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Democracy, Conflicts, International Law: "Freeing" Politics and International Diplomacy from the limitations of the Media

My contribution is articulated in two points.

I°) First of all, as a politics expert and historian of the Middle East I think and know well that Policy and Politicians are today strongly conditioned by Mass Media, and this - for some historical reasons that would be impossible here to analyse - far more than in the Bipolar era.
This is particularly true as far as if concerns the *Foreign Affairs* Policy. Let's remember the beginning of the crisis era that we live: just on the 11th of September the former Secretary of State Colin Powell – who, differently from Cheney and Rumsfeld, was in favour of a reduction of sanctions against Saddam's Iraq – should have gone to announce in the United Nation's Palace, the standing of Washington for the so-called Palestinian mini-state, of course leaded by Arafat. Anti-Islamic attitudes inside the US Administration were weak or "silent", especially after the big event of the Durban Conference against racialism of the end of August.
Still after the Twin Towers terroristic attack, in the last decade of September president Bush tried to persuade Sharon to meet Arafat: Peres agreed, but Sharon was strongly opposing. 11th September terroristic attack has changed all, *and in this dramatic change the role of western mass media was determinant to push an historically very weak western political class toward the "class of civilisation"* theorised by S. Huntington. Arafat, accused to have supported the Saddam's speech of 12th August 1990, was demonised and surrounded up to his political and physical end. In States, the Media accused falsely Saddam to be the responsible for the Twin Towers attack, sustaining an absurd alliance of laic Baathist regime with Al Qaeda, and later they invented the legend of the mass destruction arms of Saddam Hussein.
Most of all, the weak Bush was accused to be weak and to be not able to react, being absolved only when he was choosing words and acts of war. Many western mass media invented and mounted a new *jingoism* made of hysteric anti-Islamic and anti-Arabic attitude that permitted the wars against Afghanistan in 2001 and in 2003 against Iraq, first two steps of the so-called "infinite war" theorised by pro-Israeli Jews Neo-cons in the letter to the US President of 20th of September 2001. By the point of view of the same specific interest of the "Bush Family", this terrible trend has put in danger even the traditional links of US with Saudi Arabia, and it is possible that in the contrast between Bush jr and Bush sr. this particular chapter was important.
This was the beginning: let's see very shortly the mass-media panorama today: in Darfur there is no "genocide", and the crisis is an internal on, by the way mounted also by the help of Israel to the guerrilla contrary to the agreements of 2005 Abuja agreements, a peace agreement signed by *all* the western countries: but in American and western press is common the idea that the "international community" had to intervene *against* the willing of legitimate government of Khartoum, to stop the "genocide".
In Somalia the terrible effects of the illegal invasion of Ethiopia, are forgotten because of an alleged "danger of Al Qaeda", that *now*, after the stopping of the Somali State semi-spontaneous rebuilding

up, promoted by the " Islamic Courts", is becoming eventually real. Western media are often silent about this crisis.

In Palestine, Hamas – the obvious result not only of its social policy but also of the demonization of Arafat – is now *a son tour* labelled: the western ant Islamic extremism (supported by the mass media attitude that privileges always the aspect of the Hamas' military reaction to Israeli occupation) does not want to accept the fundamental democratic principle that Hamas is anyway the legal representative of Palestinian people, sacralised by regular election, regular as universally recognised.

An other chapter: 2006 Israel war against Lebanon war, founds justificationist comments in some Italian networks, like State owned RAI: for istance the actual correspondent in Israel for television, put on the same level the kidnapping of two israelian soldiers with the carpet bombing of Lebanon. As the result of such a trend, the audience of satellite network RAI-News 24, has fallen to only 1000 presence a day, as his editor-chief Mineo himself recognised. But labelling Hezbollah seems to be more important.

Finally, Iran crisis: it is absolutely sure that from the point of view of International Law, Iran – as Saudi Arabia, and as every other Arabic country of Middle East – has the right to develop civil nuclear, *an even the military one*, because of the atomic armaments of Israel since the end of Sixties: but often the western press, that does not remember that in September 2001 the Israel ambassador in Rome Avi Pazner explicitly menaced Syria and Lebanon to utilise atomic bombing against them, insists only on the Iranian "danger". Ahmedinejad, thedy say, is hated by *all* the Persian people, also if he gained twice regular elections. And he, of course, is "anti-semitic".

This last accusation is very easy in western mass media, against anyone who tries to criticize the Israeli moves and actions in Middle East areas. Even Italian Foreign Affairs minister D'Alema was accused of anti-semitism in 2007, just before the Convention of his new political party, the Democratic Party, in a pamphlet written by a jewish integralist in which the then minister of Foreign Affairs was incorrectly put side by side in a "black list", with other journalists, experts, historians all of sharp anti-racialist and progressive feelings, neither "anti-Semitic" nor – it's sure - "negationists".

This accuse is of course linked to the standing of D'Alema for a *realistic* foreign policy for peace in Middle East. D'Alema – who is the last representative, in a very moderate and responsible form, of the so-called "euro-mediterranean" policy, whose elder protagonists were personalities such as Enrico Mattei, Aldo Moro, Bettino Craxi and Giulio Andreotti - was furiously blamed by some italian newspapers in August 2006, only because he was walking amongst the ruins of Beirut accompanied by a Hezbollah representative, labelled himself as a dangerous "terrorist" only because his movement was resistant against the continued occupation and vexation policy of Israeli Army in Lebanon. For these journalists, the scandal were not the horrible ruins of Beirut - result of carpet bombing – but the fact that D'Alema had walked as arm-in-arm with his Lebanese host and guide.

Of course the impact of western mass media on western political class is different from country to country. Of course, there could be, I suppose, a similar problem for other reasons and items, also in all the other regions of the world. Of course, I don't know what is possible to do (an international conference for a frankly, open-wide debate between western and arab or Islamic mass media?). But generally speaking, it would be important before any significant political action, to "free" western politicians – but not only the politicians, and not only the western ones - from that sort of journalistic 'terrorism' in Europe and the United States, that has accompanied all the new terrible wars post-11th September.

It is diffucult to imagine that Arabic and Islamic states could gain the West approbation for their stands without considering this important aspect of the International Diplomatic Politics, as proff. Walt e Mearsheimer with their book on "The Jewish Lobby" in States, and brave and honest jewish intellectuals with their revisionistic analysis, as Norman Finkelstein (*Holocaust Industry*) or Ilan Pappe (*The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*), teach us.In fact,:

II°) Once aware of this mass-media limitations on Foreign Policy' which disables or weakens the unfolding of a politics of peace in the Middle East, independent and courageous by the Western Countries, it becomes much easier to define the fair and productive criteria to analyze the international and regional situation.
Enrico Mattei (1906-1962), the first president and founder in 1953 of ENI, the Italian Petrolium State-owned Corporation, was a christian-democrat strongly anti-communist: but he was a convinced supporter of the interreligious dialogue (his great friend and co-member of the party La Pira promoted in 1957 at Arezzo a remarkable Islamic-Christian-Jewish conference) and a great fighter against every form of colonialism, including the economic one. In fact, Mattei strongly fought with great determination to establish new relationships between petroleum producing countries – at the time hugely dependent on the American-English Oil companies - and the consumer Countries, up to invent the famous 'ENI new formula', which was consistent in guaranteeing the oil producing countries - which in a few years would have formed the OPEC (1960) - not only a higher share of royalties (over 75%) but also and most significantly the own management of the oil wells, through *own* oil companies.
On the basis of these guidelines for his politics of friendship with the Arab and Islamic Middle East countries, Mattei not only looked for constructive alliance with the newly-formed European Union (Treaty of Rome, 1957), looking with favour the establishment of the French Petroleum company Union Générale des Pétroles, but also signed an incredible number of agreements with oil producing countries of all tendencies, mainly Sunni or Shia, laics or religious, moderate or radicals, republicans or monarchist: from Morocco to the Egypt of Nasser – who announced the nationalization of the Canal of Suez the subsequent day of the visit of Mattei to Cairo in 1956 - from Saudi Arabia to Syria, from the monarch Libia to the Iran of the Persian Shah, Mattei worked in a "multipartisan" and "trasversal" way, to persue his strategic objectives: i. e. the development of a politic of economic cooperation with the il producing countries of Middle East, as a basis for a real politic of peace in the Middle East.
History is not written by the 'if's, but I'm sure that if Qatar was already independent at the times of Mattei, ENI would have signed already at those times, an agreement of cooperation also with this small but important state of the Arabic World.

Today, allowing for necessary adjustments (in latin: *mutatis mutandis*), it is necessary to continue to act with the same spirit of peace, confirming certain courageous but necessary guidelines to make the Middle East free from the various conflicts that disable it and threaten it. The main topics that we need to address in this post-bipolar era are the following:

1) **Democracy cannot not be exported by arms,** also because we are no longer in the era of of the French Revolution and of Napoleons conquest's bayonets, but in a technologically terrible era with arms of mass distruction which mainly hit and kill civilians. Charles De Gaulle had the historic courage of leaving Algeria in 1962, and the same should be done in Iraq Afghanistan and Palestine. One cannot expect to impose his own regimes, against the people's wish which manifests itself through regular elections. For example, the pre-judice of Israel and its followers in West World towards Hamas is well known. But Hamas is the legitimate representant of the Palestinians since it was voted in elections that the whole international community regarded as fair. Here, and in alike situations of open conflict or crisis, international diplomacy, the West in particular, cannot elude the dialogue with regimes or political movements with which it doesn't share the same orientation. It's an evident contradiction of the English-American claim of military intervention in 'the name of democracy'.
2) **It's necessary to distinguish – as the the League of Arab States already did in 2003 - between criminal "transnational" terrorism, and the movements of national liberation linked to a defined territory,** who also perform 'acts of terrorism' (as all movements of liberation did in Asia and Africa at the times of decolonization) but to resist the foreign occupation. This crucial distinction is also 'written' in the United Nations Chart, that

recognizes the full right of 'Colonial Peoples' to oppose the foreign military presence over territories of their legitimate possession; and it is written also in the history of decolonization, starting from the experience of Vietnam. Even if in disagreement with the above mentioned, *it's still illusionary to think to create peace in absence of dialogue with the enemy.* How is it possible to think to create peace in Palestine without involving Hamas, as it is now? In Iraq, without involving the previous party of Baath? In Afghanistan, without the Talebans?

3) **It's necessary to finally solve the situation of disequilibrium caused by the "asimmetry"of the International Law in the Middle East,** a situation that is advantaging only one state, Israel: **the International Law as codified in the United Nations Chart has been "assassinated" after 11th september, or far before, i.e. after resolution 968 of 1990 against Iraq, that began to change the interpretation of Paragraph VII of the same Chart, and opened the way to the new "revisionistic" and relativistic thesis of the US International Law School.**
First of all, Article 2 of the Chart of the United Nations should be respected, in which it deals with the sovreignity and integrity of independent States: Darfur is an internal Sudanese crisis; Ethiopia must retire its troops form Somalia; the sovreignity of Iraq over its territories shall be respected, also because the formal recognition of an eventual Kurdish secessionism would havoc in all neighbouring countries; military intervention have to be considered legitime only under aegis of the United Nations, and for the prevention of wars between countries: such as in the case of Lebanon war.

Also, the International Law must be applied to all countries: Iraq was attacked and heavily sanctioned – with the the latest war that started in 2003, which has not yet ended, and itself marked by the violation of many international and humanitarian rights – because it had occupied Kuwait for a few months. It's since 1967 that Israel occupies Palestinian Territories and the International Community has not be able in more than 40 years to even send a UN observer on the so-called 'green line': the result was the repeated violation of resolutions of the Security Council – in more than hundreds - by the Jewish state, and its politics of colonialism and new expansionsim ('the Wall') which do nothing but complicate the matter and make the peace process even more impractical.
The same applies for the Syrian hills of Golan, and for the remaining points of the crisis: it would be appropriate if the whole region spanning the Near and Middle East shall be de-nuclearized, but it's because of this that the Israeli government – Israel has not signed the non-nuclear proliferation treaty - cannot think that other countries in the region can accept the ban of developing, even in military grounds, the nuclear technology. The problem today - in absence of concrete data about the presence of nuclear stations for military purposes, as numerously stated by El Baradei – is the use of Atomic Energy only for economic and civilian purposes: in this field the Statute of the AIEA is very clear, the international community not only shall not prevent, but should even *help* (art. 2) countries having this intention of use.