

ABSTRACTS

PHILLIPE DROZ-VINCENT, *Obedient but Distrustful: The Regional System and United States Policy after the Fall of Baghdad.*

The Middle East is a system deeply marked by external factors, in particular by the United States presence and its influence on regional security dynamics. Since 9/11, that factor has been particularly destabilizing: it is a source of insecurity. Beyond the policy reorientations undertaken by Barack Obama's administration, the issue arises as to the Americans' potential for action, which fluctuates between collusion with the region's authoritarian regimes and the more or less extensive projects to restructure the area. More important than wondering about Washington's capacity to gain hegemony over the area, is doubting its ability to further real security dynamics.

Key words: **Middle East, United States, regional security, change of regime, intervention in Iraq.**

DELPHINE LAGRANGE, *France's Policy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A four-ways relation. The effects of Iraqi War in French diplomacy in the Middle East.*

In 1967 General de Gaulle established what is now known as "Arab policy", a legacy that would later be transmitted to all the presidents of France up to Jacques Chirac. However, the crisis in Iraq, which supposed a confrontation between French and United States diplomacy, has had unexpected repercussions on the relations between France, Israel and Palestine. This article seeks to show the importance of US diplomatic relations for French diplomatic relations and for its "niche diplomacy" strategy. This consists of taking up a specific position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which, since 2004, has called into question the traditional policy.

Key words: **France, Israel, Palestine, United States, medium power.**

MARTA TAWIL, *Relations between Syria and Russia: A High Wire Game.*

Since Cold War the relation between Syria and Russia shows a number of continuities and a few changes. This ambivalent interaction is mostly determined by the US and Israel interventions. The international system evolution—unipolarity and its effects in regional security in the Middle East—is the main factor that explains both the breach between these countries during the 90's and the first three years of this century, and the approach they seek in the diplomatic, economic, and commercial spheres since the war in Iraq—and especially since 2005. Through the study of the relations between Russia and Syria can be stated that the growing importance of images and perceptions in the diplomatic field comes on top of the usual factors on security. Both parameters allow Damascus—as well as Moscow—to keep a significant margin of autonomy that both countries claim before the US policy.

Key words: Syria, Russia, foreign policy, military resources, diplomacy, trade relations.

BERNARD BOTIVEAU, “Palestinian State” or “Two-State Solution”? Chronicle of the post-Oslo Period.

According to the Oslo agreements (1993), a Palestinian State would be proclaimed before May 4, 1999. The impossibility of applying this resolution showed the degradation of the peace process; its failure became evident before the second Intifada broke out in September 2000. During successive negotiations, backed by the “Quartet for the Middle East” as of 2002, emphasis was placed on a new formula: the “Two-State Solution.” This development shows the emergence of a new approach. Whereas the “Palestinian State” projected a formula of full independence and national sovereignty despite the existing territorial constraints, the “Two-State Solution” is based on an approach whose only cynical ambition is to favor a “protected” State in an Israel-Palestine system controlled by Israel.

Key words: Israel, Palestinian territories. Oslo, settlements, Two-State Solution.

LUIS MESA DELMONTE, *The Policies of Bush and Obama toward the Islamic Republic of Iran: The Centrality of the Nuclear Factor.*

The article addresses the relations between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran as of the start of the war in Iraq in 2003, but focusing above all on the central weight of the Iranian nuclear program in this relationship. After dealing with the years of considerable bilateral tension observed during the Bush administration, and some of the positive developments that were perceived in parallel, the article studies the most important aspects of the Obama administration's change in political discourse toward Iran. Although the author considers that a new negotiating opportunity does indeed exist, he doubts that such a process, if it could be undertaken, could lead to a total normalization of relations in the short or medium terms.

Key words: **Bush foreign policy, Obama foreign policy, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iranian nuclear program, Middle East.**

MASSIMILIANO TRENTIN, *Syria and Europe: The Practice of Multipolarity.*

Since 2001, the United States and Europe have been stuck in the quagmire of the policy of confrontation in the Middle East, without either having reaped the expected benefits. Despite all the difficulties, Syria closed ranks in its internal political life and withstood the pressure, taking advantage of all the opportunities afforded by the changing international system. Damascus does not appear to have yielded much in its diplomatic and economic claims; if it did so, it was due to the consequences of the political change that took place in the ruling elite, not because of pressure from the West. In addition to the historical legacy of Arab nationalism in Syrian policies, we can talk of the "domestication" of neo-liberalism. This process occurs in a moment when the main western promoters of neo-liberalism have lost much of their power of coercion.

Key words: **Europe, Syria, multipolarity, development, regime-building.**

MUSTAFA KIBAROGLU, *Turkey and the Middle East in Times of Major Transformations.*

Turkey's profile in the Middle East has grown in recent years. The current presence of a significant number of US troops in Iraqi territory as of 2003, as well as the arrival of the Party of Justice and Development to power in the parliamentary elections of November 2002 and its consolidation in the July 2007 elections, are two decisive factors that explain the dramatic change in Turkey's position vis-à-vis its immediate neighbors and in its foreign-policy priorities. On reviewing the change in Turkey's relations with Israel, Iran, Iraq and Syria from the Cold War years of to the period following 9/11, it can be supposed that the improved relations between Turkey and its neighbors will facilitate regional cooperation. For this to occur and produce tangible results for the entire region, Turkey should find effective, lasting solutions to the conflictive problems that exist with its immediate neighbors.

Key words: Turkey, foreign policy, Cold War, Iraq, Party of Justice and Development.

IGNACIO ÁLVAREZ-OSSORIO and PEDRO BUENDÍA, *The Crisis of Iraqi Refugees in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.*

One of the lesser-known consequences of the invasion of Iraq and the postwar period has been the mass exodus of Iraqis to Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. To the personal and humanitarian drama that this wave of refugees represents we should add the enormous economic and political difficulties faced by the receiving countries to maintain them. Although security has improved, Iraq does not yet offer guarantees of stability for an early return. Furthermore, the legal situation of the refugees in the receiving countries is in an administrative limbo that threatens to "Palestinize" their condition unless the international community adopts timely measures to avoid this and to guarantee the refugees' definitive return in safe conditions.

Key words: Iraq, refugees, occupation, humanitarian crisis, return.