

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 reviled 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.