisinger 2002: Russia's Role in Post-Soviet Territory: Decline of Military Power and Political Influence, 4-5.

<sup>322</sup> Fouskas 2003: op. cit. 15.

<sup>323</sup> Ahmed Rashid 2001: Central Asia Crisis Talks over Islamic ‘Invasion’, Daily Telegraph: 11 January.

<sup>324</sup> Moreover, Islamic movements in the region are still the main political challenge to Russian influence.

influence especially through the economic power of the Union, together with a consolidated model of socio-economic development<sup>325</sup>. Economically, the EU has already initiated an active policy for the promotion of European-led agreements with Eurasian countries in order to assure a network of corridors for oil and gas transportation to the West<sup>326</sup>.

As announced by the severe dispute over Iraq in 2003, therefore, the most distinguished geo-strategic game in Eurasia is between the US and leading EU members - such as Germany, that is, the European country the most interested, for geographical reasons and historical background, in the politics of Europe's eastward enlargement.

The distribution of power that started with the definitive occupation in Iraq is decisive to global primacy.

The consolidation of geopolitical pluralism and the emergence of strategically compatible partners in the region, in fact, facilitate US political manoeuvring for preventing the emergence of a hostile coalition that could challenge the US's primacy in shaping a "Greater Middle East security and economic system" based on the creation of main ethnic-religious blocks.

Avoiding regional alliances unsupportive of American interests, therefore, has an important part in the US approach to the regional structure of power relations.

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<sup>325</sup> Although based on liberistic economic principles, the European model of regional integration is also constructed upon principles stemming from socialist tradition which make it a real competing alternative to American conservative approach. Fouskas 2003: op. cit. 10.

<sup>326</sup> TACIS (Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States), TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia), INOGATE (Inter-state Oil and Gas Transport to Europe) signed between 1993 and 1995 are programs assisting the construction or renovation of pipelines corridors that, however, tend to avoid transit zones under Russia influence because of the US pressure against the building of a possible Franco-German-Moscow energy axis: Keith Fisher 2002: A meeting of Blood and Oil, 86-7.

The American view of the GME is pursued under the strategy of “constructive instability”<sup>327</sup> with reluctant allies that can obstruct US hegemonic tendencies in core Eurasian countries.

The old dilemma in which a geographically isolated United States has to engage an international policy based on a system of alliances<sup>328</sup> is, in some way, changing its status due to the gradual transformation of the US military force from a sea power – an aspect that played a key role in American intervention in the Second World War<sup>329</sup> – into a heartland power<sup>330</sup>. The policy of American military force specialized in aero-naval and rapid actions (after which the troops usually leave the country<sup>331</sup>) has changed character during the almost three years of military occupation in Iraq.

Only a contest over local struggles for power could allow and justify the permanence of foreign troops in the core of the ME. Moreover, the redistribution of power in the whole region passes through the supervision of the Iraqi partition of political power.

The deep difference in the nature of military intervention during the second and the third Gulf wars reflects the progressive renewal of American strategic power that in the

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<sup>327</sup> Satloff 2005: art. cit. *ibid.*

<sup>328</sup> Henry Kissinger 2001, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?: Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century.*

<sup>329</sup> See Roosevelt’s speeches at the nation about the importance for national security of controlling the sea and thus the necessity to intervene for a joint defence of US and Britain naval forces.

<sup>330</sup> Originally the “Heartland Theory” – formulated by H. Mackinder in 1904 – set the geostrategic importance of East-Europe in order to control the principal heartland power of that time, Russia (“Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; Who rules the heartland commands the World Island; Who rules the World Island commands the World”: Halford J. Mackinder 1996 (1919): *Democratic Ideals and Society*, National Defense University Press). Following Spykman, however, the epicentre of world’s geostrategic power will be in the east- Eurasian rimland: *cfr.* above.

<sup>331</sup> American military interventions should have specific and limited objectives: this policy was reconfirmed with the doctrine presented by C. Powell at the end of the cold war and again after the debacle in Somalia in 1994. The Powell Doctrine simply asserts that when a nation is engaging in war, every resource and tool should be used to achieve overwhelming force against the enemy. This may oppose the principle of proportionality, but there are grounds to suppose that principles of Just War may not be violated. After victory, the military should leave the field of engagement, rather than staying around as peacekeepers.



ME is supported by the logistic of traditional regional allies, and in the wider Eurasia region, by an enlarged NATO.

A geopolitical insight helped to see the link existing between regional and global factors explaining US politics. The main difference with the Cold War period is that the European Union, through its leading and stronger German-French front has inherited, *mutatis mutandis*, the Soviet Union's ideological potentiality of counterbalancing the US policy of unilateralism. If, during the second Gulf crisis, Germany was still bound to opting for a weak and neutral policy<sup>332</sup>, in the course of the third Gulf crisis its standing has been politically determinant in shaping the historical conjunction of interests between France, Germany and Russia<sup>333</sup>.

The Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis has prefigured the salient element in the new geo-strategic game among global players, in which the relevance of the ME is tied to the wider Eurasian region where the role of Germany and Russia are key factors in challenging US prospects for alliances in the region.

The fact that the US has focused attention particularly on the containment and prevention of this geo-political alliance -from France to Russia throughout east-Europe- is, moreover, evident from the US's overall policy of restructuring NATO into a political body and preparing it for eastward enlargement, i.e. the integration of three key countries of Central Europe –Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic in 1999- which granted the US

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<sup>332</sup> See Chapter I: 1.

<sup>333</sup> Although American policy of fragmentation has been effective, this political standing against the war has mirrored a widespread European preference to avoid war as showed by the joint demonstrations organized in all Paris, Berlin, Rome, London Madrid and Barcelona on 15 February 2003.

the application of a geo-strategy preventing the EU/Germany from establishing privileged relations with its neighbours to the east<sup>334</sup>.

All in all, a state of conflict based on ethnic fragmentation in the ME and Eurasia next to the importance of new projects for resources transportation summarizes the strategic relevance of the GME project as a source of global power.

Ideological and material powers are constructed together in order to instate the global dimension of the new world order, resulting in deep a contradiction with that pursued by the European Union's projection of power in foreign policy.

#### **4. Remarks on the Effects of the Third Gulf War on the EU domestic and Foreign Policy**

In general, the EU has been weakened by the US tendency to enhance its hegemonic role in the ME-Eurasia region and in the search for undisputed strategic supremacy in the Gulf.

In particular, the role of Iraq has been crucial to the US attempt to reassert an ideological and pragmatic legitimization of leadership in transatlantic relations.

Two main effects stem from the US unilateral war in Iraq.

Firstly, the war has deeply destabilized trends of world's economics especially in finance and trade. The developments of these two sectors since the beginning of the war have been particularly detrimental to EU domestic welfare and balanced growth especially because of the delicate momentum after the eastward enlargement. The

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<sup>334</sup> Fouskas 2003: op. cit. 14.

enhancement and protection of the US interests in the ME has corresponded with the aim to limit the growing economic-political power of the EU in the region<sup>335</sup>.

Secondly, the illegitimate nature of the war has drastically enhanced political fragmentation particularly in terms of the newly enlarged Europe. A remarkable impact of the Iraqi crisis has been to fragment the Union by weakening the cohesion and creating a new distribution of political and material power between Western and Eastern European countries.

The American search for supporting an illegitimate war aimed to produce a change in power relations favourable to the weaker European states seeking more political influence inside the Union. In this strategy of fragmentation, a crucial role was played by the 10 new NATO and EU Eastern members' signatories of the "Vilnius 10" declaration, an open letter of support to the US issued in the event of the transatlantic crisis<sup>336</sup>.

Under the definition of American policy-makers, the so called "New Europe"<sup>337</sup> would have to be concerned with the hegemonic aspirations of Western EU core members and, for this main reason it supported the US interventionist policy<sup>338</sup>.

In other words, the fragmentation served an American interest to prevent and counter balance a European political power stemming from a consolidated Franco-German axis.

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<sup>335</sup> Marr 1998: art. cit. 74-103.

<sup>336</sup> For the full text see Global Policy Forum 2003: Europe and America Must Stand United, Times: 30 January, at [www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/media/2003/0130useur.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/media/2003/0130useur.htm)

<sup>337</sup> C. Powell

<sup>338</sup> See, for example, the statement of a Czech diplomat: "We will not trust again in French security guarantees" and the statement of J. Chirac responding to applicant countries supporting US with the risk of jeopardize their applications for EU membership. Heller Mark 2003: The "Trans-Atlantic Rift", Iraq and Israel, 2-7.

The “Iraqi problem” has become a matter of “domestic security” for the EU because it has raised the costs of maintaining the sustainable development of a common strategy in foreign policies.

A deeper political integration in an enlarged Europe through the production of a coherent federal policy is a challenge to the US’s search for global supremacy.

This challenge was envisaged by Brzezinski who qualifies it in terms of its geopolitical nature. As a strong supporter of a stable European-American alliance, the Anglo-Saxon analyst sees in the European process of enlargement a positive move in order to neutralize such a challenge and counterbalance its potential effects against the US strategy of supremacy. The inclusion of pro-American Eastern European countries would mitigate “emancipation policies” pursued by leading Western countries.

This analysis, made in the second half of the 90s, focusing on the role played by EU enlargement, is particularly relevant when applied to the cases of the Gulf wars and the politics of identity promoted by the EU in the ME during the 90s.

With the aim of preserving both the process of enlargement and that of political homogeneity in foreign policies, the Germany-France alliance opted for a limitation of the US legitimacy to act unilaterally. This objective was still latent in the course of the second Gulf crisis, due to the absence of an institutional framework among European countries. In those circumstances, moreover, the US administration also opted for a scheme of rapid intervention not aimed at destabilizing the Iraqi sovereignty.

An adverse consequence that continued to be felt by the EU in 2003 was the presence of foreign troops occupying the country and destabilizing the whole region.

In the wake of the third Gulf crisis, the Union's priority continued to bring negative consequences, as, on the one hand, the Union sought to preserve Iraqi sovereignty with regional stability and, on the other, it wished to reduce the potential success of American unilateralism.

Such kinds of interventionism promoted outside multilateral decision bring with them a set of risks for the Union's ambitions in East Europe-Eurasia and in the ME.

Insofar as these are regions plagued by economic instability and a difficult process towards a democratic redistribution of national power, the first and foremost challenge rests in the fact that a unilateral attack represents a dangerous precedent for the unilateral use of preventive force<sup>339</sup>.

While the US decision to invade Iraq unilaterally had definitely undermined the system of the UN Security Council, partially the EU has also lost an instrument for defending European interests as a homogeneous entity granting their countries a balanced system for resolving international crises.

The UN instrument could be effective especially because it assured a more balanced redistribution of tasks -and benefits- in dealing with after-crisis management and consequentially, had the essential function of safeguarding political engagement as a way of dealing with inter-European conflicts of interest. On the contrary, unilateral intervention exposed the weakness of Europe's common foreign policy and excluded European countries from influence in Iraq afterwards.

In turn the weakening of the European institution however has corresponded with a fundamental strengthening of the European identity at least in the first stages of the conflict in Iraq. In this regard, a particular political effect results in closer ideological ties

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<sup>339</sup> Hebermans 2005 (2004): op. cit. 45.

between core EU countries and ME Arab countries opposing the US intervention in Iraq and widening the distances between Europe and Israel.

This result, however, has not reduced the negative effects stemming from the American inability to ménage and to contain the war itself. The prolonged state of insecurity in Iraq emphasizes a Western failure extended to all Western actors. By consequence, the credibility of the EU –and its effective capacity- has also decreased together with any power to pressurise Israel or Iran. At the same time, the EU's low credibility is reflected in the loss of trust and confidence on the side of the Palestinians. All in all, the intervention in Iraq has weakened the Union's policy of balancing interests for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and an overall capacity to project a political power in the ME.

The transatlantic rift on the use of force in the face of international threats also led to the emergence of a profound divergence of fundamental political values between two global camps, one of the core European countries promoting a European model for solving international crisis based on consensual process and multilateral legitimacy, and the other led by the US view of international relations projected towards hegemonic aspirations.

In substance, the line connecting US-Iraq-EU- indicates that divergences are shaped on how international relations ought to be conducted and defined.

On a global level, the occupation of Iraq has initiated the US's expansion of influence in Eurasia through the ten East European countries that gave their unconditional support to Washington.

Thus, the occupation of Iraq under the US military leadership is functioning as a political lever for enlarging military posture and establishing political alliances with countries from Eastern Europe to the Persian Gulf.

This insight into the relevance of the Eurasian landscape enlightens the shaping of a greater geopolitical space where the global dimension of the new world order is expressed by limiting all the rimland's competitors: Russia, EU France-Germany and Iran<sup>340</sup>.

In particular, the geographic and cultural proximity of the ME region to Europe makes the strategic concern for stability in the region a much more sensible issue for the EU than for the US.

For Europe, a state of conflict in the area is not disruptive just because of the direct effects on national democratic standards and the implementation of bilateral agreements for the solution of social challenges; but also for the vast range of indirect consequences that the destabilization of energy resource imports may produce for regional balance and stability and, therefore, for the future of the Union's political process.

Unstable economic trends next to political fragmentation have, indeed, restrained the advancement of the constitutional framework even in those countries such as France that represent the avant-garde of the European process of political union.

The case made by the failure of the French referendum for the approval of the EU constitution highlights a consistent part of our thesis. The failure of the French

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<sup>340</sup> On the east side of Eurasia, China represents the other important player toward which, nevertheless, the US is using a cautious policy; in the case, the balance of power with China is in great part left to regional outcomes and antagonisms (Pakistan and India). America and China need each other in Eurasia, China's growing interest in Central Asia constrains Russia's and China's support for Pakistan restrains India's; in regard to the Persian Gulf, China's growing energy needs means it has a common interest with America in maintaining free access to, and political stability in, the oil-producing regions. Brzezinski 1997: art. cit. *ibid.*

referendum is the strongest signal of a political crisis in core European countries rooted in the recent and prolonged economic instability initiated by the war in Iraq with its consequences on global financial markets.

Moreover, while for both the US and the EU a vital interest to protect is the free flow of oil at reasonable prices, Europe is more dependent on Middle Eastern supplies than the US, the level of competition on this matter has assumed a global relevance since important Asian economies have entered into the market of the area.

All in all, the domino effect of the American policy of instability in the “rimland region” has crossed regional borders and is heavily affecting the political, economic and security system of the Union. After the attacks in Madrid and London, what has been definitively proved is that the European security system cannot face the threat of terror enhanced by the US preventive war unless a coherent policy of cooperation for regional stability is promoted with the active participation of ME countries.

The unilateral decision to attack Iraq in 2003 has not ended the US-EU alliance or, at least, has not completely removed the necessity for both the US and EU-France to cooperate on some important key-issues: during the development of the Lebanese crisis in 2004-05 (behind which, after Hezbollah, the targeted player was the Syrian regime) the resolution 1559 could not be proposed without a joint accord between the US and France<sup>341</sup>.

Nevertheless, American unilateralism, by weakening the sovereignty of a key ME country such as Iraq, showed that the balance of shared interests established during the

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<sup>341</sup> Although the resolution calls for the disarmament of Hezbollah militias in a regional contest of still ongoing conflict with Israel, the French role has been supportive of Lebanese side throughout its reformist groups (interview of the writer with Mary Dabs, representative of the Lebanese Communist Party, Beirut, May 2005); above all the US threat of sending international forces has been the core issue behind the crisis of a country where Shi'a military apparatus is important also in the light of the Iraqi fighting.



90s between the EU and the US in the region was apparent. Alternative prospects for redefining a system of sharing tasks and spaces of preferential relations in ME represent a key priority for which an effective European policy in ME cannot have the chance to work.

From this perspective, our thesis underlines the political and ideological competition, more than with Russia, with leading European countries for which the US long term objective is to redesign the system of power relations in the ME, thereby limiting the advancement of the process of European Union. In such a system, the ME, since the third Gulf war, functions as keying in the chain of American global sovereignty deployed from the southern to the eastern borders of the Union through the Eurasian region.

## **5. Significance of the Research**

The analysis indicated that regional institutions have a role in determining changes in the behaviour of national actors. I have considered the France-German refusal to go to war out of a legal framework as being a result of an advanced stage in the process of European integration.

The existence of a European Union institutional framework is the variable that has allowed the two relatively weak actors to reinforce a strategy of political emancipation through the direct refusal to cooperate with a leading world superpower. This refusal was aimed at isolating the US by delegitimising its role of political leadership.

The construction of a collective political identity in Europe and its enforcement through the establishment of an institutionalized regional entity -the EU- has progressively produced a change in the transatlantic alliance and in European national priorities.

In as much as the process of political disintegration in Eurasia has opened a new stage in the global order, the process of regional integration in Europe has also had the chance to be implemented together with a defined EU foreign policy that began with proactive participation in the ME politics during the 1990s.

Within this view of the world order made by a cyclic system characterized by process of regional disintegration and integration, system transforming wars, such as the third Gulf war, can delay -but not stop- the tendency shown by the actors of the system to produce and enforce collective entities based on shared knowledge of political thoughts, on the one hand, and shared level of material powers on the other.

The analysis showed the importance of examining how shared experience stemming from different traditions of political thoughts within the same regional contest reinforce the construction of distinctive answers contra leading superpowers that engage in unilateral oriented policies.

The re-conceptualization of power -through the political concept of security and legitimacy for example- is relevant because of the possibility to operate differentiated

choices and promote alternative strategies weakening the political authority of the hegemonic actor.

From this perspective, the European logic indicates that security means the possibility of always having an alternative choice.

The flexibility of the EU institutional framework, although commonly understood only in terms of its weaknesses, has nonetheless been effective in allowing those nations in Europe to take an emancipated stand. This has been possible especially because they were basically the supporters of the process of political union that provided them with the political advantage of identifying their alternative choice to a collective response distinct from the policy pursued in Washington. This institutional umbrella has allowed them to avoid negative consequences, such as political isolation.

The ideological failure of the socialist order has produced a rupture in the predictability and identification of shared interests between the US and the EU.

In a previous stage of transatlantic relations, in fact, the existence of the Soviet Union could partly mitigate US hegemonic aspirations on the one side, and the EC political-identity aspirations on the other.

Since then, two fundamental outcomes have characterized the transatlantic partnership, for which a constant tension between identity and hegemony makes the alliance at one time politically irreplaceable and ideologically weak.

Keohane, for instance, has used both concepts of realism and institutionalism, such as power and cooperation, to frame an analysis of what he defines the hegemonic cooperation in the post WWII era<sup>342</sup>. That perspective, however, was attentive to the

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<sup>342</sup> The strategy of “hegemonic cooperation” began with the Marshal Plan, a key aspect of the Truman Doctrine of containment. By providing resources to recover European weakness the Truman administration

relevance of economic futures for establishing institutions that enabled control of the world rule-making process and that have also played a key role in the dissolution of the Soviet Union during the 80s.

The overall approach of the research has shown that both neo-realism and constructivism are able to account for the shaping of the post-Cold War order and its future of ideological crisis. The future of identity as a causal variable in the mainstream EU countries' choices and the future of hegemony in the US unilateralism have been proved to be both complementary fundamental in explaining not only the nature of the crisis in transatlantic relations, but above all, the effects of this tension on a third contest.

A major crisis in the Western exercise of sovereign powers is expressed in the projection of two opposing paradigms for "good governance" in the ME.

In this sense, the clash is within the Civilization: within the stage of an historical moment throughout which two founding aspects of world civilizations as like as ideal and material powers are endowed by actors that are, nevertheless, unable to govern their own space of sovereignty.

In this sense, the Third Gulf war is an expression of a Western failure to reconcile collected ideal and material powers: efficacy of knowledge stays, of course, not in the accumulation itself but in the way in which it is used.

For this reason, a central point emerged in the analysis regards the misuse of the ideological realm of power made by the superpower in order to cover the gap of political legitimacy.

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has also provided itself with the political leverage to achieve hegemonic cooperation for establishing and keeping a new set of world political and financial system. Robert O. Keohane 1984: After hegemony. Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy, 135ss.

As mentioned above, the progressive advancement in the degree of a constructed identity is a challenge to the exercise of hegemony.

The collapse of the Eurocentric world order has left a vacuum that all American administrations since Wilson have tried to conquest by the means of achieving “the dream of universal pacification”<sup>343</sup>.

As known, the ideology of freedom and wealth as founding assumptions of democracy and the free market economy entails the new world order doctrine. The spread of democracy -and not the application of democracy itself- as an expression of a ‘neo-mission civilisatrice’ indicates a totalitarian view of the world order whose principal aim is a collective nomos and destiny.

In the unilateral definition of civilization based solely on democratic standards for political life, there has been a substitution of religious concepts with laics categories that, however, have not changed their functioning as an instrument of hegemonic power instead of being a means for multilateral coexistence. The refusal of any different political system means, of course, denying the other’s basic idea and practice of co-existence and collective on which individual existence depend.

Any doctrine of world order is based on the fact that equality of sovereign powers prevented the use of military methods of annihilation<sup>344</sup>. Changes in the quality of these powers, therefore, affect the system of the order.

In this regard, Schmitt notes that the transformation of military warfare from sea to air space armed conflict is a threat to the order because the character of modern air war is purely destructive<sup>345</sup>.

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<sup>343</sup> William Rasch 2005: Carl Schmitt and the New World Order, 179.

<sup>344</sup> Carl Schmitt 2003 (1950): The Nomos of the Earth, 142.

If for Schmitt, war is a continuation of politics by other means, there should nevertheless be a *nomos* - a legal order in the making of warfare if states want be legitimated and peace enabled<sup>346</sup>. Most importantly, however, is that in order to enable the existence of a separated realm of warfare between European states, an absolute limit had to be established. That is an absolute division between Western and non-Western realms of violence<sup>347</sup>.

We see better now how hegemony has to pass through the fighting of wars whose character is to be out of the established legal order. The enlargement of the space of sovereignty acts in the line of this absolute limit and by moving it the space of hegemony is enlarged and consolidated.

As the notions of civilized and non-civilized nations -introduced in the warfare system<sup>348</sup>- have left space for peace loving nations, a new category has also been introduced with the expression of “terrorist”.

Wars fought against terror are similar to wars fought against non-civilized nations. Their similarities lie above all in the quality of warfare methods and main purpose: colonial bombing and modern aerial technologies both have a merely destructive function<sup>349</sup>.

We encounter here a second fundamental character of the new world order: the construction of the category of the enemy whose function is, in the end, fully ideological

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<sup>345</sup> Carl Schmitt 1954: *Land und Meer*, 320.

<sup>346</sup> This view leads to the politicization of warfare, the creation of a realm of activity distinct from properly interstate politics. The bracketing of warfare and its rationalization is, for Schmitt, a European achievement: Schmitt 2003 (1950): *op. cit.* 320.

<sup>347</sup> Jon Beasley-Murray: *The Common Enemy: Tyrants and Pirates*, 219.

<sup>348</sup> See the Congo Act signed following the Congo Conference in 1884-5: Beasley-Murray: *art. cit. ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> Schmitt 2003 (1950): *op. cit.* 320.

and quasi mythical, because enemy is an unidentifiable entity and there is no direct confrontation, but just the aim to destroy<sup>350</sup>.

The third Gulf war illustrates that the ideological paradigm based on the triangular concept of “freedom-democracy-prosperity” cannot tolerate real differences of beliefs and material interests.

What it is therefore important to analyse is the way in which changes can be promoted. Agamben concludes that changes are related to the possibility of breaking the link between the realm of violence and that of law, an action that will lead to a new condition<sup>351</sup>. By consequence, we may ask how is it possible to develop the conditions for breaking this link.

Part of the answer should be in the analysis of why and how this link has been established. We suggest that a key point lies in a change in sovereignty powers.

When the politics of sovereignty are incapable of producing answers to domestic problems and international relations became the primary source of legitimizing national sovereignty war becomes the means to understanding a world sociality of relations and regulating its forces by coercion.

A war such as the current occupation of Iraq indicates a deep crisis in the sphere of sovereign power. In this regard, in his harsh criticism of the liberal system, Schmitt compared the status of civil war in domestic politics to the status of war between nations in international relations<sup>352</sup>.

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<sup>350</sup> Hart and Negri define this enemy as “abstract enemy” in “the war on terror”: Michael Hart and Antonio Negri 2004: *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, 31-31.

<sup>351</sup> Agamben 2006: art. cit. *ibid.*

<sup>352</sup> Carl Schmitt 1996 (1932): *Concept of the Political*.

Moreover, Schmitt's criticism highlights the failure of reproducing a system in which political forces can compromise for strengthening a common good (which in his discourse was the state as absolute sovereign actor) leads necessarily to the isolation of the realm of political from any other fields of human activity; an isolation that, in his work, became defined under the *anomos* space where the source of sovereignty is found. This nature of the structure has its main meaning in the function of preserving and, at one time, being the finality of the political.

This understanding of political purposes cannot find links with other concepts that may stem from or below other realms of social life and are absolutely restricted to the radical concept of life and death.

Isolation of the political creates an autarchic vision where means and ends converge at the same point, justifying the necessity of acting for preserving a system whose main goal, as with a labyrinth circle, is to justify its own space and existence.

It is, thus, a very logical and natural development the emergence of a constitutional convergence between legislative and executive powers that, as we have seen, characterizes the state of emergency and the special laws of the Bush's administration.

In this world structure, two fields of power can be used as counter-powers, the space of economics and communications, because they are globalised spaces. The superpower controls the structure's overall spaces of power, technology, military power, communications and economy, of course. Thus, in order to arrive at the core of the significance of the research, we may finally ask a political question "who is the real enemy?" Or we may also ask a merely philosophical question: "what is the structure founded on?"



The space of political power lies outside the key spaces of the “global sovereignty” paradigm. It is understood, in fact, just as an exception granted by special laws. The principle of exception instates a structure from which the space of politics results in suspension and crisis.

In these systemic circumstances, the category of enemy is defined by an exercise of force as a lever for justifying and strengthening the existence of the military power and force itself.

One may argue that the third Gulf War -as much as the second- is a source of securing economic resources to the hegemon and that this kind of war should be understood as a neo-liberist war. Indeed, the US neo-liberist model of production which is not based on traditional mode of production –such as the European system- is based, instead, on a deficitarian state-system to the advantage of national military production and globalised financial markets.

Nevertheless, the analysis has underlined a far more critical issue related to the consequences of international relations on the systemic level leading to the four spaces of powers in the neo-liberism. The traditional liberal school, for instance, considers war to be an unfavourable future for economics and in this way we may see neo-liberism as a pure degeneration of liberalism.

To return to a political view, to European Union founders the concept of political must refer necessarily to the creation of a common-public sphere limiting the power of actions, while for the US the concept came to indicate a concrete distinction of friend and enemy at the basis of the statement “with us or against us”<sup>353</sup>.

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<sup>353</sup> See above: Chapter II.

In this way, the US ideology of politics proposes a reversal of the concept of the political for which human agents originally agree not to kill in order not to be killed and advances the priority of killing in order of not being killed instead.

The principle, thus, allows the practice of exceptional actions that are free, in other words, from any limit or constriction. The concept of political, as with that of democracy, is qualified by freedom.

As such it has become a guideline for political alliances and recalls Schmitt's concept of the political for which the identification of friend and enemy is seen as being related to the real possibility of physical killing in the most extreme condition of war and death in battle<sup>354</sup>.

Such understanding of the political is realistic and practical and goes beyond perceptions of ideals, circumstances of competitions or even common concepts of the adversary because the degree of intensity of an association or dissociation within a partnership is tied only to the possibility of killing in the end<sup>355</sup>.

To put it differently, transatlantic partners –following Schmitt's logic- may consider each other good allies because the possibility of being an enemy, to attack each other, is concretely remote.

Most importantly, however, is the identification of friend-enemy as the only founding category for the political that, in practice, creates an autonomous and independent realm disconnected from any other field of human activity<sup>356</sup>.

According to Schmitt, this reasoning was a powerful theoretical response to the liberal attempt at making politics a means of economic interests<sup>357</sup>.

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<sup>354</sup> Carl Schmitt 1996 (1932): op. cit, 27ss.

<sup>355</sup> Frye 1966: art. cit. 816.

<sup>356</sup> Frye 1966: art. cit. 824.

Nevertheless, the ideological process of purifying the political realm from any “external” element implied a second and specific finality.

An “independent” concept of politics is the space where an auto-nomos concept of authority also found ground for self-justified exercise because no derived limits can be posed on its definition and, thus, on its means and ends.

The aim was to make the realm of the political sovereign itself with respect to all other fields, such as economics or social life.

The search for a power of absolute authority has a very practical function, because it is viewed as the only source of power that can command men to lay down their lives in its defence<sup>358</sup>.

Hence, Schmitt’s friend-enemy category is primarily a theory of international relations and, more exactly, a theory of international war.

It helps us to show how states behave when their founding principles of sovereignty are not capable of giving responses to domestic problems and are instead, systematically oriented towards external confrontation or tension.

Equally important to our discourse is that Schmitt elaborates his basic theoretical category looking at a domestic scene of unsolved conflict so that his concept of the political stems from the exceptional condition of civil war.

The abnormal state of civil war, therefore, is made comparable with the condition of war between nation-states. Nevertheless, if domestic and international scenes are comparable under the conditions of civil and inter-national war, this must be also considered an abnormal and exceptional as much as a civil war.

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<sup>357</sup> Frye 1966: *ibid.*

<sup>358</sup> Frye 1966: *art. cit.* 826.

That explains why the overall structure of the concept of the political is permanently based on a state of “bellicose exception”.

The historical condition of Germany and the theoretical answer of Schmitt reveals the break of a deep crisis in the realm of norms for collective and relational existence: the search for a state whose identity and purposes are identified with the practice of an exceptional authority -instead of that of a constitutional representation- indicate that the crisis is not about the relation between order and disorder, state of norm and state of exception.

Instead, the crisis is relational within the sphere of the order leading to a misuse of the “sacred space”, the space of the political-institutional.

If the function of this conceptual category normally would be that of granting limits and assuring a system of shared co-existence, in circumstances of changes, this space became the most important because whoever controls it will control the establishment and maintenance of the coming order.

The category of disorder through the future of exception became the main political instrument of the new world order.

This paradigm offers an explanation of the causes of the main political events under analysis: the cases of the Gulf wars.

Given the differences between the two Gulf wars in specific short-term objectives and historical contests, a relation of continuity between the second and the third Gulf war is found in the new geo-political function that the regional politics of the ME came to represent in the overall American strategy for global leadership and progressive

expansionism in new areas of interests that emerged after the demise of the Soviet Empire.

In terms of the effects of the third Gulf war, we can recall the worlds of Waltz to describe a contradiction in the use of the US military capability for the establishment of a new world order: *the perils of weakness are matched by the temptations of power*<sup>359</sup>.

By consequence, a risk stemming from the state of emergency lies in the effects on the quality and nature of Western democratic governance.

What emerges as the most important outcome of the analysis of the global sovereignty paradigm started with a geopolitics connecting the ME to the Eurasia, are the results it brings in deepening our understanding of dictatorship, both historically and theoretically.

Global sovereignty based on the legitimacy of a pre-emptive ideology and state of emergency is a model that cannot truly be defined as a dictatorship but as “a space devoid of law”<sup>360</sup>.

This is not just a theoretical remark. A paramount aspect of modern dictatorship –as with the Third Reich and Fascism- also highlights salient contemporary political aspects. Following Agamben’s analysis we do not need to look at dictatorship to understand political dictates and dictators, but we need to see mechanisms and substance inherent in the state of exception.

A paradox emerges here, for the prolonged existence of the Third Reich for instance, was not in place because of an institutional mandate of dictatorship. Instead the paramount existence of what we wrongly define as dictatorship depended on a total and

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<sup>359</sup> Waltz 1979: op. cit. 201.

<sup>360</sup> “... the creation of zone of anomy in which all legal determinations find themselves inactivated. In this way, and in spite of the common view, neither Mussolini nor Hitler can be technically defined as dictators”: Agamben 2006: art. cit. *ibid*.

permanent state of emergency, a legally non-formalized structure that existed in parallel with the Weimer constitution.

We may recall, finally, the function of exceptionality in the exercise of the tyrant who acts by normalizing the exceptionality<sup>361</sup> and, in fact, exceptionality and interminability are the two qualities in the paradigm of global sovereignty started with the Third Gulf War.

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<sup>361</sup> Schmitt 1996: op. cit. ibid.



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