

# Strategic Panorama 2015

Spanish  
Institute for  
Strategic  
Studies

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Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE





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## Introduction

Felipe Sahagún

Today's digital globalisation provides easy access to the leading international media and centres that analyse threats, risks, conflicts and wars with the frequency required to improve decision making.<sup>1</sup>

It is easy to choose the most significant events of 2014. Writing in the *Financial Times*, Gideon Rachman described the year as an odd one: 'It seems to me that there are only two events that stand head-and-shoulders above the others. The first is the breakdown in relations between Russia and the West, caused by the Ukraine crisis. The second is America's return to war in the Middle East',<sup>2</sup> he pointed out at the end of December.

Neither Russia nor the West was prepared for the escalation of the crisis. The West did not foresee Russia's annexation of Crimea and the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, did not anticipate the coup staged against Yanukovych's government in Kiev, the downing of a passenger aircraft mainly carrying Dutch people or the sanctions that led to what is the most serious crisis in relations with Moscow since the end of the Cold War and a serious downslide in Russia's economy owing to the double impact of the sanctions and plummeting oil prices, which fell by nearly 50% between June and January.

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<sup>1</sup> In my blog – felipesahagun.es – I have selected more than a hundred of these assessments of 2014 and prospective studies for 2015. See the entries <<http://felipesahagun.es/?p=18864>> and <<http://felipesahagun.es/?p=18859>>.

<sup>2</sup> RACHMAN, Gideon: 'The five most significant events of 2014', *Financial Times*, 31 December 2014. <<http://blogs.ft.com/the-world/2014/12/the-five-most-significant-events-of-2014>>.

There are so many interests at stake for the balance and map of Europe, and so serious is the potential impact unless the escalating tension between the West and Russia is eased, that the Ukraine crisis has become Europe's priority in 2015 and will most likely continue to be in coming years, even more than the Middle East. The redefinition of Russia's identity from 1991, following the disintegration of the USSR, is far from complete and the fact that it coincides with the resurgence of a new united Germany vying for the same areas of influence will require utmost attention and prudence to prevent the August cannon from again turning into winter trenches.

On 8 August, nearly three years after the last US forces withdrew from Iraq, the United States returned to war in the former Mesopotamia with its first air strikes against the ill-named Islamic State insurgency, a coalition of the remnants of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Saddam's army and Sunni militias dissatisfied with the Baghdad government, whose incompetent prime minister, Nuri al-Maliki, was forced to resign under pressure from Iraq's Shia religious leader, the great ayatollah Ali Hussein Sistani, of Tehran, and from the United States.

His removal from power marked the start of a new strategy. Designed urgently and modified several times since then, playing by ear, it aimed to avoid (at least on paper) sending US soldiers to combat again and opted instead for air support to local forces such as the Kurds and the Iraqi army, and ground support without direct involvement in combat for militias in Syria that would be capable, within months or years, of putting an end to both Assad's dictatorship and to the jihadist threat.

Is supporting the Kurds compatible with continuing to deny them the right to independence? What will be the extent of the fragmentation or transformation of the Middle East designed by Sir Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot after the First World War? Will national governments recover their lost power, influence and legitimacy? Without much firmer support from the regional and international powers, it will be difficult; what is more, this support is seriously limited by a complex web of religious, ethnic, economic, political, diplomatic and military interests that are dangerously blurring the boundaries between friends and enemies, allies and adversaries.

Unlike Russia and the Middle East, the outlook for Asia in 2015 is calmer. 'Strong leaders in Asia's three most powerful nations – Shinzo Abe in Japan, Xi Jinping in China and Narendra Modi in India – will be a stabilising force. All three have staked their careers on monumental domestic reforms that will impel them to keep their focus at home and conflict to a minimum', stated Ian Bremmer in the annual forecast of *The Economist*.<sup>3</sup>

After a decade of economic growth driven by rising commodity prices that made it possible to reduce poverty to historic levels, in 2015 Latin Amer-

<sup>3</sup> BREMMER, Ian: 'Pivoting back', *The World in 2015*, published by *The Economist*, p. 57.

ica faces three options: another recession, as has occurred repeatedly in the past; a new cycle of irrational loading up on debt; or new approaches that avoid the mistakes made at similar moments.

“We have entered into a new stage,” said José Antonio Ocampo, a former finance minister of Colombia who is a professor at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University in New York. “I don’t think governments have fully realized yet that this is so, and that they have to change their policy strategy.” Yet there are signs, he said, that many countries in the region are better positioned now than in the past to tackle the challenge. “Latin America has less debt and more reserves, less liabilities and more assets.”<sup>4</sup>

Political developments may well depend on which option is chosen. As Carlos Malamud pointed out at a seminar held at the Casa de América in Madrid in the autumn, 17 of the continent’s 19 countries are due to hold presidential elections between 2013 and 2016 – all of them except Mexico, where they are not yet due, and Cuba, which continues to be a single-party Communist regime despite the hopes aroused by the agreement with the United States.

The best that can be said is that from 2009 until 2017, unless the process goes off the rails, 37 presidential elections will have taken place in Latin America; this amounts to the longest period of formal (electoral) democracy since the start of the new cycle in 1982, he stated.<sup>5</sup> The election processes of recent years indicate a tendency to re-election and the perpetuation of many leaders, the growing importance of second rounds and the involvement in politics of the emerging middle classes. ‘In the economy we are glimpsing the end of high commodity prices, which will cause social policies to suffer and will probably be reflected in the polls’, added Malamud.<sup>6</sup>

The euro seems to have crossed the Rubicon that began in 2008 and not even Greece, which goes to the polls at the end of January, poses a serious threat to its existence. Even so, Eurosceptic geo-strategists such as George Friedman, chairman of Stratfor Global Intelligence, precisely chose the situation in the European Union – although it is the world’s biggest economy (all 28 members together) and an essential hub of global trade, culture and science – as the area of greatest concern for international stability at the end of 2014 and in 2015.

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<sup>4</sup> NEUMAN, William: ‘An economic boom recedes, but South America might avert the bust’, *The New York Times*, 29 December 2014. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/30/world/americas/an-economic-boom-recedes-but-south-america-might-avert-the-bust.html>>.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Balance del año electoral en América’, roundtable at the Casa de América, Real Instituto Elcano, 4 December 2014.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

He based his choice – which surprised most Europeans – among other reasons on the EU's inability to seriously address the unemployment problem; on the growing inequality between central and peripheral Europe; on weak GDP growth; and on the strength of old and new anti-European populist and separatist nationalist movements.

'There is significant and growing risk that either the European Union will have to be revised dramatically to survive or it will simply fragment', he warned. 'The fragmentation of the European Union would shift authority formally back to myriad nation-states. Europe's experience with nationalism has been troubling, to say the least — certainly in the first part of the 20th century. And when a region as important as Europe redefines itself, the entire world will be affected.'<sup>7</sup>

The de-synchronisation of the global economy and lack of coordination of monetary policies, with the United States experiencing an extraordinary economic recovery, Japan sliding again into recession, China growing at under 8% for the first time in many years, and Europe languishing in the shadow of a Germany reborn as the main European power will all condition 2015.

'Germany's pre-eminence is not only a matter of its size and geographical position', pointed out Martin Wolf in the *Financial Times*. 'Nor is it just the fruit of its manufacturing prowess. Remarkably, of Europe's large countries Germany has arguably the most stable and adult democracy. It is free of the xenophobic populism that mars the others. In Angela Merkel, it possesses an exceptionally mature and responsible leader.'<sup>8</sup> The author preferred to turn a blind eye to the demonstrations against Muslims in German cities and the outbreaks of racism, even if they were and continue to be isolated events.

The dilemma of the German hegemon is that, having agreed to the euro under force from France and Britain as the price to pay for unification, it is now under pressure to compromise the economic doctrines that catapulted it to success and a comfortable geo-strategy, without global responsibilities, in order to achieve an increasingly diverse and unequal Eurozone. Just as it made the right choice in backing Mario Draghi in 2012 to prevent the EU from breaking up, in 2015 Germany will no doubt have to support the president of the European Central Bank in fostering demand, avoiding deflation and restructuring debt. Greece, Portugal, Italy, Ireland and Spain, in this order, expect and need it. If it does not do so, it will be difficult to find a solution between the release from or restructuring of debt that the new Greek government is calling for and fulfilment of the conditions agreed on by its predecessors with Brussels.

<sup>7</sup> FRIEDMAN, George: 'The top events in 2014', Stratfor, 30 December 2014. <<http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/top-five-events-2014#axzz3NigXDxlU>>.

<sup>8</sup> WOLF, Martin: 'Europe's lonely and reluctant hegemon', *Financial Times*, 9 December 2014. <<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/faf48600-7e43-11e4-87d9-00144feabdc0.htm?siteedition=intl#axzz3Nhxi33vd>>.

Scotland voted against independence and, following the European elections, despite the rise of populist, nationalist, extremist, anti-European and xenophobic parties, the three dominant political forces since 1979 – Conservatives, Social Democrats and Liberals – still enjoy control of the European Parliament.

Aside from Germany's thrashing of the Brazilian team, the World Cup did not witness any serious incidents and Dilma Rousseff was re-elected in the second round with a tight 51.6% of the vote. The outbreak of Ebola in western Africa and the slow response of the World Health Organization (WHO) triggered panic, caused very serious human and economic losses in the worst hit countries and is continuing to destroy thousands of lives, but the virus has not mutated into the worldwide pandemic that many feared and at last, albeit too late, it has forced the richest countries to produce a vaccine that should have been produced many years ago.

The barbarity of Boko Haram, Islamic State or Daesh, the Pakistani Taliban, the Mexican drug dealers of Iguala and many other groups, from the Central African Republic to the Colombian rainforest – who, often in collaboration with local authorities, abducted and murdered thousands of innocent people in 2014 – has unfortunately not been given the right response, and the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to champions of the fight for women's rights in Pakistan (Malala Yousafzai) and India (Kailash Satyarthi) are poor compensation for the blatant and constant violations of human rights.

Nevertheless, Salil Sathy, secretary-general of Amnesty International, ended the year with a message of hope regarding the ratification of the first binding treaty in history to curb the arms trade,<sup>9</sup> the ruling of the European Human Rights Court on Poland's complicity with the CIA's secret detention centres and the macro-report by the Intelligence Committee of the US Senate on the torture practiced by some of its agents for years.<sup>10</sup>

### Security: perception and reality

A reality is of little use if it is contradicted by feelings. Seldom had the macroeconomic situation been as positive as in the 2014 elections in the United States. However, Obama's mistake of underestimating some of the main enemies, the uneven impact of the crisis, the paralysis of the

<sup>9</sup> See the analysis by Araceli Mangas '¿Noche de paz? Leyes contra las armas', *El Mundo*, 2 January 2015, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> 'Amnistía Internacional ve preocupante la situación de los derechos humanos en 2014, pero destaca los "éxitos históricos" logrados', Europa Press, 29 December 2014. <<http://www.europapress.es/epsocial/ong-y-asociaciones/noticia-ai-ve-preocupante-situacion-ddhh-2014-destaca-exitos-historicos-logrados-20141229190307.html>>.

political system vis-à-vis the most pressing domestic and foreign challenges such as immigration, the end of hope for a better future and the multiplication of security threats that are difficult, if not impossible, to address in the short or medium term (Iraq and Afghanistan, mass and illegal espionage, Islamic State, Ebola, global warming, cyberattacks...) without easy or rapid military solutions convinced most voters that the Democrats, identified repetitively and unfairly with Obama in the Republican campaign as if it were a referendum on the president, deserved a dressing-down, and they gave it to him.<sup>11</sup>

Far from being daunted, Obama reacted rapidly with an 'I'm not done' – and proved he was not. Within a few weeks he had set in motion a process to legalise millions of immigrants, signed a historic environmental deal with China, cornered Putin with sanctions and enlisted the help of allies such as Saudi Arabia to bring down the price of oil... What is more, before the Christmas holidays he reached another major agreement with the Castros to normalise relations with Havana after a century of hostilities that, as the US president acknowledged, had merely served to consolidate the Cuban regime.

The repeated mistakes, surprises and flaws in calculations and predictions, despite the information overload, have led the main governments, security services, universities, think tanks and enterprises to step up their investments in selecting, handling and applying data.<sup>12</sup>

'The crises [of 2014] – from Ebola to ISIS beheadings of Americans to missing airliners to North Korean cyberattacks – seemed to combine as a kind of force multiplier, leaving the image of a veritable world on fire. But is it really?' asked Aaron David Miller, vice president and a distinguished scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.<sup>13</sup>

He compared the number of Ebola victims – more than 8,000 dead and more than 20,000 infected at the beginning of the year – with the ill-termed Spanish flu of the previous century, which claimed between 20 million and 50 million lives, and the radically different means we have of addressing it, concluding that 'it's not your grandfather's pandemic [...] at least not yet'.

Recalling the savagery of ISIS, he quoted the alarmist testimonies of the outgoing Pentagon chief Chuck Hagel, 'beyond anything we've seen so we must prepare for everything', and of former CIA director Michael

<sup>11</sup> SAHAGÚN, Felipe: 'Un voto de castigo en Estados Unidos', *El Mundo*, 3 November 2014. <<http://www.elmundo.es/internacional/2014/11/03/5457b7fde2704e2d-378b456e.html>>.

<sup>12</sup> SENGUPTA, Someini: 'El reto de predecir los estallidos de violencia', *El País/The New York Times International Weekly*, 2 April 2014, pp. 1 y 4.

<sup>13</sup> MILLER, Aaron David: 'You only thought the world was on fire in 2014', CNN, 2 January 2014. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/01/opinion/miller-2015-was-not-bad-as-that/?iref=obinsite>>.

Hayden, 'an ISIS attack against Europe or America was just a matter of time', concluding that: 'Since 9/11, there have been al Qaeda-inspired lone wolf attacks but not a single successful attack directed by a foreign terror organization against the United States homeland. Last year, there were 17,958 global fatalities to terror according to the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database. But 82% of those occurred in one of five countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria and Syria. As for the United States, of the 17,000 plus, only 16 deaths were American.'<sup>14</sup>

He recalled the most conflictive moments of the Cold War, drawing the conclusion that Putin is neither Hitler nor Stalin, nor is he in a position – however much the post-1991 architecture in Europe has been undermined – to build a new iron curtain or to compete with the United States or the rest of the world. 'Putin may continue to play spoiler, but Russia is hardly on a roll', he added.

In relation to mankind's most violent past, the main figures of deaths from homicide, atrocities, genocide and war are falling, according to Steven Pinker, one of the scholars most familiar with violence rates in the world.<sup>15</sup>

The seven Global Peace Index reports published until 2014 by the Institute for Economics and Peace show few changes in the global degree of militarisation (increases in some countries are offset by reductions in others) and an increase in tension (in 103 countries, according to last year's index), but the statistics are increasingly confirming the connection between security, political stability and economic growth.<sup>16</sup>

Equally or more important than identifying real or potential conflicts in order to muster the necessary preventive or intervention responses is recognising trends that can intensify or weaken these conflicts and citizens' perceptions.

## Top 10 trends of 2015



Figure 1. Source: Outlook on the Global Agenda 2015 (World Economic Forum).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> DOUTHAT, Ross: 'Steven Pinker's History of Violence', *The New York Times*, 17 October 2011. <[http://douthat.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/10/17/steven-pinkers-history-of-violence/?\\_r=0](http://douthat.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/10/17/steven-pinkers-history-of-violence/?_r=0)>.

<sup>16</sup> ARCAND, Rob: 'Quantifying world peace: peacefulness levels continue to fall', *Diplomatic Courier*, 21 August 2014. <[http://www.diplomaticcourier.com/news/topics/politics/tag/Global %20Peace%20Index](http://www.diplomaticcourier.com/news/topics/politics/tag/Global%20Peace%20Index)>.

In the chart summing up the latest trends compiled by the Meta-Council on the New Architecture of Governance, directed by former Vice-President Al Gore,<sup>17</sup> growing inequality in many countries is cited as the main cause for concern, followed by unemployment, lack of leadership and – in fourth place – major geostrategic disputes which, as we will see in due course, are the focus of attention of security chiefs.

**Greatest Danger to the World**

*Which one of these poses the greatest threat to the world?*

<i>Views in:</i>	<b>Nuclear weapons</b>	<b>Inequality</b>	<b>Religious &amp; ethnic hatred</b>	<b>Pollution &amp; environment</b>	<b>AIDS &amp; other diseases</b>	<b>Top choice</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	
U.S.	23	<b>27</b>	24	15	7	Inequality
Spain	17	<b>54</b>	14	9	5	Inequality
Greece	23	<b>43</b>	10	14	9	Inequality
Germany	19	<b>34</b>	32	13	1	Inequality
Poland	28	<b>32</b>	14	13	9	Inequality
Italy	20	<b>32</b>	15	25	6	Inequality
France	14	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	17	5	Inequality/Religious hatred
UK	14	25	<b>39</b>	16	4	Religious & ethnic hatred
Ukraine	<b>36</b>	15	23	11	12	Nuclear weapons
Russia	<b>29</b>	19	27	13	10	Nuclear weapons
Lebanon	20	17	<b>58</b>	3	2	Religious & ethnic hatred
Palest. ter.	19	18	<b>40</b>	9	10	Religious & ethnic hatred
Tunisia	25	18	<b>39</b>	7	10	Religious & ethnic hatred
Egypt	12	27	<b>34</b>	11	14	Religious & ethnic hatred
Israel	27	23	<b>30</b>	12	8	Religious & ethnic hatred
Turkey	<b>34</b>	17	29	7	10	Nuclear weapons
Jordan	19	<b>31</b>	25	11	11	Inequality
Thailand	9	29	11	<b>36</b>	13	Pollution & environment
Philippines	19	22	11	<b>34</b>	14	Pollution & environment
China	26	14	9	<b>33</b>	13	Pollution & environment
Vietnam	21	13	9	<b>32</b>	22	Pollution & environment
Malaysia	22	13	<b>32</b>	16	12	Religious & ethnic hatred
Bangladesh	19	16	<b>30</b>	22	11	Religious & ethnic hatred
Indonesia	18	18	<b>26</b>	13	22	Religious & ethnic hatred
India	19	22	<b>25</b>	14	10	Religious & ethnic hatred
Japan	<b>49</b>	12	16	20	2	Nuclear weapons
Pakistan	<b>30</b>	29	13	3	7	Nuclear weapons
South Korea	26	<b>32</b>	11	29	2	Inequality
Chile	<b>30</b>	27	8	22	12	Nuclear weapons
Venezuela	<b>29</b>	16	8	21	24	Nuclear weapons
Brazil	<b>28</b>	19	19	13	20	Nuclear weapons
El Salvador	<b>27</b>	18	16	19	19	Nuclear weapons
Mexico	<b>26</b>	19	11	<b>26</b>	17	Nuclear weapons/Pollution
Colombia	22	17	8	<b>36</b>	15	Pollution & environment
Peru	23	12	7	<b>35</b>	22	Pollution & environment
Nicaragua	25	12	9	<b>29</b>	25	Pollution & environment
Argentina	17	<b>32</b>	12	25	12	Inequality
Uganda	21	20	7	8	<b>44</b>	AIDS & other diseases
Tanzania	16	12	25	4	<b>41</b>	AIDS & other diseases
South Africa	10	29	12	9	<b>35</b>	AIDS & other diseases
Kenya	24	17	24	3	<b>29</b>	AIDS & other diseases
Senegal	23	13	27	7	<b>28</b>	AIDS & other diseases
Nigeria	31	18	<b>38</b>	4	7	Religious & ethnic hatred
Ghana	22	<b>25</b>	17	13	20	Inequality

Note: Top choice in each country bolded.

Source: Spring 2014 Global Attitudes survey, Q6.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 2

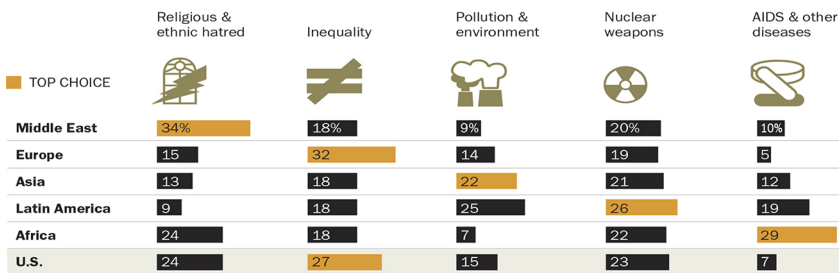
<sup>17</sup> 'Top 10 trends of 2015', introduction by Al Gore, WEF, November 2014. <<http://reports.weforum.org/outlook-global-agenda-2015/top-10-trends-of-2015/>>.



The Pew Research surveys of 2014 on threats indicate deep differences in the perceptions of various countries and regions, even between the parties of the same country. For example, the differences between the opinions of US Democrats and Republicans are as great as or greater than the differences between those of many countries and the United States.<sup>18</sup>

## Middle Easterners Fear Religious/Ethnic Hatred; Europeans, Americans Inequality

Which one of these poses the greatest threat to the world?



Note: Regional medians, Russia and Ukraine not included in Europe median.  
Source: Spring 2014 Global Attitudes survey, Q6.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 3

'The warning lights are flashing over the global economy', British Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne warned in his autumn statement to Parliament on 4 December 2014. 'Japan is in recession, the Eurozone is stagnating, and the geopolitical risks are rising', he added.

The statements about Japan and the Eurozone were undeniable, but the third – regarding geopolitical risks – has become a catch-all for describing the main international problems, as it can be applied to wars, insurrections or sanctions and equally to recessions, debt defaults, terrorist attacks, expropriations, financial crises, epidemics and any other problem imaginable.

'Each of these events poses a specific and different type of threat to national security and economic well-being', warns veteran Reuters analyst John Kemp. 'Lumping them together actually makes the risks harder to analyse and understand. It also encourages policymakers, analysts and journalists to blame problems at home on a rise or fall in the general

<sup>18</sup> POUSHTER, Jacob: 'What is the greatest threat to the world? Depends on where you live', Pew Research Center, 16 October 2014. <<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/10/16/what-is-the-greatest-threat-to-the-world-depends-on-where-you-live/>>.

level of geopolitical risk, like a thermometer, through a mechanism which is never explained.<sup>19</sup> Policymakers use the term in the same way central bankers invoke 'uncertainty' to explain nearly everything that goes wrong or is unknown.

'Geopolitical risk and uncertainty are part of the normal condition of affairs. There is no reason to believe that the current level of risk and uncertainty is any higher than in past decades', Kemp adds. 'US Presidents Reagan, both Bushes, Carter, Nixon, Johnson, Kennedy, Eisenhower and Truman would fiercely dispute the idea that current geopolitical risks are higher than the challenges they had to face in the 1980s, 1970s, 1960s and 1950s'.<sup>20</sup>

Let us rewind and compare the past year's conflicts with 11 September, SARS, AIDS, the two US–Iraq wars, the disappearance of the USSR, German unification, the Iran–Iraq war and the hostages crisis, the Latin American debt crisis, Soviet invasions of Afghanistan, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the Arab oil embargo, the Cuban missile crisis, the Berlin airlift or the Vietnam, Korean and Middle East Wars (1967 and 1973).

A further example: to combat Ebola, the vaccine is already known, as is how long it will take to become available; for AIDS however, despite the breakthroughs, there is still no vaccine.

This is not the place to debate on whether crises and turbulence in the international system are a rule or an exception; however, to systematically attribute a country's economic and/or financial problems to 'geopolitical risks' amounts to stating that its economy is not growing at a particular time because of what is going on in the rest of the world, even if, obviously, this is sometimes true.

The supposed golden age of US growth in the 1950s and 1960s coincided with the Korean and Vietnam wars and with the height of Cold War tension, which culminated in the missile crisis. However much they search, scholars have yet to find a clear empirical link between international politics and stock market trends. Indeed, the main stock market collapses have occurred in periods of relative international calm.

It is undeniable that international turmoil, no matter in what area, can have a major effect on national economies and finances, but without specifying the risks and transmission mechanisms of these effects it is impossible to establish the link. It is therefore advisable to avoid this concept in general terms and use it only when it is possible to specify the challenges and impact of wars, sanctions, epidemics or financial crises.

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<sup>19</sup> KEMP, John: 'No more geopolitical risks, please', Reuters, 4 December 2014. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/04/geopolitical-economy-kemp-idUSL6N0T022N20141204>>.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

In view of the widespread pessimism of the present, it would not be amiss to return to the most important theoretician on turbulent international relations, James N. Rosenau: 'Doubtless every era seems chaotic to the people who live through it, and the last decades ... are no exception. It is as if Spaceship Earth daily encounters squalls, downdrafts, and wind shears as it careens into changing and uncharted realms of experience. Sometimes the turbulence is furiously evident as thunderclouds of war gather or the lightning of a crisis streaks across the global sky; but often the turbulence is of a clear-air kind, the havoc it wreaks unrecognized until after its challenges have been met or its damage done.'<sup>21</sup>

### The map of risks and threats

In the dense jungle of US international thought, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), with its star journal, *Foreign Affairs*, has been one of the main sources on international politics, foreign policy and security since 1921.

Based on a list of more than 1,000 sources of tension worldwide, the CFR's Center for Preventive Action drew up a list of the 30 most important conflicts and asked more than 2,200 experts from universities, administration, the armed forces, diplomatic and business fields, as in previous years, to evaluate and sort them hierarchically in order of likelihood of erupting violently in 2015, and by their impact on the interests of the United States and its main allies.

The 30 conflicts are classified into three priority levels (I high, II moderate and III low), with 10 conflicts in each group; there are also three degrees of risk (high, medium or low) in both variables that are considered: likelihood and impact.

Only one conflict, that of Iraq, is listed as priority I, with a high risk as regards both likelihood and impact. This is not surprising if it is considered that, according to the NGO Iraq Body Count, 17,073 people died in the conflict in 2014 – more than double the previous year's figures and the highest since 2007, and that during the first days of the year hundreds of US soldiers (part of the 3,000 or so deployed from Baghdad to Erbil in the first half of 2015 and in several bases of the province of Anbas, where ISIS has grown much stronger since the previous spring) were surrounded by the insurgency.<sup>22</sup> Could they be limited to advisory, training, target

<sup>21</sup> ROSENAU, James N.: *Turbulence in World Politics. A Theory of Change and Continuity*, Princeton University Press, 1990, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> RYAN, Missy and CUNNINGHAM, Erin: 'U.S. Advisers in Iraq stay out of combat but see fighting edging closer', *The Washington Post*, 1 January 2015. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-advisers-in-iraq-stay-out-of-combat-but->

locating, demining and logistic support tasks, without returning to combat, if their Iraqi and Kurdish allies cannot hold out?

This year's report (Preventive Priorities Survey) lists six conflicts (contingencies, according to the terminology of the CFR) that did not appear in that of 2014 and two of them – increased fighting in eastern Ukraine and heightened Israeli–Palestinian tension – as priority I, the same as Iraq. The remaining seven in this category are:

- the danger of another large-scale terrorist attack on the US homeland or ally,
- a highly destructive cyberattack on essential infrastructure,
- a severe North Korean crisis triggered by military provocation, internal instability or threats with nuclear weapons and/or intercontinental missiles,
- renewed threat of Israeli air strikes against Iran if the negotiations are interrupted or if clear evidence is discovered that Iran is trying to gain a nuclear military capability,
- an armed confrontation in the South China Sea between China and one or several of the countries that are vying for sovereignty of this maritime area,
- the escalation of the Syrian civil war if external support to the sides is stepped up,
- rising violence and instability in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of most of the coalition forces if, as it seems, the Afghan forces are incapable of filling the gap left by ISAF; as of the start of 2015 the casualty rate was about 100 per week. These figures are clearly unsustainable (about 3,500 foreign soldiers had died from 2001 to the withdrawal of most of the force at the end of 2014) and President Ghani, who had taken up his post at the end of September, had yet to form a government.

If 2014 showed us anything about the North Korean threat – nuclear and cyber, following Pyongyang's supposed attack on Sony – as stressed by Christopher Hill, former US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia, it is that there will be no progress without the collaboration of China, and that this collaboration is impossible unless we pay attention to China's almost obsessive – and rightly so – concern to prevent the collapse of the North Korean regime at all costs.<sup>23</sup>

The second priority level conflicts (II) are headed by Libya. If the same exercise were conducted among one or two thousand Spanish experts,

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see-fight-edge-nearer/2015/01/01/6da57c3a-9038-11e4-ba53-a477d66580ed\_story.html>.

<sup>23</sup> HILL, Christopher H.: 'Strategic clarity on North Korea', Project Syndicate, 30 December 2014. <<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/north-korea-us-strategy-by-christopher-r-hill-2014-12>>.

it is likely that Libya would rank as priority I and compete for first place with Iraq in both impact and likelihood.

The nine other conflicts listed as priority II, with a moderate impact and/or likelihood, are:

- growing instability and increased terrorist attacks in Egypt, whose tribunals sentenced thousands of Muslim Brotherhood followers, headed by their leader, to death in 2014,
- outbreaks of violence in Jordan, if the Syrian war spreads beyond its borders ,
- increased sectarian violence and political tension in Lebanon for the same reason,
- intensification of the attacks of the Pakistani army and terrorist attacks by groups such as Tehrik-e-Taliban, which was responsible for the deaths of 132 students and 9 teachers at a school in Pes-hawar – the most lethal attack carried out by the Pakistani Taliban in their own country,
- the risk of more clashes in Turkey between Kurdish groups and the army stemming from the Syrian war,
- growing destabilisation of the Arabian Peninsula if the Houthi consolidate their control of much of Yemen and if the local branch of al-Qaeda is not stemmed,
- also priority II, with a low likelihood but with very serious consequences if it were to occur, is a confrontation between China and Japan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands,
- classified with the same level of risk is the escalation of organised crime in Mexico, which, with the murder of 43 students of Iquali in 2014, seriously weakened one of the most successful reform processes the country has witnessed in many years,
- a conflict highly likely to occur (as with many others, it has been a fact, not a probability for some time) but with a low impact (a matter of opinion) is the last of the priority II conflicts: Nigeria, owing to the violence of Boko Haram and the risk of destabilisation in the general elections of 2015.

Finally, priority level III conflicts include:

- increased political tension in China (Uighur minority),
- escalation of sectarian violence in the Central African Republic (CAR) between the Seleka rebels and anti-Balaka militias (often cited as a possible scene of new genocide),
- the intensification of sectarian violence between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar (Burma),
- the civil war being waged in South Sudan over political and ethnic divides,

- the growing political instability in Thailand following the military coup of 2014, which could worsen if it coincides with a royal succession crisis,
- the instability derived from the economic and social impact of Ebola in western Africa,
- new military clashes between India and Pakistan caused by another mass terrorist attack or increased violence in Kashmir,
- the risk of a new outbreak of military conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, one of the dormant conflicts of the former USSR that has never been resolved.

Viewing this map from a Spanish perspective, we are surprised that many other hotspots do not appear in the list and, of course, by how some of them are rated. How is it possible to ignore the risks of the inevitable transition of Cuba or of another possible succession to the Saudi throne, the battle over the exploitation of the Arctic and the situation in Algeria following Bouteflika's announcement he was retiring from the presidency for good? And much more importantly: what impact will plummeting oil prices have on exporters without sufficient reserves to cope with the drastic fall in their revenues?

### Oil, at 50 dollars per barrel

The price of oil, which stood at 115 dollars in June 2014, had slumped to the region of 50 dollars by 7 January. What were the main causes? The fragile recovery of the world economy, OPEC production quotas higher than demand and, above all, the Texas and North Dakota oil companies which, since 2010, have completed possibly more than 20,000 new oil wells, ten times more than Saudi Arabia.<sup>24</sup>

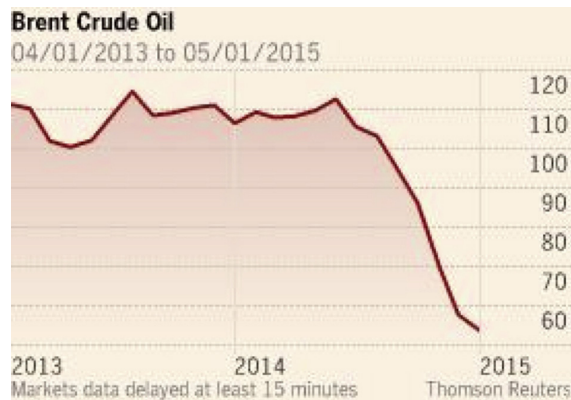


Figure 4

<sup>24</sup> 'Sheikhs v shale', *The Economist* (Leaders), 6 December 2014, p. 15.

US oil production has risen by more than 30% in four years, standing at about nine million barrels per day at the end of 2014, barely one million less than Saudi Arabia. 'The contest between the shalermen and the sheikhs has tipped the world from a shortage of oil to a surplus', concluded the British weekly *The Economist*.

The geopolitical impact will obviously depend on at what point the price bottoms out and how long it remains low, but everything indicates that we are witnessing a structural change in the market rather than temporary price swings. The international effects will be conditioned, in turn, by what each country produces, exports and imports, and by its financial endurance.

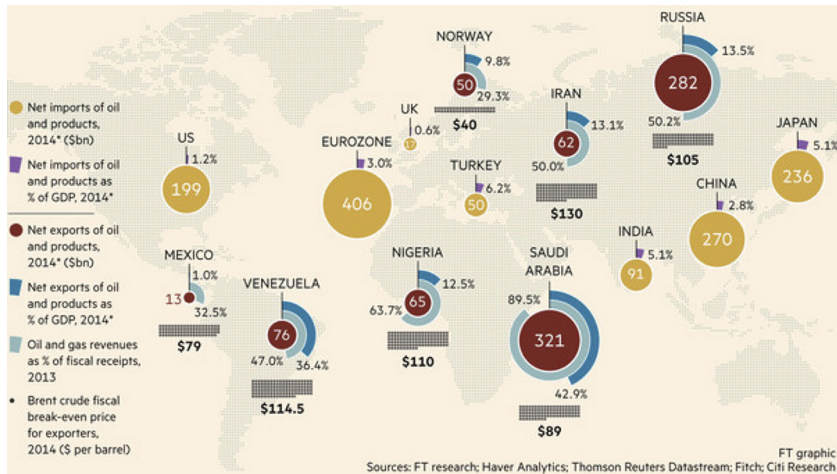


Figure 5. Exporters and importers of oil

The general effects of a drop in the price of oil under normal circumstances are well known. A fall of 50% is equivalent to transferring around a billion and a half dollars from producers to consumers. For the average US motorist, who spent some 3,000 dollars at the pumps last year, this can mean a saving of about 1,000 dollars – equivalent to a pay rise of about 2%.

Oxford Economics calculates that for every 20 dollars the price of a barrel of oil falls the world GDP will increase by 0.4% over the next two to three years.<sup>25</sup> Having studied the impact on 45 different economies, it concludes that importers of emerging countries stand the most to gain. 'More advanced economies also gain significantly, although as

<sup>25</sup> GILES, Chris: 'Winners and losers of oil price plunge', *Financial Times*, 15 December 2014. <<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/3f5e4914-8490-11e4-ba4f-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3NygbyYXXy>>.

they have less dependence on oil for every dollar of gross domestic product so their proportionate gains are smaller', wrote Chris Giles in the *Financial Times*.

But economists are not sure whether the circumstances of this change are normal and might not be distorted by inflation levels and by the value – rising at the start of the year – of the dollar, the currency in which the main transactions of the 90 million barrels of oil the world consumes daily are conducted.

The main beneficiaries are the Eurozone, China, India, Japan and Turkey. The losers are inevitably the oil-producing companies (which will see their share prices fall) and the oil-producing countries most heavily dependent on exports to finance their budgets and investment projects and which lack sufficient sovereign funds or reserves to withstand the months or years of hardship that are approaching.

This group includes Venezuela, Nigeria, Iran and Russia, and many analysts regard what has happened as a ploy by Saudi Arabia to subdue its main rivals in the Middle East and, in doing so, expel from the market thousands of shale companies in the United States and tar sands oil companies in Canada, which will not be able to compete with such low prices.

'The Russian central bank calculates that the Russian economy will shrink by 4.5% in 2015 if the price per barrel approaches 60 dollars; this could force Moscow to impose exchange-rate controls or ask the IMF for help, which would require political compensations from the Kremlin', stated *Política Exterior* in its weekly report of 22 December. 'The alternative would be worse. A default or disordered restructuring of Russia's foreign debt could cause losses of 670 billion dollars to foreign creditors.'<sup>26</sup>

In Iraq, Libya and Yemen, very low oil prices will exacerbate internal tension and will probably intensify the violence.

The unexpected liquidity injection will trigger new price cuts which, in markets such as Europe that are more threatened by deflation than by inflation in 2015, will force central banks to make their monetary policies more flexible.

Widespread war in the Middle East or at the border between Russia and Europe would again push up prices, but the abovementioned structural causes (to which should be added mobilisation against global warming) that underlie this new plunge reflect a change of cycle, possibly the start of a new period in energy history.

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<sup>26</sup> 'Geopolítica de la energía: la crisis de los petroestados', weekly report in *Política Exterior*, no. 919, 22 December 2014.



Should this be confirmed, the previous price swings – from 145 dollars in July 2008 to 30 dollars that December or the fall to 10 dollars during the Asian crisis of 1998 – would not be an appropriate reference.

### The world in a positive light

In mid-September 2014, on the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, three-times Pulitzer Prize winner Thomas Friedman, who took over from James Reston at *The New York Times* in 1996, described in Madrid an international society that is shifting further away from the East–West, North–South and Communism–Capitalism divides and is more polarised between the world of order, chosen or imposed, and the world of disorder.

The American President, Barack Obama, expressed a similar opinion on 24 September at the UN General Assembly: 'We come together at a crossroads between war and peace; between disorder and integration; between fear and hope'.<sup>27</sup>

As an example of progress, he cited the absence of any prospect of new world wars or confrontation between major powers; the fact that the number of state actors has tripled since the establishment of the UN seventy years ago; the release from the prison of poverty of hundreds of millions of people; the halving of the proportion of those who live in extreme poverty; and the strengthening of the world economy following the worst financial crisis of our lives.

In his November contribution to Project Syndicate, Javier Solana, former EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy and former NATO Secretary-General, underlined the most positive side of 2014 in contrast to the predominant disaster mongering with respect to the image of international society that is conveyed by many media, especially via the social networks, where much content is barely, if at all, verified.

'Jihadism is flourishing. Tensions with Russia are flaring. Agreement between Iran and the "E3+3" [...] remains elusive', Solana wrote, 'Obama, having suffered a severe midterm election defeat, must now deal with a Congress under full Republican control. In the Eurozone, economic growth remains anaemic, causing leaders to look inward. One could easily conclude that the world is being sucked into a vortex of instability'.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Full text of the address published by *The New York Times* at: <[http://www.Washingtonpost.com/politics/full-text-of-president-obamas-2014-address-to-the-united-nations-general-assembly/2014/09/24/88889e46-43f4-11e4-b437-1a7368204804\\_story.html](http://www.Washingtonpost.com/politics/full-text-of-president-obamas-2014-address-to-the-united-nations-general-assembly/2014/09/24/88889e46-43f4-11e4-b437-1a7368204804_story.html)>.

<sup>28</sup> SOLANA, Javier: 'November's Diplomatic Harvest', Project Syndicate, 29 November 2014. <<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/multilateral-cooperation-apec-iran-climate-change-by-javier-solana-2014-11>>

'But the past month featured some hopeful moments, and pausing to study them is imperative to avoid succumbing to pessimism', he added.

Indeed, Solana noted the following progress made in November alone:

- Iran fulfilled its obligations under the interim agreement of 2013, and the E3+3 (G5+1) showed a willingness to end sanctions. The deadline to finalise negotiations has now been extended to June 2015. What some regard as a failure that is allowing Iran to carry on gaining time and moving closer to military nuclearisation Solana sees as a 'unique window of opportunity' to help stabilise or pacify the Middle East.
- In Brisbane, the G20 approved a package of economic measures to boost global economic growth by 2.1% by 2018.
- The leaders at the Summit also endorsed the Global Infrastructure Initiative, which will create a Global Infrastructure Hub to serve as a knowledge-sharing platform for governments, the private sector, development banks, and international organizations.
- The new European Commission launched its mandate with a plan to boost public and private investment by 315 billion euros over the next three years in Europe.
- The climate change agreement reached by China and the United States during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Beijing. After several months of negotiations, Obama undertook to reduce US greenhouse gas emissions by between 26% and 28% with respect to 2005 levels – double the commitment made up to 2020. As for China, for the first time it pledged to establish the ceiling for emissions in 2030 and to increase up to 20% consumption of energy from alternative sources by the same date.
- The commitments announced by the United States (3 billion euros) and Japan (1.5 billion euros) – France and Germany had already done so – for the Green Climate Fund established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), an essential requisite for being able to progress towards a new global climate agreement in Paris in 2015 that is more inclusive and effective than the Kyoto Protocol.
- The 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy Policies adopted by the European Council in October.
- Another major deal between China and the United States at the APEC Summit that will unblock the WTO's Information Technology Agreement, which China had frozen for a year in an attempt to protect its domestic industry. The White House calculated that the increase in annual global GDP if this progress were made would amount to 190 billion dollars.
- At the summit, the Chinese President Xi Jinping reaffirmed his support for a 17-member Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific

(FTAAP) which, added to the US-backed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) would, in Solana's words, mean that 'stability in Asia could be strengthened significantly'.

- The reestablishment of normal diplomatic relations between Qatar and the rest of the Persian Gulf states – an important step towards a more effective intervention in 2015 against Daesh or Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.
- The legislative and presidential elections held between October and December in Tunisia, ending in a victory for the secular Nidaa Tounes over the Ennahda Islamists, the only flower that survives of the ill-termed Arab springs.
- Although Solana does not mention them, we might add to the list of positive developments of the last weeks of 2014 the agreement of 17 December on the normalisation of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Cuban regime, despite all the impairments witnessed from the very first day; Obama's decree of 20 November on regularising five million immigrants; the first meeting between Chinese and Japanese leaders in years; the progress achieved in the peace negotiations between the FARC and the Colombian government, which could finally develop into a major agreement this year; and the agreement between Democrats and Republicans on a trillion-dollar plan to prevent another government shutdown until September 2015.

If we widen the focus to the whole year, from January to December 2014, further promising developments – the term used by Solana – should be included:

- The January peace accords between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (FMLI) and the Philippine government and between President Salva Kiir of South Sudan and the rebels in Addis Ababa.
- The solution of the maritime border dispute between Chile and Peru derived from the War of the Pacific (1879–83) through a ruling of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, granting Peru control of 8,000 square miles of space which it claimed.
- The first official meeting – in Nanjing, China, on 11 February – between Chinese and Taiwanese leaders.
- The agreement (renewed on 25 September and, at the time of writing this article, on 5 January, yet to be implemented) between Hamas and Fatah of 23 April to form a national unity government and put an end to Palestinian internal confrontation since 2006.
- The ceasefire agreed by the Tuareg with the Malian authorities on 23 May.
- - The unconditional renunciation of the armed struggle by the National Liberation Front of Corsica (FLNC) on 25 June.

- The decision of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) to establish a development bank with an initial 50 billion-dollar fund – if it prospers, possibly an alternative or complement to the IMF and WB.

The meetings between the two Koreas, which made it possible for relatives separated by the war to be reunited in February, for the first time in sixty years, and on 15 October, the first bilateral military negotiations in seven years.<sup>29</sup>

As many are agreements in principle, commitments yet to be fulfilled or processes that will take years to complete, given their complexity, they have faded in intensity, owing to:

- ✓ Failed leadership and legitimacy of the elites in international society and within many countries;
- ✓ The unending wars on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- ✓ The volatility of borders in Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East;
- ✓ The fragility of some state actors with significant influence in the region and nuclear weapons, such as Pakistan;
- ✓ The changing nature of wars due to the technological revolution (particularly the use of the air force, drones, and cyberattacks);
- ✓ The strategic adjustments to the balance (or imbalance, depending on the observer) of global power owing to the awakening of emerging or re-emerging powers such as Germany, India and China;
- ✓ The proliferation of non-state actors determined to destroy the dominant regimes, using peaceful or violent means;
- ✓ The standstill and, in some regions, setbacks of democratic reforms;
- ✓ The comeback of energy geopolitics with a force not seen since the mid-1970s;
- ✓ A cascade of reactions in dozens of countries, beginning with China, Spain and the United States, to the growing malaise of civil society vis-à-vis corruption, excesses and abuses of the ruling classes and the major security and espionage agencies.

### The IISS debate

For its Global Strategic Review of 2014, the London International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) brought together more than 100 international security experts and chiefs in Oslo to debate on opportunities and challenges.

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<sup>29</sup> These developments are taken from the EFE press agency's timeline, the weekly summaries of *The Economist* and the monthly summaries of the US magazine *Current History*.

At the session on the Middle East, Roula Khalaf of the *Financial Times* drew attention to the 'high risk of contagion' regional instability poses to the survival of countries such as Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen.

The main sources of tension, she added, are the struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia for influence in the area and the growing divide not so much between Islamists and anti-Islamists as between the most radical versions of the two worlds, without the culture of commitment that is essential to the success of any transition. Most of the participants agreed that the solution could not be exclusively military and that nor is it possible to restore stability without regional consensus and without reconstructing viable states.<sup>30</sup>

None of these goals seems feasible unless the clashes between the West and Russia, between the West and Iran, between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and between Israel and the Palestinians are steered on the right track, but it would be appropriate to include China in the equation on account of its diplomacy – particularly economic – which is increasingly active in the region.

At the session on Asia, the Chinese political scientist and venture capitalist Eric Li stole the show with his lucid and in some aspects novel analysis of Beijing's strategic objectives in the medium and long term. His address can be summed up in three points:

- Although it is set to surpass the United States as the world's largest economy (according to the IMF it already is in terms of purchasing power), China did not participate in the design and establishment of the post-World War II global architecture and, despite being one of the countries to have benefited from it the most in the past 30 years, it does not consider that its interests are sufficiently accommodated by this arrangement.
- In Li's opinion, this architecture is breaking down for two main reasons: the double crisis – domestic and external – of the United States brought on by political polarisation, social inequality, the crisis of 2008, military overload and the rise of the rest, with China being the most prominent. Beijing's priority is to consolidate its role as the leading Asian regional power at the lowest possible cost.
- As long as the United States has to direct its attention and resources to areas as far apart as Ukraine, the Sahel, the Middle East, South Asia, the Mexican border and a large number of non-state areas with a huge capacity for destabilisation, it will have serious difficulties maintaining a coherent long-term strategy in each of them and with respect to China.

<sup>30</sup> LODGI, Maleela: 'Era of strategic adjustment', *The News*, 30 September 2014. <<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-275864-Era-of-strategic-adjustment>>.

These three points, she concluded, explain the commitment to closer cooperation with the United States of Xi Jinping, who likewise 'predicted that "short of accidents", a "new configuration will emerge peacefully" through adjustments from a "long and complex" process of negotiation between China and the US'.<sup>31</sup>

## Strategic Panorama 2014

Almost at the end of his memoirs on his years at the helm of Canada's Liberal Party, which were published in Spain in 2014, Michael Ignatieff, the author of some of the best reflections on wars of the post-war period, recalls a marvellous passage from Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, where Prince Andrei, waiting at the Battle of Borodino, states out loud the difference between war and chess: 'In chess (you may think over each move as long as you please and are not limited for time, and with this difference too, that) a knight is always stronger than a pawn, and two pawns are always stronger than one, while in war a battalion is sometimes stronger than a division and sometimes weaker than a company'.<sup>32</sup>

'War, in other words (like peace), has no (fixed and definite) rules – just (dynamic) strategies', writes Ignatieff (the additions in brackets are mine). 'There is an unpredictable element – will, courage and chance – that can decide outcomes'.<sup>33</sup>

Tolstoy's lesson on war can also be applied to politics, the economy, diplomacy and any other human activity. In all of them – more often than not owing to the communication revolution and the exponential increase in available information and opinions – strategies, to reduce the risks of error, need the systematic support of analyses to integrate, select, contextualise and shed light on the flow of events that would otherwise, in the opinion of the main leaders, drag us irremediably towards a sea of uncertainty, volatility, confusion and contradictions.

Since its first edition in 1996, the STRATEGIC PANORAMA has been one of the publications of the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies (Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, IEEE) that aims to shed light on a rapidly changing international society by surveying events of the past year and the most significant historical precedents which, in Winston Churchill's opinion, are the essence of the best predictions.

Under the supervision of General Miguel Ángel Ballesteros, director of the IEEE, five themes have been selected for this year's edition, in keep-

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> TOLSTOY, Leo: *War and Peace*, English translation by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, New York: Vintage, 2007, book 10, chap. XXV.

<sup>33</sup> IGNATIEFF, Michael: *Fire and Ashes...* Harvard University Press, 2013, p. 174

ing with the Institute's priorities and areas of work: the challenges of the European Union's external action; the outlook of wars, destabilisation and crises in the Middle East and North Africa; the many challenges of the African continent; the United States' disputed hegemony in the final stretch of the Obama administration, and trade at the service of geopolitics in the global society of the twenty-first century.

To compile this year's publication, the IEEA is honoured to have enlisted the help of two prestigious scholars (lecturers Martín Ortega Carcelén and Carlos Echeverría Jesús), Ambassador Ignacio Rupérez, José Alberto Plaza Tejera, director of the Centro de Estudios Económicos y Comerciales, and Blanca Palacián de Inza, an analyst at the IEEA who is responsible for the final edition.

### The challenges of the EU

In the chapter on the European Union, Martín Ortega provides an analysis of the changes at the helm of the main community institutions over the past year, especially those that influence external action; an assessment of the tenure of Catherine Ashton after she succeeded Javier Solana as High Representative in January 2010; the elections to the European Parliament in May 2014 and their consequences; the Union's main civilian and military operations; and the Ukrainian conflict.

The challenge of setting up a European External Action Service, he states, 'has been completed with flying colours'. The author underlines Ashton's relatively successful involvement in Serbia's rapprochement with Europe and, above all, in the negotiations with Iran. He also points out her less 'prominent involvement' in the so-called Arab awakening, in the civil war in Syria, in the Libyan crisis, and in the ups and downs of Egypt's political process since Mubarak was toppled.

Among the most criticised or negative aspects of Ashton's tenure, Ortega mentions her lack of visibility in many international crises, owing perhaps to 'a certain lack of ability to communicate' and her 'preference for certain regional matters in Eastern Europe to the detriment of other equally or more important problems, particularly developments around the Mediterranean and in the Arab world'. He also regrets the 'insufficient attention paid to the Common Security and Defence Policy during her tenure'.

He states of Ashton's successor, the Italian Federica Mogherini, that 'nobody doubted her capabilities, but the Italian brings very limited international experience to an extremely complex post'. Nonetheless, he admits that her first steps have been 'very bold and courageous'.

Despite acknowledging the progress the Union has made with respect to the crisis, he believes that the Strategic Agenda of the June Council is

insufficient, regrets the reduction in budgets and external assistance, and considers the rising Euroscepticism in the May elections to be worrying, warning of the danger of ending up with 'a smaller Union within the EU' if UKIP win the general elections of 2015 in the United Kingdom.

He describes the EU's involvement in the Middle East in 2014 as 'rather scant or lacking in substance', owing largely to the disagreements between its members. On the recognition of the State of Palestine by some of the 28 and by the European Parliament, he does not believe that the situation on the ground will change, but states that 'it could make for a more positive environment for settling issues of substance'.

On climate change and negotiations for the post-2015 development agenda until the Paris summit at the end of the current year, which he considers crucial, he is favour of Europe maintaining the active role it has always played in both areas.

The capabilities identified as most necessary by the EU in 2014, Ortega writes, were air-to-air refuelling, remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), state satellite communications and cyberdefence.

After giving a detailed account of the events leading up to the Ukrainian crisis, he concludes that 'both Ukraine and Russia, as the main actors involved, must find a modus vivendi and Europe and the United States, as external actors, must support a peaceful solution, the terms of which it is impossible to envisage. It is highly likely that the wound caused in 2014 will take fairly long to heal'.

### **MENA, the arc of crisis**

'Four years on from the outbreak of the Arab uprisings – the first being those of Western Sahara in October–November 2010 and Tunisia that December – this long and winding process has continued to have a destabilising effect on the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region', writes Carlos Echeverría in the introduction to his report.

'Developments in the war in Syria and in Libya, the security challenges the Sahel continues to pose, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the complex negotiations between the 5+1 Group and the Islamic Republic of Iran are the main factors that need examining with respect to 2014. These challenges look set to continue in the immediate future', he adds.

In Echeverría's opinion, 'the combination of Syria's internal strife, the involvement of various actors in favour of one side or the other, the spread of the war following the strengthening of IS/Daesh and the need to use actors – such as the various Kurdish militias, the Shia militia and even armed groups from Sunni tribes – to fight against the jihadists on the ground is giving rise to theatres full of contradictions'.



After analysing in detail the labyrinth of interests at stake and the drama of the high number of dead and displaced people, the author points out the risks of the hasty responses we are witnessing in both Syria and Iraq and the pressing need to restore regional and international consensus in order to put an end to these conflicts..

Regarding the tensions in the Maghreb, which have been aggravated and fuelled by the Sahel conflicts and, in the second half of 2014, by the plunging price of oil, the author does not foresee any improvements in the short and medium term. On the contrary, he warns that 'the Western Sahara conflict could be fuelled by the effect of a deterioration in the situation of the Sahel strip, particularly the western Sahel, and by the oil prospecting Morocco has begun in Atlantic waters'.

### African horizons

Despite the increase in acts of terrorism in Nigeria and Kenya, and the unceasing civil war in South Sudan and the Central African Republic – which have captured most of the media's attention over the past year with Ebola – Africa is addressing some of its main security challenges much more effectively than in the past.

To reach this conclusion, which is confirmed by Blanca Palacián in her chapter on Africa, the directors of the Foresight Africa 2015<sup>34</sup> report for Brookings, Michael O'Hanlon and Amy Copley, attach importance above all to the strengthening of the main regional organisations, with international assistance, starting with the African Union, which this year faces the challenge of converting the African Standby Force into a fully operational force. Until this process is completed, it will continue to be necessary to rely on the presence of foreign forces, especially in the most conflictive areas.

After examining in detail the deep contrasts that make Africa such a heterogeneous continent and the political and economic progress made in many of its states, Palacián warns that the growth model of many of these countries 'is currently experiencing a crisis owing to external debt, depletion and improper exploitation of resources and the effect of China's voracious appetite on the African economies'.

One of Africa's windows of opportunity, the author adds, 'is the possible repetition of the phenomenon of European companies' offshoring to Asia, only in this case from Asia to Africa'.

Palacián cites the most significant data on the main challenges to African security: illegal trafficking, the underlying immigration stemming from

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<sup>34</sup> Foresight Africa 2015: Tackling the Continent's Diverse Security Threats. Brookings. 2 January 2015. <<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus/posts/2015/01/02-security-terrorism-peace-africa-foresight-ohanlon>>.

this trafficking, the growing relationship between them, evolution of the continent's most violent terrorist groups, piracy, armed conflicts, some of the most destructive scourges they generate (especially sexual violence as a war weapon), the foreseeable effects of demographic growth and the responses that have been given to each of these challenges.

'Since the start of the new millennium, it could be said that no part of the planet has made such important progress in regional cooperation in security as Africa', she writes.

Even so, she points out the 'lack of appropriate funding and human resources' to carry this process forward and proposes boosting the capabilities of many African states to deploy forces, invest much more in training professionals, both civilian and military, and reducing these countries' financial dependence so that they can speed up independent and legitimate decision making.

Palacián ends her chapter with a detailed study of the Millennium Development Goals (2000–15) and their application in Africa. 'It might be said that important achievements have been made on all fronts, but we should not lose sight of the fact that the starting point was a highly deficient situation in many African countries', she points out.

In accordance with the data and guidelines of the report published last year by the Real Instituto Elcano on the interests and challenges of Spain in the Mediterranean and the Sahel,<sup>35</sup> she considers that the region should be a high priority for Spain's external action (military, economic, diplomatic ...).

### Obama, the end of a mandate

The 114<sup>th</sup> session of US Congress opened on 6 January with a Republican majority in both houses: 54–46 in the Senate and 247–188 in the House of Representatives.

Macroeconomic figures, as Ignacio Rupérez explains in his report, and social and environmental progress could hardly be better: a growth of nearly 2.5% in 2014; 240,000 new jobs per month, most of them indefinite; wage increases of 2.3% for the middle classes; some 10 million more people with health coverage thanks to the harshly criticised reform known as the Obamacare or Affordable Care Act; 100 million hectares converted into protected areas; nearly half of all illegal immigrants (some 11 million) freed from the threat of deportation; a budget deficit of 2.8% of

<sup>35</sup> ARTEAGA, Félix (coord.): *España, mirando al Sur: del Mediterráneo al Sahel*, informe Elcano, no. 18, November 2014. Text and presentation video at: <[http://www.Realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/web/rielcano\\_es/actividad?WCM\\_GLOBAL\\_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano\\_es/calendario/actividades/presentacion-informe-elcano-espana-mirando-al-sur-mediterraneo-sahel](http://www.Realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/web/rielcano_es/actividad?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/calendario/actividades/presentacion-informe-elcano-espana-mirando-al-sur-mediterraneo-sahel)>.

GDP (it stood at 9.8% when he arrived in the White House), and 134 new judges in two years with a substantial increase in women, minorities, homosexuals and lesbians among them.

‘The improvements in macroeconomic statistics had not found their way into the private accounts of a population that was still vulnerable and insecure’, Ignacio Rupérez explains. ‘President Obama will have to face increasing challenges at both foreign and domestic levels in terms of new initiatives and legislation. Against this backdrop, the role of the US in the world and its prominence in the international liberal order is again being called into question’.

The supposed crises in the national organisation model and the country’s position in the world order, the author warns, do not appear to have had much of an effect, at least for the time being, on his wish to carry on dealing with national issues, even though 2014 was by no means an easy year.

More than with his successes, the Obama of 2014 is identified above all with racial tension in the streets of Ferguson and New York, and the image of faint-heartedness or weakness conveyed by the Republicans in the election campaign which, despite all his efforts, Obama was unable to counter – a serious lack of communication on the part of the man who was hailed on his advent to the White House in 2008 as one of the century’s great communicators.

In Rupérez’s opinion, Obama, who launched a host of initiatives to destroy this image, regarded by many as a caricature, following the November elections, has paid the price of the difficulty of reconciling his main mission – to modernise the country, strengthening institutions and infrastructure – with the duty to respond simultaneously to military and terrorist threats in six countries, all of them Muslim: Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia.<sup>36</sup>

### World trade, from Bali to the TTIP

Starting in 2009, nearly all the European Commission’s growth forecasts began with expectations of ‘a gradual recovery’ that never came. It may at last arrive in 2015 thanks to plummeting energy prices, a weakened euro, and fresh impetus given to reforms if the Greek crisis is successfully resolved. Agreements on some of the main trade negotiations underway would undoubtedly help.

The November deal between the United States and India on the latter’s food security programme averted a crisis within the World Trade Organ-

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<sup>36</sup> See the analyses by Jaime de Ojeda in his Letter to America published in each issue of the *Política Exterior* magazine for years.

ization (WTO) and facilitated the implementation of the Bali agreement of 2013 on substantial cuts in trade tariffs. If it is implemented, the WTO expects a global GDP increase of approximately one billion dollars and the creation of as many as 21 million jobs all over the world. If the agreement is respected, the OECD anticipates a 15% reduction in many prices as a result of the elimination of bureaucratic barriers and pockets of corruption.<sup>37</sup>

In the chapter on world trade, José Alberto Plaza Tejera acknowledges that the goods and services sector 'fell sharply in 2009, but made a rapid recovery in 2010 and 2011, and in 2014 its growth was higher than that of global GDP'.

For this trend to continue, he warns, it is necessary to have rules that facilitate this, but international trade regulation remains very imbalanced: very advanced in trade in goods, but not in investments and the environment.

After analysing the results of the Bali Conference, the ups and downs in the main trade agreements in 2014 and the new mechanisms for measuring trade flows, he stresses that the commitments achieved are applicable to the 160 member states and that the WTO's universal veto, despite making it difficult to reach agreements, reinforces their acceptance once they have been achieved.

The author underlines the stability that multilateral trade agreements afford international society and the geopolitical balance. In 2014, he writes, the WTO had been informed of 253 regional integration agreements and the European Union, with 39 regional integration agreements in force, continued to be the most active member. The EU's free-trade agreement with South Korea, analysed in detail, is clearly beneficial to the Union's principal economies.

Although the EU, unlike the United States, has preferred to negotiate with regional organisations than with countries, fear of losing markets and difficulties of progressing with regional groups such as ASEAN or MERCOSUR have forced it to give impetus to bilateral arrangements.

An agreement like the Trans-Atlantic Partnership currently being negotiated with the United States – with few possibilities of being successfully concluded in 2015, according to most observers – 'could provide the European Union with a boost equivalent to 0.5% of GDP and a large western trading area would be created', writes Plaza. It would no doubt also give impetus to much more delayed or non-existent negotiations with India and other BRICS.

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<sup>37</sup> RUNDE, Daniel F. and MAGPILE, Jeremiah: 'The WTO Trade Facilitation Agenda: 2015's Biggest Development Opportunity', CSIS, 22 December 2014. <<http://csis.org/publication/wto-trade-facilitation-agenda-2015s-biggest-development-opportunity>>.

The possibility of both the EU and the United States entering into similar agreements with China is, according to him, subject to deep changes on the part of Beijing concerning management of the currency market, protection of intellectual property, labour conditions and respect for minimal environmental standards.

'As the United States is currently negotiating the creation of two major regional partnerships, it is in a key position to set the standards to be applied in both; a particularly important factor is the similarity of the technical regulations that can be negotiated and the leeway for granting preference to the components produced in each of the areas', he concludes.

### NATO's future

'The world has accelerated in 2014', stated the Spanish Defence Minister, Pedro Morenés Eulate, at a seminar on 'NATO vis-à-vis current conflicts' hosted by the Asociación Atlántica Española (ATA) on 20 November at the Asociación de la Prensa in Madrid.<sup>38</sup> He added:

*We do not know where we are going, all we know is that it is happening very fast. Prominent among the causes of the frantic pace of the past few months are the crisis in the East, which almost distracted us from the deep Islamist threat, and the emergence of Daesh (Islamic State, ISIS or ISIL) with unforeseen force. These facts changed NATO's priorities, as was seen at the Wales summit in September. In 66 years I have witnessed many changes, but the current one is completely different: owing to its speed, and the new and different actors at stake. The world has grown smaller. Major actors have appeared or reappeared, such as China, and US President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron decided to consult with their respective legislatures before responding in the war in Syria... The Atlantic is no longer the cornerstone of world security, but it is considered to be a cornerstone and cannot fail ...*

Can it do so with defence expenditures that are falling by more than double figures, while the main adversaries (real or potential) are increasing theirs by the same amount? How can the armed forces of an alliance like NATO be adapted to the new situation without losing efficiency? Is it possible to postpone and condition the setting up of a cyberspatial capacity adapted to the current reorganisation of traditional conventional and nuclear forces? How can we successfully combat those who attack and threaten us with game rules very different to ours without undermining

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<sup>38</sup> 'La OTAN ante los conflictos actuales', seminar of the Asociación Atlántica Española held at the Asociación de la Prensa in Madrid, on 20 November 2014. The testimonies are from the author's own notes. <[http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasActividades/2014/AsociacionAtlanticaEspanola\\_OTAN-Conflicto\\_s\\_Actuales\\_20nov2014.pdf](http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasActividades/2014/AsociacionAtlanticaEspanola_OTAN-Conflicto_s_Actuales_20nov2014.pdf)>.

the freedom attained with so many sacrifices in the West since the French Revolution?

The minister and other participants answered these and many other questions with a number of specific proposals:

- NATO needs to boost its influence in Central and Eastern Europe, the South Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Pacific.
- For this purpose it needs partnerships, allies and force projection wherever threats arise.
- Its decision-making methodology will have to be much more streamlined.
- Deterrent capability cannot depend solely on the United States. A strong NATO needs a strong Europe.
- Until this is achieved, Europe will be dependent on the United States – a dependence that is desired by neither Europe nor the United States.

At the abovementioned ATA summit, the Spanish ambassador to the Alliance, Miguel Aguirre de Cárcer, acknowledged that ‘few allies today have the necessary assets’ for these missions and that ‘it is important to avoid duplication’, as 22 NATO members also belong to the European Union.

Speaking of the conclusions of the Wales summit,<sup>39</sup> the ambassador dismissed the need for crises or conflicts such as that of Ukraine to reinvent NATO, acknowledged the growing and, at the same time, complex need to improve preparedness for hybrid attacks (cyber-attacks, propaganda, irregular militias, opportunistic use of minorities, etc.) and, with respect to Spain’s strategic priorities and collective defence, warned of the need to pay the same or greater attention to the South than to the East.

Citing names of Russian officers at the helm of operations in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, Russia’s history and deep-rooted feeling of a country that is surrounded, General Miguel Ángel Ballesteros, director of the IEEA, described how in 2014 Russia – taking advantage of the change in the centre of gravity of US strategy, the relative impunity provided by hybrid conflicts and the disparity of the EU’s interests – turned away from international laws and brought the West and Russia to the verge of a new cold war, undoubtedly different from the previous one, but highly destabilising nonetheless.

Rafael Calduch, a professor of international relations, views NATO’s response to the main threats of the past year as ‘confirmation of the tendency to rely increasingly on ad hoc coalitions’ and expressed serious doubts about the efficiency of ‘taking in further members who do not pro-

<sup>39</sup> Final declaration of the Wales summit: <[http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/wcm/connct/29765d80456b7a7d8457e511646dbfa9/NATO\\_Wales\\_Summit\\_Declaration.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=29765d80456b7a7d8457e511646dbfa9](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/wcm/connct/29765d80456b7a7d8457e511646dbfa9/NATO_Wales_Summit_Declaration.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=29765d80456b7a7d8457e511646dbfa9)>.

vide more security' and of 'creating new forces' within the Alliance such as that which was adopted at Wales in response to the Ukrainian crisis. 'Ad hoc coalitions, in any event, could not function without NATO', Aguirre de Cárcer stressed.

In the view of political scientist and security expert Florentino Portero, the main cause of the current uncertainty is the Obama administration's lack of foresight. 'He is a leader who does not know very well what needs to be done in the world', he stated. 'Granted, we do not have a much clearer idea in the EU'. On the future of the alliance, he expressed serious doubts that 'the United States will exercise the same leadership as before'. We are not moving towards more permanent alliances', he concluded, but 'towards more alliances of volunteers'.





# Reforms at home, problems in the neighbourhood: the European Union's external action in 2014

Martín Ortega Carcelén

## Chapter one

### Abstract

In institutional terms, the EU's external action was marked by elections to the European Parliament in May 2014, which led to the appointment of a new European Commission and a new High Representative, the Italian Federica Mogherini. The development of an efficient European External Action Service and civilian and military operations in the EU's neighbourhood, particularly in Africa, continued in 2014. The economic crisis is limiting Europeans' scope of action, but some missions have been successful, such as Atalanta in the Indian Ocean. The single most important international event for the EU's external action in 2014 was the Ukraine–Russia crisis. The EU was mainly focused on problems in the East and paid less attention to serious conflicts in the Mediterranean and the Arab world. In the Ukrainian crisis, the EU condemned Crimea's annexation by Russia and separatist movements in the East, leading it to impose economic sanctions on Russia. Tensions between the EU and the United States, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other, might be long-lasting, since Ukraine's society is divided and maintaining its territorial integrity seems to be very difficult.

### Keywords

European Union, CFSP High Representative, European External Action Service, civilian and military operations, economic sanctions, Crimea, Russia, Ukraine.

## Introduction

In 2014, the European Union's external action was marked by the May elections to the European Parliament (leading to the appointment of a new Commission and a new High Representative) and by crises in neighbouring regions, in Ukraine to the east and also in the Middle East. Many other important events drew the attention of the EU's External Action Service, which endeavours to take a stance on any global issue, but the clash between Russia and Ukraine was the focus of European diplomatic efforts. Even so, the huge complexity of the case meant that Europe's reaction did not have an immediate determining effect on the solution to the crisis or the underlying dispute. It is very likely that, following last year's flare, it will be some time before we see a fresh understanding between Russia and Ukraine and the establishment of stable relations between these two actors and the European Union. Therefore, this contribution to the STRATEGIC PANORAMA can only provide an account of the most salient developments of 2014 and discuss the underlying problems of the conflict.

This chapter will begin by examining the abovementioned institutional issues relating to the EU's external action. The final stage of Catherine Ashton's term as High Representative (January 2010–October 2014) was a good time for taking stock of the changes brought by the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force in 2009. It will go on to discuss the 2014 elections to the European Parliament and their consequences for the appointment of senior EU posts. Although these authorities only began their tenure in the final months of 2014, we can draw a few conclusions about their appointment. The third section of this chapter takes a look at various regional issues that required the EU's external action and show that greater attention has been focused on the East than on the South, as well as a few cross-cutting issues such as development cooperation and its security implications.

The fourth section analyses the Union's defence policy in 2014, which included major civilian and military operations, and the continuation of EU–NATO cooperation, as ratified at the Atlantic Alliance's September summit meeting in Wales. The chapter ends with the thorniest issue: the Ukraine–Russia crisis and the measures taken by the European Union to weather the storm, including the adoption of economic sanctions. All observers agree that the use of armed force in Ukraine during 2014 was the most serious witnessed in Europe since the Balkan wars of the 1990s. As with those conflicts, it will take a long time and a great deal of effort to overcome it.

### **First assessment of the instruments of external action put in place after the Treaty of Lisbon**

The entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009 established new instruments for the European Union's external action. At the time

there were high expectations of what these new structures would be able to achieve. Four and a half years later, the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, took stock of her term in office in a solemn address delivered to the European Parliament on 3 April 2014. Lady Ashton was the first person to take on the three-hatted role, which entailed one of the vice presidencies of the Commission, the presidency of the Foreign Affairs Council (on which the ministers of the Member States sit), and the role of High Representative of the CFSP and CSDP. In 2014, a year marked by a host of complex issues and approaching European elections, the High Representative wished to look back and underline what she had achieved during her tenure.<sup>1</sup>

Lady Ashton's declared priority during her time in office was to create an efficient External Action Service – an organisational task that she can be considered to have completed with flying colours. It involved integrating diplomats of the Member States (one-third of the EEAS) with officials of the Commission and the Council, which was not always an easy fit. Balances between countries had to be respected, and this led the High Representative to appoint the first Spaniard as one of the chief officers of the EEAS in 2012: Luis Felipe Fernández de la Peña, who, as Managing Director for Europe and Central Asia, was responsible for important areas such as the Balkans, Russia and Turkey. In 2014 Ashton declared that the framework was complete, as the European Union now has 140 delegations all over the world and more than 1,800 European diplomatic staff, with the relevant directorates for political and military affairs, and 12 special representatives, all part of an external action service under her authority. In practice, the expansion of the European External Action Service was accompanied by agreements with Member States to find the necessary synergies in some parts of the world, especially at a time of budget reductions. For example, in 2014 Spain signed a cooperation agreement with the EEAS to establish the Spanish Embassy in Burma (Myanmar) in the offices of the EU delegation to this country, after reaching similar agreements with the EU for our diplomatic representations in Azerbaijan and Yemen.

Ashton's second declared priority was to focus on the European Union's neighbourhood, both South and East. In her self-assessment, the High Representative underlined her involvement in the negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo that brought both closer to the European Union. Further eastwards, Catherine Ashton pulled out all the stops in the Ukrainian crisis – albeit with less tangible results, as we shall see in due course.

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<sup>1</sup> ASHTON, Catherine: speech on EU foreign and security policy to the European Parliament, 3 April 2014. <[http://eeas.europa.eu/top\\_stories/2014/040414\\_ep\\_ashton\\_speech\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2014/040414_ep_ashton_speech_en.htm)>.

In the Middle East, the High Representative's most noteworthy achievement was in the last phase of the agreement on limiting Iran's nuclear programme, which was concluded in November 2013 between Iran and the three Security Council powers (China, the United States and Russia) plus the three European powers (Germany, France and the United Kingdom): the group known as EU3+3, or also as P5+1. This was probably the most brilliant moment of Ashton's tenure, as in a sense she acted as a spokesperson for the agreement secured in Geneva and was present in the final negotiations with the Iranian foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif. In this case the three abovementioned European states were effectively accompanied by the EU, through its High Representative. In contrast, other issues involving Europe's southern neighbourhood did not witness such prominent involvement of either Catherine Ashton or European diplomacy. In particular, the so-called Arab awakening, the civil war in Syria, the situation in Libya following Gaddafi's death and political developments in Egypt throughout 2014 lacked a sufficiently effective presence of the European Union.

The third priority of the outgoing High Representative was relations with the EU's strategic partners, particularly the United States and China. It should be stressed that President Barack Obama paid his first visit to the European institutions on 26 March 2014 on the occasion of the EU-US summit,<sup>2</sup> and that 2014 was the year in which negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) gained momentum.

The EU's senior foreign trade officials are undoubtedly playing the leading role in these negotiations, but both Ashton and the External Service did their utmost to carry them forward. By a stroke of fate, a few days after Obama's visit, a Chinese president, Xi Jinping, visited Brussels for the first time on 31 March to further talks with the EU on trade and political issues as part of a programme that has been called the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation. Political relations between the United States and the European Union and trade and investments between them evidently have an intensity and depth that place them at a considerably higher level than incipient relations between China and the European Union, but it should be noted that both countries are described as strategic partners of the Union in official documents and by the High Representative.

The assessment of the EU's external action in 2014 was therefore based on the consolidation of the instruments of the Treaty of Lisbon, particularly the figure of the High Representative and the EEAS. As Esther Barbé states in a collective work published that year, this development has

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<sup>2</sup> BENEDICTO SOLSONA, Miguel Ángel: 'Cumbre Unión Europea-Estados Unidos: vuelve el matrimonio transatlántico', documento de opinión, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos 33/2013, 3 April 2014.

enabled the Union to project its presence in the world through various channels, as a normative power, a market power and even a traditional power – for example, through sanctions or restrictive measures.<sup>3</sup> However, just as some aspects of Catherine Ashton's track record and the European Union's external action that she directed until October 2014 merit a positive assessment, others deserve to be criticised.

Indeed, many commentators and experts expressed clashing opinions of her tenure. To start off with, Ashton was criticised for her lack of visibility in many international crises, and this obviously amounted to attributing the same flaw to the European Union. It is not a question of being apprised of the technical details or internal workings of the machinery, or of going against the necessary discretion of diplomacy; rather, what was criticised was the absence of a distinguishable criterion and a certain lack of ability to communicate. In this respect, of course, Catherine Ashton faced a difficult comparison with her predecessor Javier Solana, who always managed to make his own voice heard among the major European Union Member States, which sometimes had clashing opinions, and was also a successful high-level dialogue partner with major powers such as the United States and with other EU partners. It might be said that the first High Representative for the CFSP, with fewer means, had a greater presence and visibility than Catherine Ashton in major international crises.

As for questions of substance, another objection to the High Representative's nearly five-year tenure is her preference for certain regional matters in Eastern Europe, to the detriment of other equally or more important problems, particularly developments around the Mediterranean and in the Arab world. At this stage in the game nobody expects the European Union's external action to allow her to become involved in all the disputes that arise throughout the length and breadth of the world. There is consensus on the need to concentrate first on a scope of action limited to the EU's neighbouring regions. This also means taking an interest in and being present in our neighbours' neighbourhood (in Europe, our neighbours' neighbours are also our neighbours), such as the Sahel or combating piracy in the Indian Ocean. As it needs to attend to this wider neighbourhood, the Union cannot, for the time being, envisage having a determining political or military presence in remoter regions such as Latin America or Asia.

The European Security Strategy of 2003 established among its objectives creating security in the neighbouring countries, along with another two: addressing threats and working towards an international order based on effective multilateralism. Bearing in mind this preference for neighbour-

<sup>3</sup> BARBÉ, Esther (ed.): *La Unión Europea en las relaciones internacionales*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2014, pp. 28–30.

ing regions, it is only logical that Catherine Ashton should have focused on certain regions. Nevertheless, Ashton was criticised for spending her term in office looking more at the Balkans and Eastern Europe and less at the South, and for failing to ensure that the European Union had a real impact on the changes that took place in northern Africa and other countries of the Arab world. The transition in Tunisia followed its natural course in 2014, when a new constitution was adopted. However, in other areas of such great importance to us, such as Egypt, Libya and Syria, where developments were worrying, the European Union found itself powerless and its High Representative was somewhat absent.

Another criticism levelled at Catherine Ashton in 2014 was the insufficient attention paid to the Common Security and Defence Policy during her tenure. For example, the Frenchman Jean-Dominique Giuliani, president of the Robert Schuman Foundation, told the press that Ashton had been ineffective in defence matters.<sup>4</sup> Such a judgement is evidently an exaggeration, as the High Representative supervised the EU operations, helped prepare the European Council on defence matters in December 2013 and submitted a progress report on the implementation of that Council's decisions in July 2014.<sup>5</sup> But perhaps the criticism was targeted more at her low sensitivity to military and defence issues than at specific actions. Indeed, many observers have the impression that the High Representative did not show much interest in progressing with these issues, although it should be added in her defence that the responsibilities of the post are so many and so varied that it is difficult to achieve a balanced distribution of the time available. In the future, the idea of creating a Defence Council or a Mr/Mrs CSDP (based on the old idea, already put into practice, of a Mr CFSP) to coordinate it could provide a structural solution to this problem.

### European elections in 2014 and new appointments

When assessing Catherine Ashton's performance as High Representative, a few observers turned back to the time of her appointment and recalled that there had been a '*casting error*' (the expression was used by Joseph Daul, president of the European People's Party). 2014 was a fitting moment for retrospection, because the new High Representative was chosen that year: the Italian Federica Mogherini, who has held the post since 1 November. Elections to the European Parliament were held

<sup>4</sup> GIULIANI, Jean-Dominique: 'Défense européenne: ne tirez pas sur les pianistes!', F. Robert Schuman, Paris, December 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the High Representative on implementing the December 2013 European Council Conclusions on security and defence, submitted to the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 July 2014. <[http://eeas.europa.eu/top\\_stories/pdf/100914\\_implementing\\_the\\_dec\\_2013\\_european\\_council\\_conclusions\\_on\\_security\\_and\\_defence.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/pdf/100914_implementing_the_dec_2013_european_council_conclusions_on_security_and_defence.pdf)>.

between 22 and 25 May, followed by a few months of negotiations between the institutions and Member States, until the Pole Donald Tusk was appointed as president of the European Council and the Luxembourgian Jean-Claude Juncker as president of the Commission, of which the new High Representative holds one of the seven vice-presidencies, along with a total of 28 commissioners including the Spaniard Miguel Arias Cañete, who was given the important Climate Action and Energy portfolio.

The European elections resulted in a win for the European People's Party over the European Socialist Party, but both (and other traditional political forces) secured a lower percentage of the vote than in the previous 2009 elections because various parties, many of them Eurosceptic, achieved a larger representation in the European Parliament. Indeed, the most striking feature of the 2014 European elections was the rise of the Eurosceptics. The following chart sums up the result of the 2014 elections compared to the previous ones:

European Elections	2014	2009
<i>Participation</i>	43,1%	42,9%
People's Party	28,4%	36%
Socialist Party	24,5%	25%
(Selected with no-European party - Eurosceptics)	15,3%	---
Liberals	8,1%	11,4%
Reformists (also Eurosceptic)	5,6%	7,5%
Greens	4,8%	7,3%
European left	3,7%	4,8%

Table 1

Against a backdrop characterised by a certain amount of political fragmentation – as the Conservatives beat the Socialists by a smaller margin than in 2009 – and emerging forces within the Eurosceptic camp, the Juncker Commission was formed from 13 Conservatives, 8 Social Democrats and 4 Liberals, to list the most important parties represented. The most powerful personality is Juncker himself, an extremely well-known Europeanist with a moderate economic profile who had headed the Eurogroup since 2005. Both he and the new president of the Council, Donald Tusk, are Christian Democrats, and it therefore seemed appropriate to seek a certain political balance in the appointment of the High Represent-

ative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, a post perceived as the other most prominent figure of the European government. This balance was achieved with Federica Mogherini, who hails from the Italian Democratic Party that was established in 2007 from several centre-left forces and was consolidated months before the European elections by Matteo Renzi's unstoppable rise in Italy since 2013.

A political balance may have been achieved, but her appointment took international experts by surprise. Everyone wished the new High Representative the best and nobody doubted her capabilities, but the Italian brings very limited international experience to an extremely complex post. Born in 1973 (Renzi himself was born in 1975), Federica Mogherini had previously been a member of the Italian Parliament since 2008, where she served on the Defence Committee and took part in a few international parliamentary activities until being appointed minister of Foreign Affairs of Renzi's government; she served for only a few months, from 21 February until 31 October 2014 – when she left to take up the post of European Union High Representative the following day.

When Catherine Ashton was appointed, there was talk of her lack of government and international experience, as she had only served for a couple of months on the Barroso Commission. In view of the similarity of Federica Mogherini's appointment in 2014, the question that comes to mind is whether the Member States do not perhaps prefer someone with little international experience for the post of High Representative for the CFSP and the CSDP. Europe has no shortage of prominent people with an extensive, brilliant track record in the field of diplomacy, international business or politics – to mention only a few fields – who could make a significant personal contribution to its external action. The case of Javier Solana was revealing, as he came to the post of High Representative after a long government and international experience as NATO's Secretary General. Following the appointment of the new High Representative in 2014, and bearing in mind that the major European states defend major interests and have very marked opinions on some international issues, it is plausible to think that some Member States prefer the HR to be someone who is not initially going to generate a European stance that contrasts with their own. Whatever the case, it is very important for the incumbent to be capable of achieving consensus, especially among the large EU Member States, and nor can such a political and dialogue capability be assured a priori.

Experience shows that the CFSP and the Union's external action refer above all to the areas where there is agreement among the Member States. When dealing with the Common Foreign and Security Policy, it is perhaps necessary to place more emphasis on 'common' than on 'policy' or 'European', because Europe's external action is carried out in regions and on matters on which joint positions can be generated.



Even so, Federica Mogherini's first steps as High Representative in 2014 were very bold and courageous. During her first visit to Israel, shortly after being appointed, she declared herself to be in favour of recognising Palestine as a state and also visited the government of the Gaza Strip. During the last months of 2014, she presided over the Foreign Affairs Councils, including the one held with the Defence ministers on 17 November, and the one on 12 December on seeking a post-2015 development agenda, issuing firm declarations after both. It remains to be seen how her capacity for dialogue and communication will develop in the coming years.

The EU's external action is conditioned by the High Representative's personality and by the effectiveness of the instruments created, and is subject to the strategic decisions of national leaders. Europe's external action is framed by the post-Lisbon wording of the Treaty on European Union and its guidelines are established by the European Council; based on the latter, the Foreign Affairs Council and the High Representative define and implement the measures adopted, which range from sanctions to development cooperation and the EU's civilian and military operations overseas.

However, the framework of the treaty is very loose, as it only establishes the principles and allows the leaders considerable room for manoeuvre at the European Council. This is why drafting a European Security Strategy – which was carried out under Solana – is so important and still relevant today. In 2013 the European Union Member States decided not to involve themselves in drawing up an updated strategy document, even though the ten years that had elapsed since the previous one and the changing international landscape made it advisable to do so. Nevertheless, at the Defence Council in December 2013 it was mandated to begin this exercise in reflection, which was left pending when one High Representative was replaced with another during 2014. At the end of the year, the German rapporteur of the Foreign Affairs Council, Elmar Brok, stated in the European Parliament's reply to the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy that:

*An effective EU foreign policy needs to be based on a shared vision of key European interests and objectives in external relations as well as on a common perception of the threats affecting the EU as a whole [...]. In order to establish such a shared vision in the context of a dramatically changed environment, the EU needs to update the strategic framework for its foreign and security policy; [the Committee on Foreign Affairs] welcomes, therefore, the commitment of the HRVP, on the basis of the mandate from the European Council of December 2013, to initiate as a matter of priority a process of strategic reflection, which should involve a wide range of stakeholders, including Member States,*

*European institutions, and the European public; insists that this reflection should lead to a new European Security Strategy.<sup>6</sup>*

The June 2014 European Council that followed the European elections adopted a well-meaning strategy document that nevertheless raised more questions than it answered. It is a more inward- than outward-looking document. In the text, entitled 'A strategic agenda for the Union in times of change', the Council stated it had reached an agreement on five priorities to guide the European Union's work over the next five years: stronger economies with more jobs; societies enabled to empower and protect; a secure energy and climate future; a trusted area of fundamental freedoms; and effective joint action in the world. Documents of this kind show that Europe's main priority continues to be to overcome the crisis and return to a period of growth, but this will require further changes. This means that reforms at home are continuing and that the common economic policy, in which important progress has been made such as the European semester and bank guarantees, is still a battlefield.

Those who think that the construction of Europe is complete are mistaken, and this applies to both the internal structure and external relations. It is true that the 2000s were a period of groundwork and witnessed the completion of enlargement, the drafting of the European Security Strategy and the proposal for a Constitutional Treaty that was then converted into the Treaty of Lisbon. In contrast, it seems that the constitutional debate is over in the current 2010s.

However, a number of major issues prove otherwise. One of them is the reduction in the Union's budget – the so-called financial perspectives 2014–2020, which were slashed by 3.5% with respect to the previous 2007–2013 period for the first time in the history of the European community. This affects the aid the EU allocates to its neighbours, for instance. It is often stated that the Union should reform its neighbourhood policy and earmark more funds to the Mediterranean countries, for example, which have gone through democratic revolutions only to find themselves in highly precarious economic situations. The EU will be hard pressed to devote more funds to these countries while it is in the grip of an economic and debt crisis of its own, with shrinking budgets.

Another substantial issue that affects the future configuration of the European Union and its external action is the Euroscepticism that may be inferred from a close analysis of the results of the European elections of 2014. It should be stressed that the Eurosceptic parties gained considerable power in both France (the National Front took the most votes) and

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<sup>6</sup> Working document of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament on the Annual Report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy, 13 November 2014; rapporteur: Elmar Brok. PE541.636v01-00. DT\1040293EN.doc.

the United Kingdom (UKIP received the most votes). This heralds an uncertain situation in the United Kingdom, where general elections are due to be held in the spring of 2015. Indeed, David Cameron promised that, if his party is re-elected to govern the country, he would call a referendum on withdrawing from the European Union. A hypothetical exit or a United Kingdom forced to demand substantial changes in the Union could trigger a new constitutional debate, albeit different from the previous one. Issues such as these could likewise give rise to a smaller Union within the EU – for example of the countries that use the euro, as a few scholars have started to suggest. Both the economic and financial crisis, which Europe has still not entirely overcome, and these structural doubts are hampering its ability to establish solid foundations for strong external action in the long term.

### **Main areas of European external action in 2014**

The European Union's external action is multifaceted because it encompasses very different fields, as befits an international actor with so many and such wide-ranging responsibilities. These fields include not only the well-known CFSP and CSDP, but also international trade, development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, external ramifications of cooperation in justice, and home affairs, such as monitoring external borders and illegal trafficking, energy and the environment.

In this connection we will refer only to a few of the most important developments witnessed throughout 2014 in three main areas: the regional balance of the EU's external relations, a few international legal issues, and humanitarian issues, including development cooperation. Two key aspects of external action will be examined in subsequent paragraphs: the Union's defence policy and civilian and military operations, and the most substantial international issue that Europeans had to deal with during 2014, the crisis in Ukraine.

As for the regional dimension of the European Union's external action, 2014 began with a gradual lifting of the sanctions on Iran after it complied with the agreement of November 2013 on its nuclear programme. The operation in the Central African Republic was formalised at the February Foreign Affairs Council. It was agreed at the fourth EU–Africa Summit held in Brussels in April to cooperate in security and immigration. But the various council meetings held from March onwards were dominated by the Ukrainian crisis, on which the EU focused its efforts. Evidently many other issues were discussed, ranging from an EU strategy for the Gulf of Guinea, which is beginning to experience problems of insecurity, terrorism, organised crime and piracy, to a document on the Arctic region, as well as combating Ebola and condemning the kidnapping of girls in Nigeria. However, as pointed out, Europe's external action was largely monop-

olised by the situation in Ukraine. This is only logical given the proximity of this country, but it should be remembered that 2014 was plagued with crises, particularly the summer months and especially in the Middle East. There were several hotspots, which even sparked a sensation of international disorder at certain times when a succession of events and images in Libya, Egypt, Syria and Iraq came under the spotlight.

January 2014 saw the adoption of a new constitution in Egypt that banned religious-based parties, followed by presidential elections in May and judicial proceedings against political opponents. July and August witnessed an Israeli armed action in Gaza in response to missile attacks launched from the north of the Strip. The ensuing conflict was very bloody, resulting in many casualties on both sides. In Libya, the situation of widespread instability affected oil production and exports. In the area where the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) operated, atrocious acts of violence were committed, such as the beheadings of several hostages, which were filmed. The European Union responded to these and other worrying developments only with words full of euphemisms, failing to show a clear political vision.

These issues will not be discussed in depth here. Another chapter of this year's STRATEGIC PANORAMA focuses on events in this region. The point we wish to make here is that the European Union's external action with respect to these crises was rather scant or lacking in substance. Evidently declarations were issued, but they were always reactive and at no point gave the impression that the Union had a significant role to play in handling the crises or devising ways of stabilising them. Bearing in mind the importance of these problems, and Europe's tendency to involve itself in the area, it may be stated that the EU's position in the conflicts of 2014 in our southern neighbourhood was too lukewarm. In the Ukrainian crisis the EU appears to have had the will to act but to have been incapable of doing so, whereas in the many raging conflicts in the Mediterranean and the Arab world it often even lacked the will to do so. The impression was that the Union paid more attention to crises in the East than in the South. Signs of this imbalance are the declarations by the French minister of Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius, who stated in public (contravening diplomatic practice) that the High Representative had taken too long in August to call an urgent meeting on the Iraqi conflict as requested by France. Fabius commented: 'When there are people dying, you have to come back from your holidays'.<sup>7</sup>

It should also be stressed that the most striking disagreements on the European Union's external action in 2014 were sparked by the conflicts in the Arab world – a fact that highlights how difficult they are to address.

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<sup>7</sup> 'Désaccords entre les Vingt-huit sur la fourniture d'armes en Irak', *Le Monde*, 13 August 2014. <[http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2014/08/13/desaccords-entre-les-vingt-huit-sur-la-fourniture-d-armes\\_4470878\\_823448.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2014/08/13/desaccords-entre-les-vingt-huit-sur-la-fourniture-d-armes_4470878_823448.html)>.

Even if the EU wished to exercise external peacebuilding influence, it is debatable how this could be done. This occurred, for example, with the decision on sending the Kurds weapons to defend themselves from the militias of the so-called Islamic State. Whereas France and the United Kingdom maintained that arming the Kurdish peshmerga was acceptable and could even be considered humanitarian aid for a region at war, Germany held that supplying weapons contravened its policy of not exporting to regions involved in conflict. This clash of opinions recalls the political divides between Europeans and allies with respect to the intervention in Libya approved by United Nations Security Council resolution 1973 in 2011: whereas France and the United Kingdom played an active part in this NATO-led operation, and Spain took part as an ally in compliance with the resolution but was not directly involved in the attacks, Germany, then a non-permanent member, abstained at the Security Council and did not take part in the operation either.

The second issue that deserves to be dealt with separately in this section is the position of the Member States and the EU on a matter relating to international law: the recognition of states. The situation with respect to Kosovo remained at a relative standstill throughout 2014. That summer, 100 states had recognised Kosovo, but 5 members of the European Union had not yet done so: Cyprus, Slovakia, Spain, Greece and Romania. The agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, in contrast, brought a functional rapprochement between these two actors and the EU.

The recognition of Palestine as a state witnessed certain developments in 2014. Of the 193 members of the United Nations, 135 had recognised Palestine as a state, and in November 2012 the United Nations General Assembly had even agreed to non-member observer status for Palestine with 138 votes in favour, 9 against and 41 abstentions. During 2014 various European partners – for example Sweden and the United Kingdom – began openly expressing their support for the recognition of Palestine as a state, and this made it possible to grant it certain rights. In November 2014, the Spanish Congress agreed almost unanimously to urge the government to recognise Palestine as a state. In December, the European Parliament also followed suit, as it supported the principle of recognising the State of Palestine on the basis of the solution of two states. The future completion of the recognition process by the EU and most of the international community will obviously not change the situation on the ground, but it could make for a more positive environment for settling issues of substance.

The third main area of the European Union's external action that should be mentioned is humanitarian matters, including development cooperation. The European Union has always stressed the link between security and development, which is particularly visible in conflict settings in Africa. As is well known, the EU with its Member States is by far the world's leading donor of official development assistance and also of relief in cases of

emergency and natural or manmade disasters. The EU likewise claims to be one of the greatest champions of human rights in the world, though this statement should be compared with specific experiences in various places where political considerations sometimes prevail over principles. Interestingly, the West's insistence on promoting democracy, which was all the rage in the 2000s, lost steam following the uprisings in the Arab countries, because these democratic revolutions have often led to paradoxical situations where the international community prefers stability to democracy. However, it is important to bring to light this aspect of its external action because the EU is working globally to seek international commitments on development and combating poverty. The Union has drawn up a doctrine of its own that is characteristic of the comprehensive approach of its external action, which entails integrating the various initiatives for preventing crises, addressing conflicts and rebuilding post-conflict landscapes using very different civilian and military means available to the Union and its Member States.

The December 2014 Foreign Affairs Council brought important issues to the table, such as the post-2015 development agenda, migration, refugees, Ebola and gender equality in the world – all with the visible involvement of Federica Mogherini, the new High Representative. A particularly long-term issue is the world development agenda that needs to be agreed on to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were established at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 at the initiative of Kofi Annan.

Eight realistic goals were set for reducing poverty, boosting literacy and ensuring widespread basic healthcare services in the poorest countries. These countries and local actors (also governments, which are often the main impairments to development), as well as rich countries and international institutions, were called on to work to this end. Back then 2015 seemed a long way off, but it has finally arrived. And the fact is that, although the poverty situation has improved in many parts of the world, those goals have not been met. The European Union has accordingly decided to promote international action with the most important dialogue partners to agree on a plan to replace the MDGs, which needs to involve a broad range of actors in this complex problem.

In this issue, the EU is playing the same role it has taken on in fighting climate change. Europe's commitments to reducing greenhouse gases are deeper and more demanding than other major emitters like China and the United States are willing to assume. The European Union approved an ambitious 20-20-20 plan for 2020 that involves saving energy, encouraging renewables and reducing emissions. But it is of little use having Europeans reduce their emissions, as the problem is global by definition. Air pollution in Asia affects the whole planet, just as pollution does in any other continent or in the seas. Therefore, the EU is urging all emitters to

commit to a new agreement to replace the outmoded Kyoto Protocol that was in force from 2008 to 2012. The Lima meeting in December 2014 merely served to prepare the climate summit that will take place in Paris at the end of 2015 and will be a decisive moment regarding the adoption (or not) of an international and universally accepted system for combating climate change. The meeting will be crucial, and Europeans, who are more advanced in this matter, will play an important role in it. Only by adopting global measures will we be able to manage negative environmental developments before they have a destructive impact with serious and unforeseeable human, economic and security consequences.

### European Union defence policy and missions throughout 2014

The monographic European Council of December 2013 devoted to defence matters took a series of important measures to boost the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The Council was positively regarded, as it was decided to increase the efficiency, visibility and impact of the policy and of the EU's civilian and military operations rather than address other more ambitious objectives that are difficult to achieve in times of budgetary restraint, as Miguel Ángel Ballesteros pointed out.<sup>8</sup> After that European Council, a progress report was submitted in mid-2014 and the matter was left for another Council on defence, scheduled for 2015. Throughout 2014 the CSDP continued to progress on several fronts that deserve to be underlined, but a few difficulties remain. The areas in which progress can be identified most clearly are as follows:

(a) Development of the comprehensive approach that allows synergies to be found between military and civilian action, development cooperation and the various aspects of the EU's action continued its course. This also entails working more on the relationship between internal and external security, because the threats that have an impact on the Union's territory and its citizens have an external origin or connections.

(b) Improving rapid response capabilities has become a basic aspect of the EU's military presence on the ground. Such was the experience of the crisis in Mali in 2013, when French intervention was needed to be able to mount an international operation. The European Union carried on working throughout 2014 to be able to deploy the necessary operations more swiftly, including improvements in the planning, logistics and funding of missions.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> BALLESTEROS MARTÍN, Miguel Ángel: 'La Política Común de Seguridad y Defensa tras el Consejo Europeo de diciembre de 2013', documento de análisis del IEEE 03/2014, January 2014.

<sup>9</sup> On this subject see VÁZQUEZ RAMOS, Alfredo: '¿Solidaridad o alianza? Reformar la base financiera de las operaciones de la UE', documento de opinión del IEEE 97/2014, 5 September 2014.

(c) Boosting the EU's capacity for military and civilian action was another constant concern in 2014, though the economic crisis and shrinking defence budgets are a challenge in this field for both the EU and NATO, which also continues to stress the need to set a minimum budget for all allies. The capabilities the EU identified as most necessary in 2014 were: air-to-air refuelling, remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), state satellite communications and cyberdefence. As for civilian capabilities, the EU greatly stressed the need for qualified personnel in important tasks such as developing the rule of law.

(d) Work also continued to be performed to deepen relations with other organisations, particularly NATO and the United Nations, at an operational level. Relations between NATO and the EU are excellent in all respects and make it possible to cooperate in various simultaneous missions in the same theatre. Efforts to strengthen the African Union in the field of crisis management, peacekeeping and security sector reform likewise continued.

(e) Finally, the EU attached great importance to the new threats in order to be better prepared for such risks, many of which are already part of the present and will increase in the future. In this field, the EU's Maritime Security Strategy was an important joint document of the High Representative and the Commission that was released in March 2014.<sup>10</sup> The EU likewise continued its work on cybersecurity and cyberdefence in accordance with the strategy drafted by the Commission in 2013 on the best measures for addressing border control, energy security and the impact of climate change on security, all of which are considered new risks that will require increasing attention from the CSDP.

In contrast, it should be recognised that a few other issues related to European defence were not dealt with in 2014. One is the development of the Treaty of Lisbon with respect to permanent structured cooperation or the possibility of entrusting special tasks and missions to a group of Member States. The idea of EU battle groups remains at the project stage because a crisis in which they can be put to good use has yet to arise. On the other hand, streamlining demand for defence assets, which continues to be done on a national basis, and strengthening the technological and industrial base of European defence and the European Defence Agency so that it can fully perform its function of armaments cooperation are other projects that have yet to get off the ground.

In any event, the aspect of the CSDP that continued to arouse the most admiration was the various military and civilian missions carried out by the

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<sup>10</sup> Joint document of the High Representative and the European Commission: 'For an Open and Secure Global Maritime domain: Elements for a European Union Maritime Security Strategy' (JOIN (2014) final).



Union over the course of 2014. These operations have proved to be the clearest expression of the CSDP and Europeans' most effective means of being present in the world to enhance peace and security. The EU obviously does not have all the civilian and military capabilities and in a period of financial restraint it is difficult for its Member States to meet all needs that arise in the Union's neighbourhood and beyond. Nevertheless, despite having to choose, the EU's missions have secured notable successes in peacebuilding and stabilisation in various settings. A notable success is the reduction of the frequency of pirate attacks in the Indian Ocean in recent years owing to a series of factors, prominent among which is the naval presence of the EUNAVFOR Atalanta mission.

Throughout 2014 various EU missions continued to operate in the world. At the Foreign Affairs Councils of January and February 2014, the EU decided to establish a new operation in the Central African Republic. In this case, as in Mali, a French operation (Serval in Mali, Sangaris in CAR) is combined with operations run by the EU (EUTM in Mali, EUFOR RCA in Central African Republic) and the African Union (MISCA in CAR).

Spain contributes decisively to the joint functioning of these efforts, not only by taking part in the European operations but also by supporting those of France. Spain's ALFA MIKE missions provide logistic support from Senegal to Mali, and the ALFA CHARLIE missions from Gabon facilitate access to the Central African Republic. Indeed, this confluence of efforts is found in nearly all theatres. For example, Spain has taken part in the abovementioned Atalanta, under the EU flag, since the outset and is also involved in NATO's Ocean Shield operation in the same theatre: the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

As of the end of 2014, the EU had 17 operations of the following types under way: border surveillance (EUBAM, Border Assistance Mission) in Libya, Gaza and between Moldavia and Ukraine; capacity building (EU-CAP) in Mali, Niger and Djibouti, for the Indian Ocean; ground or naval military force (EUFOR or EUNAVFOR) in Bosnia, Central African Republic and the Indian Ocean; for the rule of law (EULEX) in Kosovo; a monitoring mission (EUMM) in Georgia; police training (EUPOL) in Afghanistan and Gaza; security sector reform (EUSEC) in Congo; a training mission (EUTM) in Mali and Somalia; and a civil and military advisory mission (EUAM) in Ukraine. The information provided on the European Union's website on the various operations in progress and those already completed is well organised and up to date.<sup>11</sup>

Spain has been notably involved in the various international peacekeeping and security efforts, always under an international mandate as set forth in the Organic Law on National Defence of 2005, whether under the

<sup>11</sup> See <<http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/>>.

direct leadership of the United Nations, NATO or the European Union, with military personnel and materiel, and also with personnel who are highly trained for civilian missions such as establishing the rule of law. In 2014, when the international presence in Afghanistan was decreased, Spain's participation in the UN's FINUL II in southern Lebanon was the largest. At the end of the year, according to the Ministry of Defence, Spain intended to allocate more than 600 million euros (less than the nearly 800 million it had earmarked in 2013) to the following international operations of various types:

Mission	Leadership	Spanish participation	Budget Spain
Lebanon <b>UNIFIL</b>	United Nations	580	155
Afghanistan <b>ISAF</b>	NATO	464	237
Indian Ocean <b>EUNAVFOR</b>	EU	128	104
Mali <b>EUTM</b>	EU	122	39
Central African Republic <b>EUFOR RCA</b>	EU	114	35
Senegal <b>ALFA MIKE</b>	Spain	55	
Gabon <b>ALFA CHARLIE</b>	Spain	49	
Somalia <b>EUTM</b>	EU	14	2
Bosnia <b>EUFOR Althea</b>	EU	9	1,4

Table 2

The chart shows only the most significant operations, as Spain also took part in other operations with fewer personnel and lower budgets in 2014. In December Spain also began significant collaboration in the framework of the Atlantic Alliance in order to step up air surveillance in the Baltic States. New missions envisaged for 2015 involve military and civilian training in Iraq and missile defence in Turkey, though future theatres always depend on contingencies.

### The crisis in Ukraine: a long-term problem

What had been an unstable political situation for many years developed into an unexpected crisis that flared in 2014. The armed conflict in Ukraine marked the return of war to Europe. The main challenge for Eu-

rope's foreign policy in 2014 was undoubtedly the clash between Russia and Ukraine.

Kiev had been protesting vigorously since the previous November about President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to rule out the possibility of signing an association agreement with the EU. To try to balance this decision, on 17 December 2013 an agreement was signed in Moscow whereby Russia granted Ukraine financial aid and lowered the price of gas, but the demonstrations held in Maidan square since the end of the year increased. In February 2014 clashes between demonstrators and the police resulted in more than 70 deaths and the situation became untenable for Yanukovich, who abandoned Kiev and sought refuge in Russia, accusing his opponents of staging a coup d'état.

The crisis took a turn for the worse when Crimea decided to proclaim its annexation to Russia by holding a referendum on 16 March. Both the United States and the European Union rejected the referendum and imposed sanctions on Russia. In April, pro-Russian separatists seized control of territories in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, and there were also skirmishes in Odessa on the Black Sea coast, while the Ukrainian government launched military operations to crush the rebellion. The presidential elections held on 25 May were won by the businessman Petro Poroshenko with a clearly pro-western programme, enabling much of the envisaged association agreement with the EU to be signed in July.

During the summer months, NATO condemned Russia's intervention in the eastern separatist areas. Speaking in Warsaw in June, Barack Obama condemned Russia's aggression in Ukraine. On 17 July a missile struck a Malaysia Airlines aircraft flying over the separatist-controlled area, killing all 289 people on board and sparking firm protests from the whole international community. In August Russia sent convoys of humanitarian relief to the areas dominated by the separatists. Shortly afterwards attempts were made to reach an agreement in Minsk, with the Ukrainian authorities promising those areas regional autonomy in exchange for a ceasefire. But the truce was violated during the months that ensued and in November the separatist regions held their own elections without abiding by Ukrainian law. At the end of 2014 swords remained drawn, with a situation on the ground that was not recognised by NATO allies: Crimea's annexation to Russia and separatist military control of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions. Tension with Russia was at its highest since the Cold War and the sanctions imposed on all sides were threatening to harm Russia's economy, but there was also the risk of a damaging effect on the European Union Member States.

This short summary of the crisis underlines the seriousness of the problem, and there is no predicting how it will develop in future. Both Ukraine and Russia, as the main actors involved, must find a *modus vivendi* and

Europe and the United States, as external actors, must support a peaceful solution, the terms of which it is impossible to envisage. It is highly likely that the wound caused in 2014 will take fairly long to heal. In any event, analysing the crisis at this latter stage does not help understand the complexity of the underlying issues. It is not sufficient to refer to compliance with principles such as territorial integrity; rather, it is necessary to dig more deeply into history in order to get to the root of the problem.

Although this aspect does not account for the whole of the problem, the dispute is based on territory. Since the country gained its independence in 1991, the government of Ukraine has been hotly disputed by pro-westerners in favour of closer relations with the European Union and Atlantic Alliance and pro-Russians, and it has always been very difficult to find a balance between these two political forces. In 2014, as it was not possible to achieve such a balance, the crisis veered in a new direction, territorial partition, though it was not really known where it would lead. When Ukraine emerged as an independent state at the end of 1991, the Belavezha Accords and the Alma Ata Protocols marked the end of the Soviet Union and the birth of new states in the territories of the Soviet republics. The successive agreements made by these new states – among them Ukraine – with other subjects of international law were based on those territories. This way of defining territory has a certain parallel with the classic principle of international law called *uti possidetis iuris*, which means 'as you possessed you shall possess'. In other words, the territory of the new Ukraine was the territory of the Soviet republic of Ukraine. The historical origin of this principle lies in the Latin American states' independence with respect to Spain in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Following certain attempts to achieve large confederations in the image of the United States in the north (that was Simón Bolívar's dream), the new states were established in accordance with the territorial boundaries of the Spanish viceroalties and provinces. The second historical phase in the application of this principle was during the decolonisation of Africa throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Although the colonial powers had established borders capriciously, in accordance with meridians and parallels, or with their own interests – which were far removed from those of the local ethnic groups or cultures or their history – when it came to decolonising, the new states concluded that it was preferable to preserve the previous limits because starting from scratch was a recipe for continuous war. The principle of *uti possidetis* guaranteed a measure of legal certainty. Nevertheless, this principle has sometimes been corrected in Africa – as seen, for example, when Eritrea gained its independence from Ethiopia in 1993, and from South Sudan in 2011, in both cases with the recognition of the international community.

In the case of Ukraine, the territory assigned to the new state in 1991 is the result of a number of historical changes, particularly the most recent

changes stemming from decisions made in the USSR, first by Stalin and later by Nikita Khrushchev, who decided to incorporate the Crimean peninsula into the Soviet Republic of Ukraine in 1954. In previous centuries Ukraine had only been independent on a few occasions, particularly during a period of splendour in the late seventeenth century that lasted a few years, but the rest of the time the Ukrainian Cossacks formed alliances with neighbours, the longest period being that of the Tsarist empire when the country became 'Russified'.

To quote Pilar Bonet, who is very familiar with the area: 'The state of Ukraine, which emerged from the collapse and disappearance of the Soviet Union in 1991, is an amalgam of territories with different histories and different external influences that overlapped, became intertwined and dissolved over the centuries.'<sup>12</sup> Interesting and well-written articles and studies on the history of Ukraine were published in 2014.<sup>13</sup> Although there is insufficient space in this chapter of the STRATEGIC PANORAMA to examine these at length, it is important to point out that the end result of independence was what Pilar calls a 'bipolar country' with a vast Ukrainian nationalist area in the western part, to the right of the river Dnieper, and a pro-Russian area in the eastern part. The vast territory that depended on Kiev was unmistakably Ukrainian nationalist. In contrast, about half of the population of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions was Russian-speaking; these regions were richer than the rest of the country and were bound by strong ties to Russia, whereas about 80% of Crimea's population spoke Russian. In fact, despite the homogenisation of the Soviet period and efforts to impose the Ukrainian language since independence, there was a duality in the use of the languages, as explained by Professor Simón José Suárez Cuadros of the University of Granada,<sup>14</sup> and this confirms a social division.

In political terms, the same bipolarity was reflected in Ukraine's successive presidents and governments, who often attempted to reach a compromise among the various influences. Ukraine's first president, Leonid Kravchuk, who signed the abovementioned treaties of 1991 with Boris Yeltsin and other leaders, was succeeded by Leonid Kuchma, who was president from 1994 to 2004. During this period, attacks on freedom of the press and the president's iron fist triggered the so-called Orange Revolution, which brought to power the pro-western Viktor Yushchenko, who

<sup>12</sup> BONET, Pilar: 'Ucrania: las fronteras de un país bipolar', *El País*, 20 February 2014.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, RUIZ GONZÁLEZ, Francisco: 'Las claves para comprender la crisis de Ucrania y sus posibles soluciones', Fundación Ciudadanía y Valores, Madrid, February 2014; and MILOSEVICH, Mira: 'Ucrania entre Rusia y la Unión Europea', *Papeles FAES* 153, Fundación FAES, February 2014.

<sup>14</sup> SUÁREZ CUADROS, Simón José: 'La situación lingüística actual de Ucrania', *Interlingüística* no. 14, 2003, pp. 953–58.

had been poisoned months earlier but managed to survive and remained at the helm from January 2005 to February 2010.

During this time another prominent politician, Yulia Tymoshenko – who was also in favour of closer relations with the EU and NATO – acted as prime minister on several occasions. The beginning of 2010 witnessed another change of trend, as the elections were won by President Viktor Yanukovich, a politician of a different leaning who remained in power until fleeing to Russia in February 2014. In this latter phase the political struggles in Ukraine led to Tymoshenko's trial and imprisonment in October 2011. She was released from prison following another change of government in mid-2014. Such political fluctuations were extreme in Ukraine during the last years that followed independence, and the orientation of the country's government was at stake. However, in 2014 this game ended when the Maidan protests led to the seizure of power by the pro-westerners and the holding of new elections. The pro-Russians, implicitly backed by Russia, responded by ceasing to play in the political arena and supporting a territorial division of Ukraine, with unforeseeable consequences. In this respect, 2014 marked a historic change for the country and the whole region.

A very visible sign of the tension that has been mounting since independence was the legal system governing the Russian military naval base in Crimea. In the case of Sebastopol, Ukraine initially provided Russia with land for this naval base through a treaty of 1997, which granted Russia rights until 2017. Subsequently, by means of another treaty signed on 21 April 2010 when Yanukovich was already in power, it was permitted to use the territory for the naval base until 2042, in exchange for lowering the price of Russian gas. This treaty was only approved by the Ukrainian parliament following a major controversy. After the referendum held in 2014, Crimea's annexation to Russia ushered in a new territorial situation. Crimean territory was disputed and this sparked incidents such as Ukraine's cutting off of the electricity supply to the peninsula at the end of 2014.

The European Union's reaction to the Ukrainian crisis was firm and homogenous and in consonance with the measures adopted by the United States. The EU Member States have always differed in their political stances towards Russia. However, in 2014 these differences were ironed out and dealt with behind closed doors, because the normative decisions and public statements were always coherent.

The EU Member States did not accept the annexation of Crimea and criticised the use of force in the regions to the east of Ukraine. But the most salient aspect was the economic and financial sanctions imposed on Russia, which ushered in a new situation in relations between the EU and its eastern neighbour, as it is impossible to predict whether this develop-

ment will lead to even tenser relations in the future. Specifically, sanctions were imposed on 29 July and further tightened on 12 September when the Official Journal of the European Union published Decision 2014/659/CFSP and Council Regulation 960/2014 containing restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine.

These sanctions affect various sectors – such as dual-use goods and technology, military equipment, certain technologies for the oil industry, especially in deep water – and certain financial sectors. The restrictions on military and dual-use goods apply to a number of entities listed in the annexes, including Russian manufacturers as well-known as Kalashnikov and Sirius. But the sanctions with the greatest effect were financial. The European Union prohibited the purchase, sale, negotiation or dealing in bonds, debentures, shares or similar securities issued by Russian entities, except those used to finance non-prohibited imports and exports of non-financial goods and services between the European Union and Russia.

Designating the specific targets of the sanctions is a technique intended to limit their undesired effect. As Professor Clara Portela has pointed out, the European Union's targeted sanctions have proved effective.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, it is inevitable that the collateral effects of the sanctions against Russia will be important, especially because they affect the Russian economy and the Russian population as a whole. On the European side, the countries worst affected by sanctions of one kind or the other were the Baltic coastal states. Although the Russian prime minister, Dimitri Medvedev, spoke of negative effects of the sanctions and Russian countermeasures on the EU's economy, which he estimated at 90 billion dollars, it is evident that the effects on Russia's economy are greater, especially bearing in mind that they coincide with international financial movements to avoid Russian products and the low worldwide prices of hydrocarbons.

At the European Council of December 2014, European leaders added sanctions relative to Crimea, preventing investments in this territory and barring tourist cruise ships from stopping at its ports. At this point the stances seemed entrenched. The EU stressed that Crimea's annexation to Russia was unacceptable, while the Russian authorities replied that the peninsula was an 'inalienable part' of Russia, underlining the fact that the region has had close ties to Moscow throughout history as Russia's natural outlet to the Black Sea. Even so, the Europeans attempted to convey a message of seeking reconciliation. The High Representative Federica Mogherini stated in December that President Putin 'should reflect seriously on the need to radically change his attitude', while Germany's

<sup>15</sup> PORTELA, Clara: 'The EU's use of "targeted" sanctions: evaluating effectiveness', *CEPS Working Document* no. 391, Brussels, March 2014.

Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that the ultimate aim is for 'European cooperation with Russia, not against Russia', though she invariably called for preserving Ukraine's territorial integrity. At the same time, the European Union decided to grant financial aid to Ukraine at the December 2014 Council.

NATO's reaction to the crisis was based on a strong condemnation of Russia's attitude, expressed mainly at the Alliance's summit in Wales that September. The conflict in Ukraine and Russia's threat of armed force – the Russian parliament considered authorising the use of military force, which was later withdrawn – triggered 'a very important confidence crisis between NATO and Russia', as the Spanish ambassador Miguel Aguirre de Cárcer pointed out.<sup>16</sup>

The Atlantic Alliance decided to step up the surveillance flights of AWACS and increase air policing over the Baltic states to prevent Russia from violating air space and causing intimidation. At the same time, the North Atlantic Council approved a package of measures to ensure maritime deployment and prepare exercises in the Alliance's eastern areas. In 2014 it was interesting to note that the end of operation ISAF in Afghanistan, confirmed at the September NATO summit and put into practice at the end of the year, was accompanied by a return to updating the Alliance's contingency plans in the European area. This contrasts with the policy pursued since the Cold War of promoting institutional dialogue between NATO and Russia, despite certain disagreements over specific issues.

Some authors underlined the damage to Europe caused by the sanctions against Russia and the countermeasures adopted by Russia in 2014, which affect Spanish exports of agricultural products, for example.<sup>17</sup> However, the possible escalations that could occur in both directions seem much more serious, as they could affect more sensitive issues such as gas and oil exports. By the end of 2014 it was evident that both the European sanctions and the low prices on the international oil and gas market were taking their toll on Russia. The Moscow stock market had plunged, interest on Russian treasury bonds had soared into double figures, and the value of the rouble had fallen. All this had sparked concern and protests among Russians, whom President Putin attempted to silence with special measures in December 2014, such as financial aid for part of the population.

Meanwhile Russia threatened reprisals against the European partners and western countries. By the end of the year the perception was that Russia was in a weakened position, though there was still potential for

<sup>16</sup> AGUIRRE DE CÁRCER, Miguel: 'La OTAN y la crisis de Ucrania', *Revista Española de Defensa*, May 2014, pp. 44–47.

<sup>17</sup> FERRERO TURRIÓN, Ruth: '¿Quién gana y quién pierde con las sanciones rusas?', commentary by the Real Instituto Elcano 57/2014, Madrid, September 2014.



energy measures. At the same time, a number of worrying Russian military manoeuvres at certain points along its borders were observed. Under these circumstances, calling for calm and sitting down to discuss matters at the negotiating table seemed the most reasonable options for Russia and the European and western partners, as the risks of an escalation are always impossible to calculate. Nobody had any intention of returning to a cold war. Evidently a conflict of this scope is out of place in the twenty-first-century world. But a local armed conflict or energy war could have highly undesirable consequences for global trade, communications or the economy that the European Union and Member States would do better to avoid.

### Conclusion

The year 2014 was important to the European Union's external action for several reasons. Firstly, the appointment of a new High Representative for the CFSP was an opportunity to assess Catherine Ashton's track record. Various observers pointed out that, since her appointment in 2010, the most important achievement of Europe's most senior diplomat in her post created by the Treaty of Lisbon has been the establishment of a comprehensive and effective European External Action Service. This administrative task was carried out satisfactorily, as by the end of her tenure the organisational structure was in place and staffed with personnel from the Member States, the Commission and the Council, ensuring the EU's external presence all over the world. What is more, with respect to questions of substance, Lady Ashton had successfully mediated in an agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, and had also acted in the last stage of the negotiations with Iran leading to an agreement on its nuclear programme in Geneva in November 2013. In contrast, Ashton was criticised for paying little attention to the Mediterranean and the Arab world, which had experienced many crises during her mandate, and for not showing particular sensitivity to military and defence matters.

The appointment of a new Commission headed by Jean-Claude Juncker was followed by the designation of the Italian Federica Mogherini as new High Representative of the Union for foreign affairs and security and defence policy; she took up her post on 1 November 2014. The choice of this young Italian politician caused a certain amount of surprise, as she did not have a track record of significant international experience. Nevertheless, with her very first steps Mogherini proved to have considerable capacity for action. As Javier Solana clearly showed during his own tenure, the most essential qualities for a High Representative are willingness to create consensus among the European states and a political instinct that lends weight and visibility to the post – which is useful when dealing with the Union's strategic partners and will only be seen over time.

The EU's external action throughout 2014 was highly varied, including President Barack Obama's visit to Brussels for the United States–EU summit in March and the fourth European Union–Africa summit, which discussed security on the continent and immigration. However, two neighbouring regions dominated this external action: to the East, Ukraine, which experienced a serious crisis that threatened to partition the country, and to the South, the many hotspots in the Mediterranean and the Arab world where extreme violence flared in the summer of 2014.

The widespread perception is that the European Union concentrated more on the problems of the East than those of the South. This is logical to an extent, because the civil strife in Ukraine is the most serious expression of war in Europe since the Balkan wars in the 1990s. But the EU should have sufficient ability to assert a political presence in the crises that break out in its Mediterranean neighbourhood and exert a pacifying influence in those theatres. In 2014 conflicts were witnessed in Gaza, Libya and the space between Iraq and Syria in which the so-called Islamic State is present, and the Europeans did not give the impression of having clear ideas about how to address these conflicts.

On the contrary, the European Union was capable of contributing to peacekeeping in other theatres, especially through civilian and military operations in post-conflict situations or conflicts in the process of being settled. Once again, European Union missions were the most visible expression of the Common Security and Defence Policy in 2014. They were successful in some cases, such as Operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta, which, together with other factors, helped substantially reduce piracy in the Indian Ocean.

In 2014 the EU had 17 missions of various kinds ranging from border monitoring to strengthening the rule of law, security sector reform and more traditional military peacekeeping operations. Spain took part in most of these EU missions. Furthermore, Spain's involvement in overseas operations was greatly varied, as it is part of forces led by the United Nations, NATO and the European Union, and it can also lead its own missions in collaboration with other operations. The aim of the Spanish ALFA MIKE mission in Senegal is to provide logistic support in Operation EUTM Mali, in which Spanish troops also take part, and ALFA CHARLIE in Gabon collaborates with EU mission EUFOR in the Central African Republic.

In 2014, Spain deployed the largest number of forces overseas in the United Nations Operation FINUL II in the southern Lebanon, more than those that took part in the Atlantic Alliance's ISAF mission in Afghanistan, which is due to end. Spain's presence in various operations with various objectives and in very different theatres attests to the significant capabilities of our civilian and military personnel – a major effort despite the limited means – and confirms our commitment to our partners in maintaining world peace.

Finally, the European Union's external action was put to the test by the most serious European crisis of 2014: the internal conflict in Ukraine. Since Ukraine gained its independence in 1991, its governments had oscillated between pro-western positions favourable to rapprochement with the EU and NATO and pro-Russian positions. Indeed, Ukrainian society is divided, and the easternmost part on the left bank of the Dnieper and Crimea has always enjoyed a strong relationship with Russia.

The delicate political balance of what Pilar Bonet called a 'bipolar country' was upset in February 2014, when rioting in Kiev forced President Viktor Yanukovich to seek refuge in Russia, leading to a referendum in Crimea on annexation to Russia and the seizure of power by the separatists in the provinces of Donetsk and Lugansk. The successive changes of government in Ukraine gave way in 2014 to a civil war in which control of the territory became divided, posing a risk of partition. Both the European Union and the United States condemned the annexation of Crimea and the use of force, maintaining that Russia was destabilising Ukraine, and accordingly issued economic sanctions against Russia.

At the end of 2014 it was very difficult to foresee in what direction the conflict will develop. The western allies, who called for adherence to Ukraine's territorial integrity as defined at the time of independence on the basis of the former Soviet republic, and Russia, which claimed that Crimea had been part of its territory for centuries and that the wishes of the eastern regions should be respected, appeared to be entrenched in their positions. These apparently irreconcilable stances augured a long drawn-out conflict. A European precedent, the Balkan crises of the 1990s, took a long time and a great deal of effort to resolve and it is likely that we will also need many years to settle the Ukrainian conflict. In addition to the territorial impasse, at the end of 2014 the European and American sanctions were having negative effects on the Russian economy, and Russia for its part was threatening more serious actions in the energy or military fields. Under such circumstances, an escalation of the dispute seemed to be the worst option owing to its unforeseeable consequences on world trade and communications. The most reasonable course of action would be to sit down at the negotiating table and for all the parties to show willingness to understand their opponents and give in if necessary. Good agreements are those in which all parties cede something to receive something better in return and for the benefit of everyone.



## The Middle East and North Africa: epicentre of uncertainty

Carlos Echeverría Jesús

## Chapter two

### Abstract

The aftereffects of the Arab uprisings that began in the autumn of 2010 are still resonating in the MENA region, which has since undergone a complete change in security terms. The current wars in Libya and Syria are direct results of that process, spreading instability to their neighbouring countries and regions. Egypt is trying to regain stability and political normalization, but the terrorist threat is increasing. The Israeli–Palestinian conflict witnessed a new phase of war, waged in the summer of 2014 between Israel and Hamas, which caused huge human and material losses. The major jihadist threat in Syria has expanded into Iraq with Islamic State/Daesh as its main instrument. This group is extremely lethal and has the ability to recruit across the MENA region. The worsening of the conflict in Syria and Iraq is adding to the complexity of the regional situation, where the differences between Iran on one side and a few Gulf Cooperation Council countries on the other are growing; and gravitating over everything are the lingering negotiations between Iran and the international community on nuclear issues that are still beset with obstacles. Multilateralism has ground to a standstill in the MENA region, from the Middle East Peace Process to the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation framework, as borne out by the obstacles hindering the implementation of an international coalition against IS/Daesh, the resolution of the Libyan and Syrian conflicts, and the follow-up to the negotiations on the Iranian

nuclear programme. The MENA's southern neighbourhood, in the Sahel Strip, continues to be riddled with problems and tensions as well. The Malian conflict remains unresolved and Boko Haram, another jihadist actor, is also spreading across national boundaries, becoming a regional threat.

#### **Keywords**

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Ansar al-Sharia, Arab League, Arab uprisings, EU, Gulf Cooperation Council, Hamas, Hezbollah, Iraq, Islamic State/Daesh, Libya, Maghreb, multilateralism, Sahel, jihadist terrorism, 5+5 Defence Initiative.

## Introduction

Four years on from the outbreak of the Arab uprisings – the first being those of Western Sahara in October–November 2010 and Tunisia that December – this long and winding process has continued to have a destabilising effect on the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region analysed in this chapter in 2014 and can be expected to carry on doing so in 2015.

With its epicentre in the Libyan and Syrian theatres with respect to each of the two sub-regions (North Africa and the Middle East), this instability is spreading to neighbouring areas such as the Sahel strip immediately south of North Africa and to countries such as Iraq and Lebanon from Syria. Added to this are the equally negative developments of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which witnessed a new armed clash in 2014 between Israel and the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (better known by its acronym Hamas) in the convulsive Gaza Strip, and the worsening of the situation in the West Bank, as reflected by violence in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, among other places, and the consequent increase in tension between the governments of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Owing to all these factors, the implementation of long-established multilateral initiatives in the region – from the Middle East Peace Process that was converted into the Madrid Quartet in 2003 to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) as successor to the Barcelona Process since 2008 and NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue expanded with the Istanbul Initiative since 2005 – remains at a standstill. As has traditionally occurred in a region that is ever complex in politico-diplomatic, economic and security terms, the impasse in multilateral efforts is offset by revitalised bilateral contacts and a focus on less ambitious sub-regional frameworks, prominent among which is the 5+5 Initiative in its various dimensions, particularly the 'Defence' dimension of which Spain was president during 2014.<sup>1</sup>

Although Algeria and Morocco managed to escape the most destabilising effects of the Arab uprisings – notwithstanding attempts in both states, initiated at the beginning of January and on 20 February 2011 respectively – their bilateral relations are in the grip of a longstanding crisis. The

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<sup>1</sup> In the tenth year of existence of this initiative, the Spanish presidency of the 'Defence' dimension during 2014, headed by the minister Pedro Morenés, made it possible to progress in the various areas despite the adverse circumstances of instability in some of the Maghreb states that take part. On the working programme developed in the 'Defence' dimension, see our analysis ECHEVERRÍA JESÚS, C.: *La Iniciativa 5+5 Defensa sobrevive a las revueltas árabes en 2011*, monografía de Seguridad y Defensa en el Mediterráneo (informe SEDMED no. 3, January 2012, at [www.sedmed.org](http://www.sedmed.org)). On the conclusion of the Spanish presidency, with the ministerial meeting in Granada on 11 December, LÁZARO, Fernando: 'Acoso al yihadismo en el Mediterráneo', *El Mundo*, 12 December 2014, p. 15.

unresolved Western Sahara conflict seems to be the ultimate reason for bilateral Algerian–Moroccan tension and looks set to continue that way, although, with the final status of Spain’s former colony yet to be defined, there are other past and present factors that account for the tension between Algiers and Rabat.

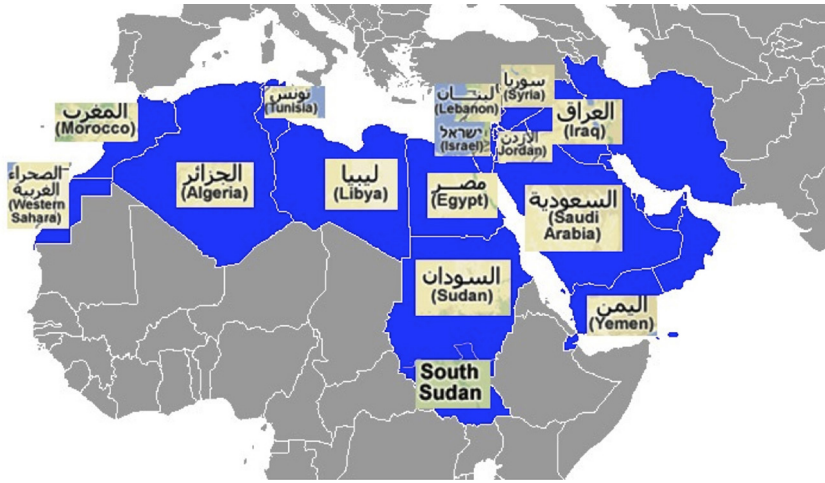


Figure 1: Map of the MENA region. Source: own elaboration

### Continuation and worsening of internal conflicts resulting in regional destabilisation

Developments in the war in Syria and in Libya, the security challenges the Sahel continues to pose, with consequences for the western Mediterranean sub-region, instability in Egypt and Yemen, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the complex negotiations between the 5+1 Group and the Islamic Republic of Iran over the latter’s nuclear programme are the main factors that need examining with respect to 2014. These challenges look set to continue in the immediate future.

### Theatres of war in classical terms: Libya, Syria and the Gaza Strip

We will begin with the most dramatic theatres in MENA, as they have contributed to heightening tensions and contradictions that also affect other actors and will continue to do so. The tensions sparked by these conflicts have been exacerbated by the increasing interference of regional and foreign actors; two of them continue as open conflicts and the third – which pitted Israel against Hamas in the summer of 2014 – was ended by a



feeble ceasefire agreement that is bound to be short-lived judging by the experience of two recent wars.

### *Libya: political chaos, a wasteland in security terms and its influence in the immediate environment*

With two governments and clashes between groups and various militias that extend to various population centres in the east, west and south of Libya, this Maghrebi country is exhausted nearly four years on from the outbreak of uprisings on 15 February 2011. The civil war that began in the first week of the uprisings was considered formally over following the killing of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi on 20 October 2011; however, the conflict has continued to the present day, as the uprisings merely unleashed forces and fuelled the various contradictions of Libya's complex society. The figures released in October 2014 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) illustrate above all the chaos that currently prevails: 287,000 displaced people from 29 Libyan cities, 100,000 of them in only three weeks, the Libyan coasts being the point of departure for many of the 165,000 illegal immigrants who arrived in Europe in the first nine months of 2014.<sup>2</sup> The clashes between various militias and groups have dragged on until the time of writing this chapter in December 2014; two sides are progressively taking shape – though this is never definite owing to the proliferation of actors pitted against each other, even within each of these sides – which as of the end of 2014 are marked by the two existing governments: that of Abdullah al-Thani, which is internationally recognised as it resulted from the latest general elections held in the summer, and the one that is supported by various Islamist militias and controls the country's capital, Tripoli.<sup>3</sup>

The influence of Libyan instability in the immediate neighbourhood has been evident at the south and southwest border and is spreading towards

<sup>2</sup> CASQUEIRO, Javier: 'Ban Ki-moon llega a una Libia en pleno caos político y humanitario', *El País*, 11 October 2014. On the uprisings in Libya and the rapid deterioration in security that began then and continues to this day, see some of our studies in ECHEVERRÍA JESÚS, C.: 'Revueltas, guerra civil tribal e intervención militar extranjera en Libia', *Anuario Español de Derecho Internacional*, no. 27, Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 2011, pp. 185–201; and *El descenso hacia el caos en Libia*, documento de opinión del IIEE 54/2014, 15 May 2014, pp. 1–9.

<sup>3</sup> The Islamist militia or militias wanted to seize the port of Es Sider in the gulf of Sirte – the main terminal for crude oil exports – in mid-December 2014 and confronted the militias that were loyal to al-Thani and his government, who had taken refuge in the city of Tobruk. The fighting was intense at the port terminal, but there was a second major front in the region close to the Tunisian border, spreading instability to the Maghrebi neighbour, then involved in a delicate electoral process. See 'Libye: Des milices se disputent le port d'Es Sider', *El Watan*, 15 December 2014.

the Sahel, though also towards the East (Egypt) and West (Tunisia and Algeria). With respect to Tunisia, some believe that the recent electoral progress – in October (general elections) and in November and December (with the first and second rounds of the presidential elections) – will make it possible to consolidate the Jasmin Revolution, but the fact is that elements of instability still remain and its close proximity to Libya is highly destabilising.<sup>4</sup>

The spread of Islamic State (IS, though it is better known by its Arabic initials, DAESH), with the proclamation of its caliphate at the beginning of the summer of 2014, has become evident in Libya, a country whose jihadists have been fuelling lethal activism on Syrian soil in the fight against Bashar al-Assad's regime for a long time – since the very outbreak of the uprisings in Syria in March 2011. The city of Derna, with 75,000 inhabitants and located in eastern Cyrenaica, pledged loyalty to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's group on 7 October 2014.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the destabilisation of Libya is such that the war in its territory is affecting a number of Arab countries in particular: Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). on the one hand, and Qatar, on the other, have a visible role in the Libyan conflict, either directly or through other actors; the former support al-Thani's regime and the latter back the Islamists, particularly the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>6</sup> Libya has had between five and six governments since 2011, and in the autumn of 2014 there were two de facto governments: an Islamist government in Tripoli that refuses to recognise the results of the latest general elections held on 26 July 2014, and another in Tobruk, which is recognised by the international community. In the autumn of 2011 UAE fighter planes taking off from Egypt carried out air strikes on militias loyal to the first of the governments, which is supported by Qatar, among other foreign actors. Although the two sides are not altogether clearly defined, the involvement of several Arab countries in the conflict will become more evident owing to the inability of the international community, particularly the West, to help settle the conflict.

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<sup>4</sup> 'África del Norte. Entre el antiguo y el nuevo régimen', weekly report of *Política Exterior* (hereafter *ISPE*) no. 913, 10 November 2014, p. 6; and MENESES, Rosa: 'Túnez. Droga, armas y yihad', *El Mundo*, 28 October 2014, p. 24. The second round of the presidential elections took place in Tunisia in December, as planned, but the country still needs to address political tension, economic difficulties and the major security challenge stemming from the bigger role of the Islamist actor. See SELLAMI, Mourad: 'Formation du nouveau gouvernement en Tunisie. Un casse-tête dénommé Ennahdha', *El Watan*, 14 December 2014.

<sup>5</sup> CEMBRERO, Ignacio: 'Derna, la primera ciudad de Libia en jurar lealtad al Estado Islámico', *El Mundo*, 7 October 2014.

<sup>6</sup> 'África del Norte. La guerra libia se panarabiza', *ISPE* no. 910, 20 October 2014, pp. 1–2.

### *The war in Syria and its regional consequences*

The fighting on Syrian soil continues to be very bloody, causing many casualties and triggering population movements that are becoming increasingly untenable in terms of the number of displaced people in the country and refugees in third countries. Some neighbouring countries are the worst hit: of the three million people who are already refugees or are attempting to acquire this status, two million are in Turkey and one million are in Lebanon. And there are at least three million displaced people in Syria.

Of the groups who lead the armed opposition to Bashar al-Assad's regime, the Islamists – radical in varying degrees – are the most significant. The most radical seized the northern city of Raqqa in March 2013 and established what is so far the embryo of the Salafi jihadists of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (or al-Sham, in Arabic) – ISIL, which later developed into IS and/or Daesh – from which they intend to expand in an uncontrolled fashion; indeed, they even proclaimed the caliphate in June 2014. Raqqa is the sixth most important city in the highly urbanised Syria and had 400,000 inhabitants before the war.

In the second half of 2014, the effects of the war in Syria had disastrous consequences in Iraq, such as the capture of Mosul – the country's second largest city with two million inhabitants – by ISIL terrorists who furthermore had the audacity to proclaim the abovementioned caliphate and pompously dub themselves Islamic State.<sup>7</sup> The offensive of this group, which some now regard more as an insurgent actor than as a terrorist group strictly speaking – though in many aspects it still has terrorist idiosyncrasies – has led various actors to progressively form a coalition that is finding it difficult to gel as such, underlining how difficult it is to achieve formations of this kind in the region.<sup>8</sup>

Another horrific scene of fighting was – and this is how it ended 2014 – the Syrian city of Kobane, located in the region with a Kurdish majority by the Turkish border. Most of its 70,000 inhabitants fled to Turkey when IS ter-

<sup>7</sup> 'Oriente Próximo. El EI, un hueso duro de roer', *ISPE* no. 914, 17 November 2014, p. 6. On the maximalism of the group and its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-proclaimed 'Caliph Ibrahim', see CARRIÓN, Francisco: 'Haced que la yihad llegue a todo el mundo', *El Mundo*, 14 November 2014, p. 25. ISIL had already strengthened its position early in 2014 in the Iraqi province of Al Anbar, in January 2014, by taking Faluya. See 'El Ejército iraquí bombardea Faluya y mata a 55 yihadistas', *Diario de Navarra*, 5 January 2014, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> 'Coalición contra la barbarie terrorista', *ISPE* no. 903, 1 September 2014, p. 5. On ISIL and other Islamist groups that make up the armed opposition to the Damascus regime, and on the various armed actors involved in the region against Daesh, see our two analyses published in mid-2014 in ECHEVERRÍA JESÚS, C.: 'Grupos terroristas operando en Siria', documento de investigación del IEE 04/2014, pp. 1–14, June 2014, and 'El Estado Islámico (EI) como grupo terrorista yihadista salafista y otros grupos armados violentos actuando hoy en Irak', documento de investigación del IEE 06/2014, pp. 1–15, September 2014, both at [www.ceseden.es](http://www.ceseden.es).

rorists began to lay siege to and capture some of its districts. The Kurdish nature of the city and its inhabitants has slowed down any possible response from Turkey, which since 2002 has been governed by Islamists of the Justice and Development Party (AKP in Turkish), who regard the Kurds of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and their real or potential alliances with those of the neighbouring countries as more of a threat than the bloodthirsty members of Daesh.<sup>9</sup> It should be stressed that the PKK, like the Palestinian Hamas, is considered a terrorist group by both the United States and the European Union (EU).<sup>10</sup> In July 2014 the EU likewise added to its list of terrorist groups the military wing of the Lebanese Party of God, Hezbollah, another regional non-state actor that is increasingly involved in the regional conflict and has received fresh impetus from the bloody uprisings in Syria that led to civil war and spilled over various state borders. .

The combination of Syria's internal strife, the involvement of various actors in favour of one side or the other, the spread of the war following the strengthening of IS/Daesh and the need to use actors – such as the various Kurdish militias, the Shia militia and even armed groups from Sunni tribes – to fight against the jihadists on the ground is giving rise to theatres full of contradictions.<sup>11</sup> The Iraqi state has yet to get off the ground as a feasible political and security project and it has therefore been necessary to set up a complex ad hoc coalition to combat Daesh.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the various Shia militias, who have been reactivated to curb the momentum of Daesh, and the various Kurdish militias, there are the Sunni militias that operate on the ground: the Iraqi deputy prime minister and leader of the al-Arabiya Sunni bloc, Saleh al-Mutlaq, even advocated re-enlisting the soldiers of Saddam Hussein's armed forces as the only means of defeating the oversized threat.<sup>13</sup>

As for Turkey, nothing concerns it more than the increasingly evident possibility that the Kurds may be among those who immediately stand to gain – as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran – from the currently deteriorating situation.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> 'Turquía ajusta cuentas con los kurdos', *ISPE* no. 910, 20 October 2014, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> At the time of writing the final version of this chapter, the EU Court of Justice had just issued a surprising decision (on 17 December) forcing the Council to remove the Palestinian group Hamas from the Union's list of terrorist groups, citing procedural problems with the listing. Hamas had appealed against the decision to include it on the blacklist and the EU court's judgment has given rise to a new situation at a particularly delicate time for the region.

<sup>11</sup> 'Oriente Próximo. El "gran Kurdistán" avanza sin prisas', *ISPE* no. 915, 24 November 2004, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> CARRIÓN, F.: 'Purga en el ejército iraquí', *El Mundo*, 15 November 2014, pp. 22–23.

<sup>13</sup> See the interview with Saleh al-Mutlaq in 'Jamás habrá paz en Irak si no se disuelven las milicias shiíes', *El Mundo*, 22 November 2014, p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> HURTADO, Lluís Miquel: 'Los kurdos desatan su ira contra Erdogan', *El Mundo*, 8 October 2014, pp. 20–21, and CARRIÓN, F.: 'Los kurdos acarician su sueño', *El Mundo*, 20 June 2014, p. 64.

One of the main theatres of the growing intra-Muslim conflict between orthodox Sunni and heterodox Shia triggered by the Syrian war has been and continues to Lebanon, as well as Iraq. This has been seen in clashes between groups, but also in a landmark terrorist action: the double suicide attack on the Iranian embassy in Beirut on 19 November 2013, which killed 23 people. The attack came on top of the other two also suffered by Beirut's Shia community in July and August that year. Responsibility for the attack on the Iranian embassy was claimed by the Abdullah Azzam Brigades led by the Saudi Majid al-Majid, who died of kidney failure in a military hospital in Beirut on 3 January 2014.<sup>15</sup>

### *The Gaza Strip: an unending theatre of warfare*

The Gaza Strip, the most heavily populated corner of the world – with more than 1.8 million inhabitants in the second half of 2014 – has unfortunately been in the hands of Hamas ever since the terrorist group snatched it from the PNA back in the summer of 2007, only two years after Israel evacuated settlers and military in the summer of 2005.

Hamas has imposed its own law in Gaza, purging it of PNA representatives and, accordingly, of rivals of Fatah, turning it into an increasingly armed Islamist domain and a hive of all kinds of irregular activities through a complex network of tunnels which has connected it with Egypt for years. Its stronger position has enabled it to engage in direct violent armed clashes with Israel in 2008–9, 2012 and now in 2014 with the overpopulated Strip as a battlefield – leading to huge civilian death toll.<sup>16</sup> Hamas's position has been strengthened by smuggling through the tunnels beneath Rafah and the Egyptian border and also through the Mediterranean coasts, as well as by the assistance received from various official and private sources in Arab and non-Arab countries (particularly Iran).

The year that President Mohamed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood was in power in the neighbouring Egypt – Hamas is merely a Palestinian subsidiary of the Brotherhood, which also has branches in Jordan, Tunisia and Algeria, among other places – these flows between Gaza and turmoil-stricken Egypt on the Sinai Peninsula intensified, including weapons from various origins such as the distant Libya.

<sup>15</sup> On the attack, see 'Liban: 23 morts dans un double attentat contre l'ambassade d'Iran à Beyrouth', *El Watan*, 19 November 2013. Al-Majid had already collaborated with Fatah al-Islam in 2007, during the clash between this jihadist group and the Lebanese army in the Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared, and founded his terrorist group in 2009, operating in and from Lebanon; see 'Muere el líder del brazo de Al Qaeda en Líbano', in *Diario de Navarra*, 5 January 2014, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> GÓMEZ, Juan: 'Hamas amplía el alcance de sus cohetes hasta el norte de Israel', *El País*, 10 July 2014, p. 4.

All this, coupled with the generous military assistance provided by Iran and Syria for years, has bolstered Hamas militarily and, although mounting Sunni–Shia tensions fuelled by the Syrian war cooled off relations between the Palestinian movement and its long-standing support in Damascus and Tehran, the fact is that many of these contradictions are being overcome and will continue to be overcome in pragmatic ad hoc frameworks for facing up to Israel.

In the summer, as occurred previously after each of the other two wars waged by Hamas and Israel, the Gaza Strip again became the target of multilateral reconstruction attempts. The kidnapping on 2 June 2014 and subsequent killing of three Israeli teenagers by Hamas terrorists triggered a fresh escalation of the fighting, leading Israel to launch Operation Protective Edge in Gaza, with air and ground strikes to destroy the network of tunnels that allows Hamas to infiltrate Israel and its improved and larger arsenal.<sup>17</sup> The war caused huge material and human losses in the Strip which, following the abovementioned ceasefire, requires fresh attempts to rally an international reconstruction effort.

### The regional challenges of the Sahel

The Sahel – particularly the western part, which encompasses the five states involved in the G5 Sahel created as a sub-regional international organisation in February 2014 (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) – continues to suffer the destabilising consequences of the Arab uprisings in North Africa, particularly Libya.

The overthrow of Gaddafi in Libya led to the demobilisation of many of his faithful supporters, including the Malian Tuareg who returned to the country heavily armed and willing to resume combat in Mali, where beginning in January 2012 they led what was the fourth major rebellion against the power in Bamako since the country gained its independence in 1960. It should furthermore be recalled that the then recent independence gained in July 2011 by South Sudan, so far the latest state to become independent, would also have encouraged the Tuareg leaders to begin such a process. Mali's huge northern region that the Tuareg call Azawad had been largely demilitarised since the latest peace accord signed by the Malian government and the Tuareg in 2006, and the ground had therefore been prepared for rapid progress for those who returned from Libya. Another contributory factor was the array of Salafi jihadist groups which, headed

<sup>17</sup> On the war, see FUENTE COBO, Ignacio: 'Los planes de Netanyahu', *El Mundo*, 16 July 2014, p. 22, and EMERGUI, Sal: 'Israel declara la guerra a los túneles del terror', *El Mundo*, 20 July 2014, p. 33; and on the postwar, see 'Oriente Próximo. Gestos simbólicos en Gaza', *ISPE* no. 911, 27 October 2014, p. 6.

by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), were going to join in the offensive using their networks and human and material assets deployed to the region years earlier.<sup>18</sup>

The Malian state was further weakened by a coup d'état in Bamako in March 2011 that caused a rift in the already debilitated armed forces and this reinforced the centrifugal forces in the North. These forces – the AQIM jihadists together with the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (better known by its initials in French, MUJAO), and the Tuareg Salafi jihadists belonging to Iyad Ag Ghaly's Ansar Dine – took over from the Tuareg who had begun the rebellion and southward advance, seizing control of the huge territory in the spring, including important cities such as Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal.

These developments sparked a reaction from the international community: both from the United Nations (UN) and from the closer African context, particularly the sub-regional context in which the politico-diplomatic tool par excellence was and still is the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In view of its capacity to provide a rapid and effective response to the jihadist offensive on Malian soil, in January 2013 France began to lead Operation Serval – an intervention that is still necessary two years on, as the Salafi jihadists continue to pose a threat to Mali and the western Sahel sub-region. In addition, as an aggravating factor, the Tuareg have yet to achieve robust agreements with the Bamako authorities: the epicentre of these contradictions is currently the city of Kidal, where the Tuareg are of key significance and where the government forces suffered a humiliating defeat in May 2014 when they attempted to deploy there.<sup>19</sup>

Proof that the terrorists are still there, doing what they have been doing for years, is the release of the last French hostage held by AQIM at the end of 2014: Serge Lazarevic was freed on 9 December, after three years in captivity. He had been captured by AQIM on 24 November 2011, in the company of his compatriot Philippe Verdon, who was murdered in July 2013, and was released following confirmation that Bamako had freed and sent to Niamey four terrorists – two Malians, one Tunisian and one Sahrawi – and most likely, though this has not been confirmed, a ran-

<sup>18</sup> On the deterioration of the situation in the north of Mali that required external military intervention led by France beginning in January 2013, see our study ECHEVERRÍA JESÚS, C.: 'El deterioro de la seguridad en el norte de Mali: un desafío para la Unión Europea y para sus Estados miembros', *Cuaderno de Estudios Europeos* no. 5, Madrid, Instituto Robert Schuman de Estudios Europeos, Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, 2013, 54 pages.

<sup>19</sup> The negotiations between six Tuareg groups held under the aegis of the Algerian government were resumed on 1 September 2014, but the autumn went by and there was still no sign of an agreement. See 'Les jihadistes marquent leur retour en forcé dans le nord du Mali', *El Watan*, 8 October 2014.

som payment.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, that the Tuareg and the Malian government have yet to reach an agreement is confirmed by the long drawn-out negotiations that have been dragging on for months in Algiers, into which France appeared to wish to inject enthusiasm at the end of 2014.<sup>21</sup>

In October 2014, the Malian minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdoulaye Diop, asked the UN Security Council to deploy a rapid reaction force to the north of the country to quash the reorganised terrorist groups that are increasingly visible and lethal and had already killed 31 troops of various nationalities belonging to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) between July 2013, the date of its deployment, and October 2014. It is significant that 21 of them were murdered between September and October 2014, as this attests to the rapid and recent deterioration of the situation. This mission, which should be reinforced in terms of both mandate and human and material resources, already has 9,300 troops, including military and police, to cover a vast region in which terrorists and traffickers have always roamed freely, taking advantage of the huge expanse of land and the many borders with few or no checks with several neighbouring states that are overrun with the same scourge.

Added to the French-led Operation Serval, which has evolved into Operation Barkhane since the summer of 2014 and, being more regional in scope, without additional troops, is weakening the Malian front to a certain extent, are other efforts, including the multilateral EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM-Mali), which Spain has commanded since the end of October 2014 through General García-Vaquero.<sup>22</sup> The EU mission is important, but it is just a drop of water compared to the ocean of obstacles faced by the ever-scant Malian armed forces, which are poorly equipped to address a complex threat in a huge geographical area.

### Instability in Egypt and Yemen

Egypt and Yemen are two theatres where uprisings erupted practically at the same time during the first months of 2011, where the heads of state,

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<sup>20</sup> Following his release three westerners still remain in AQIM's hands: a Swede, a Briton who also has South African nationality and a Dutchman. All three were seized by AQIM in Timbuktu on 25 November 2011, during an operation in which the terrorists killed a German citizen who put up resistance. See 'Libération de Serge Lazarevic. Les aveux de Bamako', *El Watan*, 15 December 2014.

<sup>21</sup> The French defence minister, Jean Yves Le Drian, stated in December that an agreement needed to be reached by January 2015 at the latest, after the last round of negotiations in the Algerian capital ended in November without the parties reaching an agreement of any kind. See CHERFAOUI, Zine: 'Réglement de la crise malienne. Le forcing français', *El Watan*, 15 December 2014.

<sup>22</sup> 'Alfonso García-Vaquero. Jefe de la Misión de la UE en Mali, EUTM-Mali', *One Magazine* no. 14, December 2014, p. 14.



Mohamed Hosni Mubarak and Abdullah Saleh, were removed from power, and where instability remains and has been worsening.

### *Egypt*

The uprisings began in Egypt on 25 January 2011 and the following month, on 11 February, they toppled President Mubarak and marked the start of a political process with elections leading to a sound victory of the Muslim Brotherhood Islamists, who gained control of a parliament where the second largest force was the Salafists – between the two of them, the Muslim Brotherhood represented by its electoral framework and the al-Nour Salafists controlled 70% of the seats – and even managed to make Mohamed Morsi head of state.

Morsi was president of the republic until he was removed from power by the armed forces on 3 July 2013 after a tenure of more than a year during which he aimed to establish the Islamist ideology in both domestic politics and externally. It was precisely this rapid Islamisation effort – characteristic of any Islamist group, such as the Tunisian section of the Muslim Brotherhood, Ennahda (Rebirth), which was attempting something similar in Tunisia around the same time – that led sectors of society and the Egyptian state to entrust the armed forces with steering the country's political and security course in a new direction. Not only had President Morsi dashed the hopes of the non-Islamist sectors who had led the uprisings in January 2011, but in his zeal to Islamise society and politics he had begun failing to comply with his obligation as a statesman to firmly address the jihadist terrorism that is growing stronger and stronger in theatres such as the Sinai peninsula; and he also consolidated this Islamist direction by strengthening relations with Hamas and, accordingly, cooling off relations with Israel on the one hand, and becoming increasingly involved in the bloody Syrian conflict on the other.

On 3 July 2013, Marshall Abdul Fattah al-Sisi led this renewal and by the following year he was president – after winning the presidential elections of May 2014— of an Egypt in which the Muslim Brotherhood has been banished from power, outlawed and even declared a terrorist organisation. The end of 2014 saw Mubarak absolved from all the accusations levelled against him in connection with the outbreak of the uprisings and his removal from power, and with Egypt in a situation of turmoil that can be expected to continue.<sup>23</sup> The jihadist terrorist attack perpetrated on 24 October against a military base in the Sinai Peninsula, which claimed the lives of 33 Egyptian soldiers, is a milestone in the constant succession of blows dealt by groups such as Ansar Beit al- Maqdis, translated as

<sup>23</sup> 'Egipto perdona a Mubarak los cerca de 900 muertos de la plaza Tahrir en 2011', *Diario de Navarra*, 30 November 2014, p. 7.

'Champions of Jerusalem'.<sup>24</sup> This attack had been preceded by many others – most led by this terrorist group which, in November 2014, would formally pay tribute to IS/Daesh, thereby evolving from the purely Egyptian group it was at the time of its formation in 2011, when it began attacking exclusively military and political Egyptian targets and the gas pipelines that connect Egypt and Israel.<sup>25</sup> Ansar Beit al-Maqdis already has a long track record of successful terrorist attacks, as more than 500 people were killed by the group in the Sinai Peninsula between the summer of 2013 and the autumn of 2014.

## Yemen

After President Abdullah Saleh was removed from his post in the autumn of 2011, his successor and former vice-president had to face similar challenges, some even more dangerous.<sup>26</sup> Yemen has had an eventful life as an independent state in terms of both its current reconfiguration following the merger of two republics in 1990 and its neighbourhood before and afterwards, with Saudi Arabia as its predominant neighbour.<sup>27</sup>

If in 2011 Yemen was an important theatre where jihadism had taken root – al-Qaeda in Yemen and al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia had merged two years earlier to form the since then highly ambitious and active al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) – the chaos triggered by the uprisings against President Saleh would further weaken the country. It endured and continues to endure three years later a very deep-rooted presence of jihadists, as well as the violence unleashed by the Houthi Shia in the north and the separatists in the south.<sup>28</sup>

In Yemen violence is reproducing the exacerbated inter-religious clash between Sunni and Shia; the latter were already influential in the north of the country, but in the autumn they even managed to seize control of Sanaa, the capital of the state.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> 'Oriente Próximo. La represión amordaza Egipto', *ISPE* no. 912, 3 November 2014, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> See 'Égypte: un groupe jihadiste publie une nouvelle vidéo de décapitation d'otages', *Jeune Afrique*, 6 October 2014, and GONZÁLEZ, Ricard: 'Mueren seis soldados egipcios en otro atentado en el Sinaí', *El País*, 19 October 2014.

<sup>26</sup> 'Un atentado contra los shiíes agrava la crisis en Yemen', *El Mundo*, 10 October 2014, p. 27. This attack, which illustrates the current situation and will be referred to again, occurred when the demonstrators mobilised to protest against supposed US interference in the appointment of the prime minister Ahmed Ben Mubarak.

<sup>27</sup> IDIR, Amnay: 'Yemen-Arabie Saudite. Voisinage de promiscuité' and 'Yemen-Arabie Saudite. Entités différentes pour une unité biaisée', *El Watan*, 14 December 2014.

<sup>28</sup> The Houthi seized control of the capital, Sanaa, in October 2014.

<sup>29</sup> 'Yemen: au moins 43 morts dans l' attentat anti-chiite de Sanaa', *El Watan*, 9 October 2014. The attack, the worst suffered by the capital since 2012, took place in Tahrir square in Yemen's capital, where sympathisers with the Shia rebels had rallied.

### The Israeli-Palestinian conflict beyond the complex theatre of the Gaza Strip

It is known that Palestine has been deeply divided since the coup staged by Hamas in the summer of 2007, which allowed it to seize control of the Gaza Strip from the PNA. Since then, the Ramallah-based government of the PNA, headed by President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), has merely attempted to carry on with the administration of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the other two territories where it still holds some power. According to Israel's Basic Law of 1980, 'complete and united is the capital of Israel'; at the same time, pursuant to an agreement between Israel and Jordan, after the first Arab-Israeli war (1948), the Jordanian monarchy took control of the city's eastern area, part of which still remains in a few aspects. Jerusalem is increasingly becoming the epicentre of tensions that look set to be very difficult to address given their religious as well as political and security dimensions. It is important to be aware of this when assessing the PNA's supposed efforts to attempt to recover Palestinian unity – which will be difficult if not impossible given the divergence of the programmes advocated by groups such as Fatah, on the one hand, and Islamists such as Hamas and the Islamic jihad on the other – and to scrape together international recognitions for the Palestinian State.<sup>30</sup>

These recognitions are being achieved thanks to a strategy implemented by the PNA, which has reaped a few successes in recent years ranging from acceptance of Palestine as a member by the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) – one of the specialised agencies of the United Nations system – to achievement of the status of non-member observer state at the UN, and recently full recognition as a state by Sweden, the pioneer in the EU, and favourable votes in some parliaments that could spur their executives to follow the Swedish example.<sup>31</sup> In November the Spanish parliament passed a motion urging the government to recognise Palestine as a state, though making this conditional on progress in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The Spanish legislative is following in the footsteps of the Irish and UK parliaments, but has not succeeded in giving momentum to the adoption of such a firm stance as Sweden's with its full recognition.<sup>32</sup> In 2011, when voting on whether Palestine should be accepted as a fully-fledged member of UNESCO, the EU Member States did not act in a coordinated manner – at

<sup>30</sup> VILLAÉCIJA, Raquel: 'Otro ladrillo para los cimientos de Palestina', *El Mundo*, 3 December 2014, p. 14. On 2 December, the French National Assembly had passed a non-binding motion urging the government to recognise Palestine as a state.

<sup>31</sup> 'El nuevo Gobierno sueco reconocerá a Palestina', *Diario de Navarra*, 4 October 2014, p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> 'Israel-Unión Europea. Gestos políticos, resultados escasos', *ISPE* no. 915, 24 November 2014, p. 5.

that point three of them had already recognised the Palestinian State: eleven voted in favour, eleven abstained, and five voted against. Another European but non-EU state, Iceland, also has acknowledged Palestine as a state.<sup>33</sup>

In the autumn of 2014 this purely politico-diplomatic process, which is destabilising from Israel's point of view as it does not give priority to negotiations with Israel as a means of achieving the ultimate aim of creating a Palestinian State, suffered the negative effects of the violence that has cast a shadow over several Israeli cities.<sup>34</sup> This process – latent or open conflict in Gaza and permanent tension in the West Bank – exacerbated by internal tensions between Palestinian leaderships and the firm position of the Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, at the helm of an ever-complex coalition government in which the hard-core sectors are vying with each other and, in a regional and international context inappropriate for seeking peace, does not look set to lead to a scenario in which a return to credible peace negotiations can be envisaged in the coming months.

### Negotiations with Iran on its nuclear programme

For many 2014 was set to mark the materialisation, at long last, of an agreement with the Tehran authorities on their nuclear programme. Contributory factors were the attitude of Iran's new president Hassan Rouhani, who has a much less severe manner than his predecessor Mahmud Ahmadinejad, and the maturity of the negotiations, which, following an initial experience of harsh sanctions, had led to an interim agreement in November 2013 that allowed progress to be made, as well as the envisagement of a final agreement the following year in November 2014.<sup>35</sup> In the end, the so-called 'Joint Plan of Action' agreed by the G5+1 (China, United States, France, United Kingdom, Russian Federation and Germany) with Iran in the autumn of 2013 did not allow a final agreement to be reached by 24 November 2014, despite eight intensive days of negotiations in New York – in September in connection with the annual opening of the UN's new General Assembly – and the new negotiating process starting in Vienna on 15 October that many wanted to be final. Negoti-

<sup>33</sup> On these European recommendations, see 'Avigdor Lieberman, ministro de Asuntos Exteriores de Israel', *One Magazine* no. 14, December 2014, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> BERIS, Jana: 'Nuevos kamikazes atacan en Israel', *La Razón*, 6 November 2014, p. 29; AYESTARÁN, Mikel: '¿Afronta Israel una tercera Intifada?', *Diario de Navarra*, 16 November 2014, p. 9, and 'Netanyahu jura venganza', *El Mundo*, 19 November 2014, p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> The interim agreement of November 2013 entailed freezing some Iranian nuclear activities in exchange for a partial lifting of some of the sanctions imposed on Iran, as we will see in due course. See 'Últimas bazas de Irán ante el G-5+1', *ISPE* no. 902, 11 August 2014, p. 5.

ations are again being postponed for another seven months, while time is ticking by and actors such as Israel are stressing the danger of the situation, as Iran can be presumed to be progressing in consolidating its nuclear programme and furthermore reinforcing its regional position, given the security wasteland found in theatres such as Syria, Iraq and Lebanon.

Iran is being subjected to sanctions that have already caused it losses of 100 billion dollars in unrealised foreign investment and unsold crude oil and threaten further losses in a country where oil exports account for 20% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 60% of government revenues. On the positive side, the US Secretary of State John Kerry believes progress has been made if we look back and take stock of the whole process – for example Iran had 200 kg of 20% enriched uranium and has none today, and the inspections of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have been reinforced.<sup>36</sup> But the fact is that the outlook is not very encouraging: 63% of Iranians support the nuclear programme; the duo formed by the supreme leader Ali Khamenei and President Rouhani have closed ranks around it and, according to IAEA sources, it seems to be operating with IR-5 centrifuges, contravening the terms of the interim agreement of 2013.<sup>37</sup> Khamenei even took the liberty of establishing 11 points to be respected compulsorily by the team of negotiators and which were all to be guaranteed before any type of agreement could be signed. It is telling with respect to Iran's intentions that two of them are non-negotiable: firstly, uranium enrichment needs are 190,000 SWU (separative work units), that is, 20 times more than previously, and as the only means of producing fuel for the Boucher power plant, which will be supplied by the Russian Federation until 2021; and secondly, the obligation to safeguard the uranium enrichment facilities at Fordo, located beneath a mountain a hundred kilometres from Tehran – which came to light in 2009 but not because they were announced by the Iranians – whose existence must be preserved at any cost.

Despite Iran's traditionally firm stance, the country achieved a few advantages with the interim agreement of 2013, among them access since then to 700 million dollars a month, as this commitment allowed it to obtain this slight relief from the sanctions. And, as stated, while all this is going on, Iran is not ceasing to consolidate its regional influence, despite the sanctions that burden it. Mohammad Sadeq al-Hosseini, former advisor to former president Mohammad Khatami, tellingly stated in the autumn of 2014 that Iran, through other actors, is currently consolidating its influence and even control in four Arab capitals: Beirut, through the pow-

<sup>36</sup> See 'Proliferación. Irán no cede ante el G-5+1', *ISPE* no. 916, 1 December 2014, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> 'Nucléaire: l'Iran réaffirme ses "lignes rouges" avant de nouvelles discussions', *El Watan*, 9 October 2014.

erful militia Hezbollah; Damascus, with its ally President Bashar al-Assad; Baghdad, with the government dominated by Shia, currently Haider al-Abadi and formerly Nuri al-Maliki; and Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, which has been in the hands of the Houthi Shia since the autumn of 2014, as we have seen.<sup>38</sup> In short, Iran is taking advantage of this apparently so adverse situation – images of IS's killings of Shia throughout the summer – to grow progressively stronger and become a key actor.<sup>39</sup>

### Developments in Algeria and Morocco

Algeria seemed to be moving in the same direction as Tunisia – towards the consolidation of the process of the Arab uprisings with the mobilisations that erupted at the beginning of January 2011, in this case in protest against the rising prices of staple goods. Although on 12 February of that year various groups that oppose President Abdelaziz Bouteflika attempted to make the mobilisations permanent and visible, as in Avenue Habib Bourguiba in Tunis and Tahrir Square in Cairo, they failed to do so. There are several reasons why Tunisia differs from the other two processes: the Algerian authorities kept the situation under control, going back on their decision to raise the prices of staple goods exponentially; the Algerian population did not support the call for mobilisation; and, finally, the Algerian opposition was and still is deeply divided, a fact that is conducive to the regime's control of society.<sup>40</sup> During the four years that have elapsed since the beginning of 2011, Algeria has continued to suffer terrorist violence, though not with the same intensity as before; President Bouteflika has consolidated his power for a fourth term – despite his ill health – and the country is badly affected by the deteriorating security in some of the neighbouring countries, chiefly Libya, Mali and Tunisia, owing precisely to this process of Arab uprisings that was viewed with great mistrust in Algeria from the outset.<sup>41</sup>

The neighbouring Morocco also witnessed attempted uprisings with mobilisations by the opposition; concentrated on 20 February 2011, this rallying effort came to be called the 20F. And as in Algeria, there was also an early and effective response from the authorities – in Morocco's case directly from King Mohammed VI. In his historic address to the nation on 9 March that year, the monarch announced reforms, which led to a new constitution and a new government resulting from the general elections of November 2011, headed by the winning party, the Islamist Justice and

<sup>38</sup> 'Apuntes', *ISPE* no. 916, 1 December 2014, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> 'Irán mueve sus alfiles en Irak y Siria', *ISPE* no. 909, 13 October 2014, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> FETHI, Nazim and SAYEH, Hanan: 'Algeria faces security challenges', *Magharebia*, 12 November 2014.

<sup>41</sup> A sudden problem Algeria is suffering from is the fall in value of hydrocarbons, whose exports continue to be the main source of income.

Development Party (PJD).<sup>42</sup> The three years that have elapsed since then have been marked by factors such as a constant struggle between the Islamist sectors on one hand and the king and the parties faithful to him on the other; the dangerous dynamics of the most radical Islamist sectors – visible in the sending of combatants to theatres of warfare such as the Sahel and above all Syria and Iraq; and the lingering tension with Algeria that has been dragging on since early times but has worsened in recent months and years.<sup>43</sup>

Algeria's most pressing concerns include the health of President Bouteflika and growing destabilisation at its eastern (Tunisia and Libya) and southern (Sahel) borders, and nor has the internal Salafi jihadist terrorist threat been eliminated. These situations are coupled with the increasingly worrying fall in the price of oil and gas on the international markets – a reality that is threatening above all countries which, like Algeria, have largely been solely hydrocarbons producers. As for the frictions with Morocco, we should underline the tension sparked by the kingdom's growing visibility in theatres of the Sahel – particularly Mali – which Algeria regards as its *domain réservé* in both diplomatic and security terms. The wrestling match over Western Sahara continues as usual, though Morocco is stressing that the Sahrawi, specifically the Polisario Front, should be classified as rising jihadist groups of which the international community should be wary and to which a unanimous reaction is required, whether in the Sahel or the Middle East.<sup>44</sup>

In Morocco, following the abovementioned rise to power of the PJD in the context of the reforms fostered by Mohammed VI following the outbreak of attempted uprisings in 2011, the coalition government – dominated by Islamists – has planned reforms and reform initiatives that are increasingly forcing the king to intervene in politics.<sup>45</sup> Also particularly worrying is the growing number of nationals and European Moroccans who have been going to fight in Syria in recent years and, by extension and more recently, also in Iraq.<sup>46</sup>

A salient feature of bilateral Algerian–Moroccan relations is the recent incident in the border city of Ouchda on 18 October 2014, in which a Moroccan citizen was seriously wounded by shots from the Algerian side of

<sup>42</sup> HURTIGÜELA, Rebeca: 'Marruecos. Los islamistas capitalizan la huelga general', *El Mundo*, 30 October 2014, pp. 22–23.

<sup>43</sup> FAKIR, Intissar and MONJIB, Maati: 'Rabat's Undoing. Why the Moroccan Monarchy Should be Worried', *Foreign Affairs*, 23 October 2014.

<sup>44</sup> CEMBRERO, I.: 'Marruecos desafía a Estados Unidos y no se incorporará a la coalición anti-IS', in *El Mundo*, 7 November 2014, p. 22.

<sup>45</sup> FAKIR, I and MONJIB, M.: *Op. cit.*

<sup>46</sup> 'Le Maroc face à la "Daesh connection"', *Jeune Afrique*, 24 November 2014, and DIALLLO, Abubakar: 'Terrorisme: "Hadar", nouveau dispositif de sécurité au Maroc', *Afrik.com*, 26 October 2014.

a land border that has been formally closed since the summer of 1994 – an undesirable escalation in the tension between the two states.

The Western Sahara situation is at a standstill, with the occupying power, Morocco, attempting to convince the world of the merits of a national plan for autonomy for the territory, and Polisario Front trying to stem any progress in this direction while it continues to call for a referendum on self-determination.<sup>47</sup> The recent oil prospecting Morocco commissioned from two US companies, Kosmos Energy and Cairn Energy, in waters located between the Canary archipelago and the coast of the occupied Sahara, may rekindle tensions, as it should be remembered that back in 2002, when the debate on possible oil prospecting in this part of the eastern Atlantic began, an opinion issued by UN Legal Counsel Hans Corell established that any exploitation of resources in waters adjacent to this territory must benefit the local population.<sup>48</sup>

Bilateral tension between Algeria and Morocco stems from issues of regional hegemony, the difference between their political models and Morocco's questioning of their shared land borders. The Western Sahara conflict is but a further factor to be added to the abovementioned; it should be remembered, for example, that during the anniversary celebrations on 1 November 2013 of the Algerian National Liberation Front's uprising that triggered the Algerian war in 1954, the Algerian flag was snatched from the Algerian consulate in Casablanca, and in the abovementioned incident in the border city of Ouchda on 18 October 2014 a Moroccan received gunshot wounds from Algerian border guards who claimed they had defended themselves against smugglers. They are furthermore two very different countries – not only in their political systems but in their own idiosyncrasies – as one is a producer of hydrocarbons (Algeria) and the other an importer of the same product (Morocco), and they vie with each other to attract international actors such as the EU and its Member States, the United States, and other Arab and African countries, among others.<sup>49</sup>

### Forecasts for the different theatres examined and the consequences for Spain

Although each of the sections and subsections touches on a prospective analysis, it is appropriate to devote a specific section to the general out-

<sup>47</sup> 'Marruecos encuentra indicios de crudo frente a sus costas en Sidi Ifni', *Diario de Navarra*, 22 October 2014, p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> This issue is going to resonate in the coming months, precisely when the Security Council has to decide on renewing MINURSO's mandate in April 2015. See 'Magreb. Nuevos frentes para Marruecos', *ISPE* no. 916, 1 December 2014, p. 6, and 'Marruecos toma ventaja en la "carrera del crudo"', *El Mundo*, 22 October 2014, p. 30.

<sup>49</sup> MOALLI, Hasan: 'Algérie-Maroc. Ramtane Lamamra remet les pendules à l'heure', *El Watan*, 31 October 2014.



look for the region in view of the recent events and the interactions between actors and factors.

Instability is an endemic problem in Libya; it stems from the overall chaos resulting from the collapse of Gaddafi's state and the spread of the destabilising influence of IS/Daesh in a ground already prepared by home-grown jihadists.<sup>50</sup> The fact that clashes between a broad range of actors have continued since 2011, that two sides are progressively becoming established – albeit riddled with internal contradictions – and that the presence of foreign actors in the conflict is increasingly visible allows us to predict that Libya's internal contradictions, which are considerable, will continue to be added to those of the region, and this will merely worsen the situation and perpetuate internal destabilisation and its regional consequences.<sup>51</sup>

Egypt is largely returning to the status quo it had before the uprisings, but with a deep social and political divide and jihadist terrorism that is increasingly consolidated. The existing level of violence both in the country and in its most immediate environment (Libya to the west and the Gaza Strip, Syria and Iraq to the east) has radically changed Egypt's traditional security landscape.

The war in Syria is dragging on eternally and its consequences in terms of regional destabilisation are worsening, also leading to the deterioration of relations between communities – which were not far short of exemplary before the outbreak of the uprisings and the civil war – and the negative interaction with immediate neighbours (Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel).<sup>52</sup> The determination of so many actors – both westerners and a few Arabs – to encourage the revolts against al-Assad's regime, which were supposed to be peaceful and democratic, has fuelled a chaos that some of these actors realised was happening sooner rather than later, though by that time it was already too late to curb the forces that they had unleashed.<sup>53</sup> This determination continues to this day even following the situation that has been created, and the United States is still stressing the need to combine the necessary fight against excessively powerful actors such as IS/Daesh with continuing to bring about the Syrian president's downfall – a situation that will only continue to fuel contradictions.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> MENESES, R.: 'IS es un peligro real para Libia', *El Mundo*, 9 October 2014, p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> 'Libya air strike hits Tripoli's last functioning airport', *BBC News*, 25 November 2014. <<http://af.reuters.com>>.

<sup>52</sup> EMERGUI, S.: 'Assad acusa a Israel de un ataque cerca de Damasco', *El Mundo*, 8 December 2014, p. 20.

<sup>53</sup> AYESTARÁN, M.: 'Estados Unidos busca resucitar a la oposición moderada siria', *Diario de Navarra*, 29 September 2014, p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> On the efforts to group the opposition together, see MENESES, R.: 'España apuesta por el diálogo en Siria', *El Mundo*, 10 April 2014, p. 18, and on the process riddled with

The violence in Iraq is gaining momentum and the ad hoc responses that have been mustered, especially since IS/Daesh launched its unstoppable offensive early in the summer of 2014, are in themselves hasty reactions that can bring more problems than solutions in the medium and long term.<sup>55</sup> One of these responses is support for various political and armed Kurdish actors, who are going to take advantage of the fact they are needed to strengthen their own positions.<sup>56</sup> The evident inability of the Iraqi armed forces to play the role expected of them is giving impetus to actors such as the various Kurdish political and armed groups as well as the many Shia groups and Sunni tribes with their respective militias, further exacerbating the rift that has been growing dangerously in Iraq for more than a decade.<sup>57</sup>

Against this backdrop, attitudes such as Turkey's are causing regional confusion and cracks in relations between allies, but they can be explained by the very nature of Islamism and its track-record of more than a decade in power in Turkey and by the traditional security perceptions of this NATO member, which is the gateway that can provide or deny access to the Middle East and has been suffering from the security scourge of the internal war against the PKK for a long time, not to mention its regional problems in theatres such as Cyprus or its difficult EU accession negotiations.<sup>58</sup>

The worsening of this and other conflicts such as that of Yemen is having and will continue to have regional consequences, notably – as it is relatively new to many – the clash between Sunni and Shia and the appearance, now with significant visibility, of actors such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Iran, among other states, as well as non-state actors such as Hezbollah, IS/Daesh and Hamas, to name a few. Coupled with these are the humanitarian consequences of conflicts such as that of Syria which, as we have seen, are spurring population movements rarely seen to date, especially in the region examined, with tragedies that are becoming increasingly common throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>59</sup>

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contradictions, SUANZES, P.: 'Margallo: "Assad es parte de la solución en Siria"', *El Mundo*, 16 December 2014, p. 23.

<sup>55</sup> 'Turquía ante la alternativa del diablo', *ISPE* no. 907, 29 September 2014, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> 'Oriente Próximo. El "gran Kurdistan" avanza sin prisas', *ISPE* no. 915, 24 November 2014, p. 6.

<sup>57</sup> AYESTARÁN, M.: 'Sunies, kurdos y chiíes se reparten Irak', *Diario de Navarra*, 13 June 2014, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> BEN-AMI, Shlomo: 'Es hora de que Erdogan se decida', *El País*, 19 November 2014, pp. 31–32. On the other Turkish fronts, see 'Las provocaciones turcas en Chipre', *El Economista*, 30 October 2014, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> On the role played by some of the newly important actors, see 'L'émir de Qatar peine à s'affranchir du lourd héritage de son père', *El Watan*, 25 June 2014, and 'Riyad veut livrer des armes pakistanaïses aux rebelles syriens', *El Watan*, 24 February 2014;

On the traditional Israeli–Palestinian front, which many hold to be pivotal, the tension between the two sides continues, and the steps taken by and in a few EU Member States are not going to change the status quo in the short or medium term.<sup>60</sup> The EU is Israel's largest trading partner and the main donor to the PNA and continued to regard Hamas as a terrorist group until a ruling of the Union's Court of Justice of December 2014 forced us to change our attitude to an actor that is by no means constructive. At any rate, Europe's own contradictions were witnessed that year when in the spring the EU Council expressed its satisfaction with the fact that the group, then still terrorist, had reached an agreement on the 'unity' of the main Palestinian factions. As was more than foreseeable, this agreement has proven to be hugely vulnerable owing to the deep contradictions inherent in a commitment of this kind.

Always in the Israeli-Palestinian dimension, this summer's war – the third between Hamas and Israel with the troubled and overpopulated Gaza Strip as a setting – and the terrorist attacks in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in the autumn show that violence is here to stay.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, we should stress the demographic trends on the ground, which point to the prospect of future tensions between the two communities. Jerusalem continues to be a deeply divided city, as whereas in 1967 79% of its population was Jewish, today this figure has fallen to under 63% and East Jerusalem continues to be overwhelmingly Arab and opposed to Israel's decision to make the city its 'eternal capital'.<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile, Prime Minister Netanyahu is stressing the Jewish nature of the State of Israel, a priority which in December 2014 led to the permanent breakup of the coalition government, ushering in an immediate future of political instability in the country.<sup>63</sup> The Wailing Wall and Temple Mount, on the Jewish side, and the Arab Noble Sanctuary that crowns and dominates it, have been a scene of tension since early times, which has been further heightened, leading some to envisage a third intifada or popular uprising.<sup>64</sup>

The greater importance of a few Arab actors, particularly the Gulf oil monarchies such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar, is and will continue

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and on the tragedies in the Mediterranean, see DOMÍNGUEZ, Íñigo: 'Italia y la UE se desentienden a partir de hoy del rescate de inmigrantes', *Diario de Navarra*, 1 November 2014, p. 6.

<sup>60</sup> RENGEL, Carmen: 'La jefa de la diplomacia de la UE reta a Israel al avalar un Estado palestino', *El País*, 8 November 2014, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> 'Versión árabe del mito de Sísifo', *ISPE* no. 904, 8 September 2014, p. 5.

<sup>62</sup> 'Israel-Unión Europea. Gestos...', see note 32.

<sup>63</sup> EMERGUI, S.: 'Israel como "Estado judío"', *El Mundo*, 24 November 2014, p. 20. On the political crisis, see AYESTARÁN, M.: 'Netanyahu rompe el Gobierno para salvar su proyecto de "Estado judío"', *Diario de Navarra*, 3 December 2014, p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> The first intifada broke out in December 1987. See AYESTARÁN, M.: '¿Afronta Israel una tercera Intifada?', *Diario de Navarra*, 16 November 2014, p. 9.

to be unsettling, as is that of Turkey also in the regional context.<sup>65</sup> Turkey is a particularly interesting case on account of the country's political and diplomatic profile and its geostrategic position.<sup>66</sup> And the role played by a few Arab oil monarchies in the context of the uprisings that have led to an intensification of inter-community violence has and could continue to have consequences in their own territories that are contrary to their interests: an example is the attack on the Saudi Shia community on 4 November, which killed eight people in Dalwah.<sup>67</sup>

Iran stands the most to gain from the whole process and is consolidating its regional influence while gaining more and more time to bolster its nuclear programme. Apart from making the most of the strategic advantages of the Arab-Muslim conflict, Iran is also benefiting from the growing tension between the United States and the Russian Federation – a fact that will allow Moscow to adopt an increasingly favourable attitude to Tehran as cracks appear in the framework of shared Russian and US objectives with respect to keeping Iran's nuclear programme in check and in relation to the Middle East peace process. Furthermore, Moscow already announced in the autumn of 2014 that it will sell two more nuclear reactors to Iran, on top of the one already installed at the Bushehr nuclear plant.

Even if the unlikely scenario of the G5+1 signing an agreement in principle with Iran during the course of 2015 were to materialise, the Republican majority that has controlled both houses in the United States since the autumn would probably make it difficult for President Obama to ratify it, by blocking the authorisation the executive needs from the legislative.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, from January 2015 onwards, Obama will have to contend with a bill promoted by two Republican senators, Bob Menéndez and Mark Kirk, on additional sanctions against Iran. Furthermore, although sanctions are doing harm – as we have seen – at the end of 2014 Iran was exporting some 525,000 barrels/day of ultralight crude oil, nearly twice as much as in 2013, to Asian countries, obtaining some 1.5 billion dollars in export revenues in the last quarter of the year. This is coupled with the fact that Iranian power and society support the nuclear programme and Iran is already violating some of the commitments entered into in November 2013:

<sup>65</sup> 'Los cuervos de Riad regresan al nido', *ISPE* no. 906, 22 November 2014, p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> 'Enroques políticos en Ankara', *ISPE* no. 904, 8 September 2014, p. 6. It is interesting to listen to criticisms of the West in the speeches given by Turkey's President Erdogan and Russia's President Vladimir Putin during the latter's visit to Turkey in December. See 'Rusia-Turquía. El zar y el sultán comparten intereses', *ISPE* no. 919, 22 December 2014, p. 5.

<sup>67</sup> ESPINOSA, Ángeles: 'Un atentado golpea a los chiíes saudíes en su mayor fiesta', *El País*, 5 November 2014, p. 11.

<sup>68</sup> MARCHI, Stefano: 'La negociación nuclear con Irán se alarga 7 meses más', *El Mundo*, 25 November 2014, p. 22.

it is operating with IR-5 centrifuges and has announced the forthcoming entry into operation of centrifuges 16 times more powerful than those currently in use at the Natanz plant.<sup>69</sup>

At any rate, it is preceded by the umpteenth postponement of the international community's arduous negotiation process with Iran, which envisages that 'in four months' – counting from the abovementioned Vienna meeting in November 2014 where the desired agreement failed to materialise – a 'political agreement' will be achieved that establishes the 'main elements' of a full understanding that should be reached around June 2015.<sup>70</sup>

As for Spain's immediate neighbourhood – represented by both Morocco and Algeria – the negative developments in relations between the two Maghrebi 'giants', coupled with the destabilising influence of a larger jihadist threat that is spreading towards the Sahel in the south and towards Syria and Iraq in the east, are largely eclipsing the favourable sub-regional security situation, namely the fact that since 2011 Rabat and Algiers have so far managed to avoid any contagious effect derived from the Arab uprisings.<sup>71</sup> The development of relations between the two Maghrebi capitals does not allow us to envisage short- or medium-term improvements, and the Western Sahara conflict could be fuelled by the effect of a deterioration in the situation of the Sahel strip, particularly the western Sahel, and by the oil prospecting Morocco has begun in Atlantic waters.<sup>72</sup> In general, both states and their closest neighbours, headed by Spain, should also be concerned about how the Salafi jihadist terrorist threat is developing: Morocco and, to a lesser degree Algeria, are sources of jihadists, as are other nearby countries (Tunisia and Libya), for the battlefields of Syria and Iraq, but we should not lose sight of the loyalty that is being pledged to al-Baghdadi's IS/Daesh by local jihadists ranging from Libyan groups to the Tunisian Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade and including the Algerian Jund al-Khilafah (Soldiers of the Caliphate), whose beheading of the French hostage Hervé Gourdel in the northern Kabylia region in September harks back to gruesome images of earlier times.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> 'Proliferación...'; see note 36.

<sup>70</sup> SUANZES, P.: 'Kerry bendice el ataque iraní al IS', *El Mundo*, 4 December 2014, p. 23.

<sup>71</sup> RAMZI, Walid: 'Algeria sends troops to southern frontier', *Magharebia*, 14 November 2014.

<sup>72</sup> BLAS, Javier: 'Battle for oil in 'Africa's last colony'', *Financial Times*, 4 December 2014.

<sup>73</sup> On the sensitive issue of the Algerian regime's handling of relations with various Islamist sectors in terms of the present and future, see 'Algeria's Government Alters Its Relationship With Islamists', *Stratfor*, 19 December 2014. On jihadist terrorism, Spain and its Maghrebi neighbourhood, see 'España reclama al Magreb más cooperación antiterrorista', *Diario de Navarra*, 12 December 2014, p. 5.

For the EU countries, particularly Spain, the destabilisation of the immediate neighbourhood is very bad news, and the Arab uprisings have fuelled it more than any other factor in the past.<sup>74</sup> Not only have they rekindled conflicts and shattered the regional dynamics that had been taking shape for the past two decades in terms of regional negotiations, arrangements and cooperation designed to last (Middle East Peace Process and Barcelona Process, both of them promoted and encouraged in and from Spain), but the growing insecurity is increasingly apparent in the greater flows of irregular immigration for a country that is the immediate gateway to Europe on African soil (land borders in the Autonomous Cities of Ceuta and Melilla) and in the development of proselytism, recruitment and sending of jihadist terrorists to battlefields fuelled by those uprisings in Mali, Syria and Iraq, among others.<sup>75</sup>

The humanitarian effects of the deterioration in the situation in all the theatres studied here cannot be forgotten. Apart from being visible in the sea that separates the southern shores of Europe and the northern shores of Africa, they are also visible at the 'shore' of sand – *sahel* means 'bank or coast' in Arabic – that constitutes the southern frontier and is increasingly affecting events occurring in MENA theatres, particularly Libya and Syria. Human insecurity is likewise on the rise in the Sahel, its epicentre being in Mali, but also in Niger.<sup>76</sup> Niger, in turn, is not only suffering the effects of increased Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, a locus for purely African jihadism not long ago – with links to AQIM and other groups in the Sahel and Maghreb – but is also beginning to witness the spread of actors such as IS/Daesh, active in the heart of the Middle East.<sup>77</sup>

## Conclusions

Uncertainty everywhere owing to the fluent interaction of actors and factors, the crisis of multilateralism and an international context that does not help and will foreseeably not help in the more or less immediate future, are the three realities that can be stressed in general with respect to the present and future of the MENA region.

<sup>74</sup> See ECHEVERRÍA JESÚS, C.: 'Análisis del futuro de los riesgos y las amenazas para la seguridad nacional de España', in GARCÍA SERVET, Rubén Carlos (coord.): *Perspectivas para el desarrollo futuro de la estrategia nacional de seguridad*, Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa-EALED-CESEDEN-Documentos de Seguridad y Defensa no. 63, September 2014, pp. 43 and ff., at [www.ceseden.es](http://www.ceseden.es).

<sup>75</sup> 'Les Européens inquiets du départ de jihadistes vers la Syrie', *El Watan*, 22 January 2014.

<sup>76</sup> GUËYE, Bakari: 'Operation Barkhane tightens noose on Sahel terrorists', *Magharebia*, 13 November 2014.

<sup>77</sup> 'Northern Nigeria: Hundreds of thousands have fled', *Irin News*, 28 November 2014 ([www.irinnews.org/report/100890](http://www.irinnews.org/report/100890)), and ELORRIAGA, Gerardo: 'Boko Haram se atreve con un nuevo secuestro de mujeres', *Diario de Navarra*, 19 December 2014, p. 8.

The vast MENA region is notable in general for its divisions. It consists chiefly of Arab countries – but also non-Arab countries, whose importance is progressively increasing (Israel, Turkey and Iran, in the Middle East, and Mali and other Sahelian countries that greatly interact with the Arab Maghreb) – which are not structured through organisations like the Arab League and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). The only structured Arab sub-regional organisation, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which brings together monarchies and has even attempted to attract the two other existing Arab monarchies (Jordan and Morocco), runs the risk of breaking up if internal tensions continue and worsen, particularly between Saudi Arabia and the AMU on the one hand and Qatar on the other.

Such intra-Arab tension is visible in MENA theatres such as Libya, Egypt and Syria, among others, that are affected by internal obstacles but also by the growing regional complexity. The Arab uprisings have altered various theatres (Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen and Syria, among others) that continue to be affected and have spread instability to other countries and neighbouring regions (the Sahel and the rest of the Maghreb in the case of Libya, on the one hand, and Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan in the case of Syria, on the other). The fresh impetus of the jihadist actor or actors is a factor to be reckoned with today and will continue to be in the immediate future.

Clashes between Sunni and Shia are worsening in theatres that were already fertile ground for confrontation, such as Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, but new clashes have emerged more suddenly in others (Yemen, Saudi Arabia and even Nigeria, to the south of the Sahel, since December 2014).

All this overlaps with an Israeli–Palestinian conflict which, although no longer the ultimate source of regional tensions and conflicts, is becoming progressively more deeply rooted, fuelling frustrations, and with its full symbolic force still intact.

Finally, in Spain's immediate vicinity, Morocco and Algeria escaped the Arab uprisings but not their consequences in terms of regional destabilisation: the instability of Libya and the Sahel is affecting them, the conflict in Syria and Iraq is attracting their radicals; and historical bilateral tensions continue, with the Western Sahara conflict at a standstill as usual, though there is a possibility it may also be affected by three main factors. The first is the very Arab uprisings, as the one that occurred on the outskirts of El Aaiún at the Gdeim Izik protest camp between October and November 2010 was the earliest and denoted problems of coexistence in the Moroccan-occupied territory. The second is the destabilisation of the Sahel, with corruption, illegal trafficking and thriving Islamist radicalism. And the third is related to prospecting in Atlantic waters and the possibility that the discovery of oil will make it necessary to adopt a new approach to the unresolved conflict taking into account the resources factor.





## The challenges of the thousand Africas, the silenced continent

Blanca Palacián de Inza

### Chapter three

#### Abstract

The great African continent stands out for its diversity. Thus, we can speak of flourishing countries, but also of areas of chaos and extreme weakness. Challenges and opportunities combine in this continent, which is ever closer to us. Security challenges such as the Ebola crisis, the threats of terrorism and organised crime, and migratory movements are hampering the development of the native population, but also that of the surrounding regions and the European continent. In this context, Spain is the most obvious bridge between Africa and the European Union – for opportunities, but also for threats.

Thanks to international assistance provided through collective initiatives such as the African Union and its missions, or those led by NATO, the EU and the UN, Africa is currently addressing some of these challenges more effectively than in past years.

As a collective initiative for development – in other words, for security, because one cannot exist without the other – the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are specifically analysed in this chapter, as they are coming up for revision and update.

**Keywords**

Opportunities, challenges, migratory movements, terrorism, piracy, armed conflicts, demography, Ebola, security, development, Millennium Development Goals.

### Introduction: Africa, a continent of contrasts

The African continent is a vast space that spans more than 30 million km<sup>2</sup> – nearly a quarter of the world's emerged land mass – making it the third largest continent in the world after Asia and America. The Mercator projection maps we are accustomed to in the West do not faithfully reflect the colossal size of the African continent, into which the whole of Europe (except Russia and the Scandinavian countries), the United States, China, India and Japan would fit.



Image 1: The true size of Africa. Author: Kai Krause

Africa is furthermore the second most heavily populated continent in the world. Some 1.2 billion people live in this huge space and its population

is growing. UNICEF<sup>1</sup> estimates that, by the end of this century, Africans will account for 40% of the world's population and will number more than four million.

It would be extremely ambitious to attempt to analyse this vast expanse of land with an overwhelmingly large population divided among 54 countries<sup>2</sup> and a host of ethnic groups, languages, cultures, glories and misfortunes. Indeed, if anything, the continent is characterised by its contrasts. If we look at the 2014 Ibrahim Index of African Governance,<sup>3</sup> we find a huge difference between the Republic of Mauritius, which has a score of 81.7 points out of 100, and Somalia, the country with the lowest score of 8.6. Therefore, although the overall data for the continent give us reason to be optimistic or *Afro-optimistic*,<sup>4</sup> we must be cautious and examine specific cases.

For 'Africa is not a country';<sup>5</sup> rather, as Ryszard Kapucinski states at the beginning of *In the Shadow of the Sun*, his book of short stories about the continent, 'except as a geographical term, Africa does not exist'. 'This continent is too large to describe', the Belarussian journalist concludes. These statements are intended to justify the modest approach of this chapter, which aims to examine the security issues most significant to 2015 in this rich and heterogeneous continent.

### Classifying the African countries

Unfortunately it is security problems that have ultimately proved just how close Africa is to Europe. The outbreak of the Ebola virus from Africa in Europe and America has shown, once again, what we do not wish to see: that security problems have been global for some time now. The same is true of terrorism, state weakness, underdevelopment, organised crime, piracy, irregular immigration and many more factors. Distances are constantly being shortened and therefore in the case of Spain – and,

<sup>1</sup> 'Generation 2030: Africa', UNICEF: Division of Data, Research and Policy, August 2014, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Not counting the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, which is not recognised as a country. It nevertheless belongs to the African Union (AU), which is why Morocco does not. Conversely, Morocco belongs to the UN, but the SADR does not.

<sup>3</sup> '2014. Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)', Mo Ibrahim Foundation. <<http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/>>. This index is very comprehensive, as it is based on indicators in the categories of security and rule of law, participation and human rights, economy and human development.

<sup>4</sup> SÁNCHEZ-BENEDITO GASPAS, Antonio: 'Africa: lights and shadows of an emerging continent', in *Panorama Estratégico 2014*, IEEA, Ministerio de Defensa, 2014, p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> Opinion taken from the blog in the newspaper *El País* 'África no es un país', created and coordinated by Lola Huete Machado. <<http://blogs.elpais.com/africa-no-es-un-pais/>>.

accordingly, Europe – the southern security border must be taken to be the Sahel, and perhaps further south.

A geopolitical vision of Africa allows us to divide the continent into several areas with characteristics of their own:

- Northern Africa, with its western part called the Maghreb and also Egypt. We include in this region Mauritania, Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. Egypt is in fact a bridge country, as its influence in the Arab world powerfully extends to the Asian Arab territories too. The instability resulting from the ill-termed 'Arab springs', especially in Libya, is the biggest challenge to this region. Despite almost having triggered a civil war, the Egyptian revolution and the current counter-revolution is the most important milestone. The process in Tunisia is also highly significant because, despite being a small country, it could become an example for the rest of the Arab political transitions to follow.
- Sahelian Africa includes part of Mali, Niger, Chad, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and South Sudan. It encompasses a distance of about 5,400 km from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the east. The width of this strip of land varies between several hundred and a thousand kilometres, and it spans an area of about 3,000,000 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>6</sup> In this region economic, political, and social fragility – in other words, state weakness – has made these countries 'privileged' areas for the establishment and operation of terrorist groups and for recurring conflicts. It is currently considered a 'no man's land' where a firm alliance has been struck up between jihadism and organised crime – trafficking in people and drugs bound for Europe, and in arms for the African regional conflicts.
- Two major regional powers stand out as an example of the continent of contrasts: South Africa and Nigeria. The first is a first-rate economic power which accounts for 25% of Africa's GDP, but it is also a military power. It plays a leading role in southern Africa. Nigeria's rich oil resources, among other factors, make it the foremost power in the Gulf of Guinea area and it has taken over South Africa's role as leading economic power in the continent. Its main source of instability is the divide between the increasingly radical Muslim north where the terrorist group Boko Haram operates and the animist and Christian south. As in so many other countries of the continent, the frail political system is burdened by corruption. Furthermore, the fall in oil prices – which are the lowest they have been in the past five years – is already taking its toll on the eco-

<sup>6</sup> GONZÁLEZ REVUELTA, Alberto: 'A qué nos enfrentamos en el Sahel', GESI, 27 November 2014.

nomy, triggering a devaluation of the local currency, and instability can be expected to increase as a result of social unrest.

- Africa the agricultural exporter is also represented in two areas: one in the east, with Kenya and Tanzania; and the other in the west, with Cameroon and the most stable countries of the arc of western Africa, which stretches from Senegal to Nigeria. They are countries that have witnessed major economic growth in the past decade thanks to exports; this has allowed them to diversify their economies to an extent and accordingly progressively replace some imports with domestic products. Nevertheless, this model is currently experiencing a crisis owing to external debt, depletion and improper exploitation of resources and the effect of China's voracious appetite on the African economies. These countries continue to be a potential source of conflict, as economic stagnation is combined with overwhelming growth of the population, concentrated in cities. This is one of the main factors of the coming decades in Black Africa, as overpopulation is giving rise to failed supercities that are breeding grounds for social and political movements similar to the Arab uprisings, with a very high potential for violence. Such is the case of the Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone – currently ravaged by the Ebola virus and its economic consequences – and Liberia.
- We can group together a number of countries that are characterised by their mining or oil exploration activities. The first group includes Guinea, Mauritania, Liberia, Niger, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leona, Zambia and Mauritania, and the second Angola, Gabon, Congo and Nigeria. Their political dynamics are subject to fluctuations in commodity prices and the strategies of multinationals. Some of them, such as DRC, are furthermore gripped by recurring conflicts funded with their own natural resources. The Gulf of Guinea is also particularly important on account of its high-quality oil reserves that are easily transported to the western consumer markets. Without straits or canals to navigate, it has become a first-rate strategic area in which oil is the fundamental geopolitical factor – seriously threatened by the rise of piracy – and for which European, American and Chinese companies are vying.
- Other countries and regions can be considered the area of 'chaos', as they are exposed to terrorist groups, as is the case of the Sahel region and Somalia; ethnic conflicts and disputes over resources, as in Darfur and the Great Lakes region; and religious disputes, as with the two Sudans.
- In contrast, other states are notable for their successful economic and socio-political models, such as Botswana, which efficiently manages its diamond resources; the Republic of Mauritius, a country open to the outside world and whose progress is driven by tou-

rism and the proceeds of sugar exports; Seychelles, where more than 70% of the GDP comes from tourism and is invested in the fisheries and coconut fibre industries; and Cape Verde, or South Africa, which is continuing to emerge thanks to its abundant natural resources, despite having one of the highest unemployment rates in the world.

One of this continent's windows of hope, which will possibly give rise in the future to a new category, is the possible repetition of the phenomenon of European companies' offshoring to Asia, only in this case from Asia to Africa. As a result of the slow but steady rise in labour costs in Southeast Asia, India and China, industrial manufacturing facilities are beginning to be established in some African regions and cities, which over time may create working- and middle-class hubs that will be these countries' driving force. In order to achieve this process, stability and efforts to curb political corruption are essential.

### Challenges

The risks and threats faced by Africa are directly related to European and, therefore, Spanish security. In 2003 the European Security Strategy identified five threats that were a particular risk: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, disintegration of the state and organised crime. Several years later, in the 2008 revision, piracy, cyberthreats and climate change were added to this list. These are the same threats that affect the neighbouring continent, but those of Africa have a direct influence on Europe, as they become dangers for the countries of origin as well as for the region itself.

Along the same lines, Spain's National Security Strategy considers that Africa poses 'significant security challenges and must continue to be given preferential attention. Spain's membership of various security organisations entails responsibilities and duties to our partners and allies and, accordingly, possible actions in this field.'<sup>7</sup> In 2014, the most obvious examples of the results of the globalisation of dangers are the internationalisation of jihadist terrorism and the spread of Ebola.

### Migratory movements

The world population is growing to such an extent, particularly in Africa, that in the coming decade migratory flows will not only not cease but will increase. Immigration is nearly always a symptom of inequality and hu-

<sup>7</sup> *National Security Strategy: Sharing a Common Project*, Gobierno de España, Presidencia del Gobierno, 2013, p. 11.

man rights abuses, and we may therefore conclude that if these causes do not diminish, nor will the flows they trigger. The apparent contradiction of attempting to control irregular migratory movements in a context of globalisation will continue to be an open debate in the coming years. The same will occur with the different refugee settlement models: either in closed camps – as in Dadaab, Kenya's third most populated 'city', which has existed for more than two decades<sup>8</sup> – or by taking in refugees outside these areas, in the cities themselves, as is occurring with many Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries.

No doubt some African countries will continue to experience poverty, armed conflicts and state weakness, which means that the needs of some will be the object of trafficking by organised criminal groups increasingly linked to terrorism.

Intercontinental emigration is chiefly towards the United States and Europe.<sup>9</sup> The south of the Old Continent is increasingly chosen as a destination by the lucky ones who can afford to travel. The Spanish border – an EU border with Africa – is one of the most unequal in the world and it is precisely these economic, political, social and cultural inequalities between Europe and Africa that account for the 'pull effect'.<sup>10</sup>

The difference in income and wages between some countries and others, particularly between the north and the south, is a magnet for migration, especially now that new technology has made poor countries much more aware of the different living conditions to which they can aspire for themselves and their children if they emigrate to wealthy countries.<sup>11</sup> In addition to these economic differences, natural disasters and conflicts are two other major causes of mass displacements of people.

Nevertheless, the main migratory movements of the African population are intracontinental. As Spain's National Security Strategy indicates, host countries can harbour<sup>12</sup> 'mistaken attitudes of rejection towards immigration in general', as is occurring in Kenya with the Somali refugees, who are linked to the terrorist attacks perpetrated in this country,<sup>13</sup> 'greater inadaptability', 'greater social unrest', 'the emergence of urban ghettos' and 'greater vulnerability of migrants as targets of forms of

<sup>8</sup> PALACIÁN DE INZA, Blanca: 'Dadaab: ¿modelo a seguir?', documento informativo del IEEE 23/2013.

<sup>9</sup> GARCÍA FERNÁNDEZ, Cristina: 'Las causas de la emigración en África', *Papeles* no. 96, 2006/2007.

<sup>10</sup> KABUNDA, Mbuyi: 'La inmigración africana, revisada', *Nova Africa* 18, 2006. pp. 19–39.

<sup>11</sup> MILANOVIC, Branko: 'Las causas económicas de las migraciones', *El País*, 30/10/2014.

<sup>12</sup> *National Security Strategy...*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> 'Criminal Reprisals: Kenyan Police and Military Abuses against Ethnic Somalis', Human Rights Watch, May 2012.



labour exploitation and the action of organised criminal groups involved in human trafficking and the drug trade'. The risk of the emergence of extremist radical minorities is considered particularly significant in this document.

According to the UNCHR's statistics for 2013,<sup>14</sup> more than a quarter of the world's refugees live in sub-Saharan Africa. The most critical internal displacement situations that year were witnessed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan. These countries' armed conflicts also heavily influenced the number of refugees who fled to neighbouring countries, particularly from the DRC and South Sudan to Uganda; the CAR and Sudan to Chad; and the CAR to Cameroon. The trend for 2014 and 2015 may not vary in those countries, but it will be just as important as the movements of people fleeing from Ebola and from the economic consequences this disease is having in the countries of the west of the continent.

## Terrorism

The various security threats cannot be classified into watertight compartments. As the Spanish defence minister Pedro Morenés stated in April 2014, 'we have evidence of the link between irregular immigration, drug trafficking and jihadist terrorism'.<sup>15</sup>

The African continent experienced significant levels of terrorist activity in 2013 and 2014. Owing to the weakness of some regions, especially the Sahel, this trend is not expected to vary much in 2015. The need to combat terrorism through international cooperation is justified by the fact that terrorist activity takes on an international dimension wherever it occurs.

The main terrorist threat in Africa is jihadism, which has spread across large areas of the Sahel and sub-Saharan Africa from the north of the continent. Its ideological base is not Islam, which is a religion, but Islamism, which is an ideology, and specifically jihadist Salafism. This ideology is a perverse and minority offshoot<sup>16</sup> of a major doctrinal trend known as Salafism that advocates a return to early Islam and aims to build a society like that of early times, using the jihad to achieve this aim.<sup>17</sup>

The first theoreticians spoke of the 'near enemy': the Muslim states considered disloyal to the message of the Koran. The failure of this strategy

<sup>14</sup> 'Global Report 2013', UNHCR. <<http://www.unhcr.org/gr13/index.xml>>.

<sup>15</sup> <[http://www.cadenaser.com/sociedad/audios/morenes-hemos-constatado-vinculacion-inmigracion-irregular-narcotrafico-terrorismo-yihadista/csrscsrpor/20140315csrscrsoc\\_16/Aes/](http://www.cadenaser.com/sociedad/audios/morenes-hemos-constatado-vinculacion-inmigracion-irregular-narcotrafico-terrorismo-yihadista/csrscsrpor/20140315csrscrsoc_16/Aes/)>.

<sup>16</sup> JORDÁN, Javier: 'El terrorismo yihadista en España', 2005.

<sup>17</sup> *Jihad* means 'effort'; nevertheless, in this context the term refers to the use of violence in the name of Islam.

led to the success of the theories proposed by al-Qaeda, which advocated fighting against the 'distant enemy',<sup>18</sup> as was the case of the attacks of 11 September in the United States or those of 11 March and 7 July in Europe. Jihadist Salafism – particularly global jihadism – has become an ideology that knows no frontiers.

We are currently at a new stage in which the al-Qaeda brand is of secondary importance and it is Daesh, the self-proclaimed Islamic State,<sup>19</sup> which is playing a leading role. This group combines both struggles: the near and the distant enemies, the conquest of a territory and desire for expansion. Groups in Egypt<sup>20</sup> and Libya<sup>21</sup> have already pledged their allegiance to these terrorists' cause and according to General David Rodríguez, commander of the United States Africa Command, they even have training camps in Libya.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, controlling a territory they call the *caliphate*, between Syria and Iraq, is both a success and a current vulnerability, because being tied to the land makes them a more or less conventional force and, as such, sensitive to the actions of the international community's regular armed forces. The reaction of the latter is a consequence that is not only inevitable but necessary.<sup>23</sup>

The rise in terrorist organisations cannot be explained without linking them to criminal activities, which provide them with political power, social influence, access to resources and publicity.<sup>24</sup> Corruption, illegal trafficking of all kinds of goods and human beings and money laundering weaken the state, prevent economic growth and undermine the political system, creating an environment conducive to conflict. Organised crime also hinders peacekeeping operations and fuels many civil wars and terrorist groups through arms trafficking. Drug trafficking is one of the main activities of organised criminal groups. It is a highly lucrative business, as in certain cases the earnings are higher than some countries' GDP, undermining the state's authority, economic development and the rule of law.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> KEPEL, G: *Fitna: Guerre au coeur de l'Islam*, Paris: Gallimard, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> They call themselves Islamic State (IS), but governments and media are increasingly referring to this group by the derogatory name – owing to its phonetic similarity with other words – of Daesh or Da'ish, which is the Latin transcription of Al Dawla al-fil Islamiya Irak Wa'al Sham, meaning Islamic State of Iraq and Levant. The underlying intention is to not legitimise this group or the caliphate it has proclaimed, as it is a terrorist group and not a state, and contrary to its intentions, it does not represent Islam.

<sup>20</sup> 'Egypt armed group pledges allegiance to ISIL', Al Jazeera, 10 November 2014.

<sup>21</sup> CEMBRERO, Ignacio: 'Un enclave del Estado Islámico en el norte de África', *El Mundo*, 3 November 2014.

<sup>22</sup> 'Islamic State setting up Libya training camps, US says', BBC, 4 December 2014.

<sup>23</sup> BERENQUER HERNÁNDEZ, Francisco J.: 'El Estado Islámico como oportunidad', documento de análisis del IEEE 47/2014, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> FUENTE COBO, Ignacio: 'La amenaza híbrida: yihadismo y crimen organizado en el Sahel', documento de análisis del IEEE 57/2014, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> Note by the Secretary-General A/59/565, United Nations General Assembly.

Furthermore, unlike other criminal activities such as hostage taking, it provides a highly stable regular income.<sup>26</sup> It is estimated, conservatively, that the total volume of business generated by organised crime is more than 5% of world GDP.<sup>27</sup> In western Africa alone it is thought that as much as 60 tonnes of cocaine finds its way into Europe every year.<sup>28</sup>

Jihadist terrorists have taken advantage of these activities to reinforce and fund their activities so that what were called 'new risks' in the 1990s are now regarded as real security threats.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, today there is talk of *narco-jihadists*, and it is calculated that the drug route that passes through the Sahel earns al-Qaeda members 15% commission.<sup>30</sup> The West's intervention at the beginning of 2013, Operation Serval, has not managed to eradicate terrorism or organised crime – if anything, it has only lowered its profile in areas of international action such as Mali, and displaced it to areas where military pressure is lower, such as northern Niger and, above all, Libya.<sup>31</sup>

As it is impossible to list all the terrorist groups operating in the vast African continent, we will refer to the most active ones: al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram and al-Shabab. The tendency of some groups to join Daesh may increase and the whole area from the Middle East to the Atlantic Ocean is affected by this threat.

Al-Qaeda is the terrorist group responsible for the attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States. Following the death of its leader, Osama Bin Laden, it came to be commanded by the Egyptian al-Zawahiri, and today al-Qaeda can be considered a weak network of autonomous cells. Of these, AQIM, established in 2007, operates in the African continent, chiefly in Algeria, Libya and northern Mali, where it has gained strength and has monopolised organised crime in the region.<sup>32</sup>

Its intention is to spread across the region; the vastness of the Sahel and the lack of state presence in some territories are facilitating the establishment of the crime networks and terrorist groups that come under the umbrella of this vague organisation. Although its chief means of income is ransom from western hostages and, increasingly, the lucrative drug

<sup>26</sup> FUENTE COBO, Ignacio: 'La amenaza híbrida...', *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> MONTÁNCHEZ, E.: 'El crimen organizado alimenta la economía mundial', *Atenea: seguridad y defensa*, año II, no. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Center on International Cooperation. *State Capture and Organized Crime or Capture or Organized Crime by the State*. NYU, New York, 2011, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> ECHEVERRÍA, Carlos: 'Terrorismo yihadista salafista y actividades ilícitas en el Mediterráneo Occidental', Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos, 2010.

<sup>30</sup> ROJAS, Alberto and HERRAIZ, Pablo: 'De cada gramo de cocaína que se vende, 7,5 euros van a la narcoyihad', *El Mundo*, 30 November 2014.

<sup>31</sup> FUENTE COBO, Ignacio: 'La amenaza híbrida...', *op. cit.* p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> DÍEZ ALCALDE, Jesús: 'África: avances, desafíos y su alianza estratégica con la Unión Europea', *Revista de Derecho, Empresa y Sociedad* no. 4, January–June 20014, p. 34.

trade, its activities and internal divisions often overlap: for example, the Soldiers of the Caliphate group in Algeria, which made itself known in September and whose leader, Abdelmalek Gouri, pledged loyalty and obedience to the leader of Daesh. AQIM has proved its ability to coexist with various Tuareg rebel movements and other splinter groups such as the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Ansar Dine.<sup>33</sup>

Operation Serval and its successor, Operation Barkhane – both French military interventions in Mali – and Algeria's increased counterterrorism efforts are weakening AQIM, but not preventing the group from continuing to demonstrate its presence and willingness to act.<sup>34</sup>

With strong ties to AQIM, the terrorist group Boko Haram (whose name can be translated as 'western education is a sin') is located between Nigeria, Cameroon and Nigeria. Its aim is to impose Islamic law, also in a caliphate, but in this case in the northeast of the continent. Its funding comes from thefts, donations, arms trafficking and, naturally, the drug trade.

It is one of the most lethal groups on the continent and has been increasingly active since 2009.<sup>35</sup> The measures taken by the Nigerian government to curb it have failed miserably to date.<sup>36</sup> During the first months of 2014, Boko Haram murdered 2,000 people.<sup>37</sup> It operates almost exclusively in Nigeria, Africa's most heavily populated country with major tensions between the Muslim North and the Christian and animist South. It made the headlines in 2014 for kidnapping 273 girls in Chibok, Borno, in April. It has also carried out massacres in schools and churches and is known for sinister practices against supposed 'sins', such as attacks on campaigns to vaccinate children against polio.<sup>38</sup> Although the Nigerian government has announced ceasefire agreements, the group's terrorist leader, Abubakar Shekau, denies this and remains active and strong in the north – the poorest area and with the highest employment rate in the country, with a Muslim majority.

An article by Jacob Zenn<sup>39</sup> on this group superbly illustrates the relationship between organised crime, people trafficking and terrorism. This

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>34</sup> ECHEVERRÍA, Carlos: 'Al Qaida en las tierras del Magreb Islámico (AQMI) y otros grupos de su entorno: una compleja red de carácter violento', documento de investigación del IIEE 02/2013, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> ECHEVERRÍA, Carlos: 'El desafío terrorista de Boko Haram en Nigeria', documento de investigación del IIEE 02/2014, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> BOLANOS, Jorge: 'Boko Haram: la bandera negra que ensombrece Nigeria', documento de análisis del IIEE 34/2014, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> 'Islamist terror groups in Africa and Middle East', DW. <<http://www.dw.de/islamist-terror-groups-in-africa-and-middle-east/a-17739751>>.

<sup>38</sup> ECHEVERRÍA, Carlos: 'El desafío terrorista de Boko Haram en Nigeria', *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> ZENN, Jacob: 'Boko Haram: Recruitment, Financing, and Arms Trafficking in the Lake Chad Region', Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 31 December 2014.

author concludes that the boys and girls taken hostage by Boko Haram are re-educated in camps in Cameroon thanks to the close relationships between terrorists, arms traffickers and bankers in that country. He believes that Boko Haram needs these human and financial resources for its plans to extend the territory it controls, as does Daesh, with which it is becoming increasingly involved.

According to Robin Simcox, an expert on al-Qaeda, this group's relations with al-Qaeda are not limited to AQIM. There is evidence, at least, that one Boko Haram terrorist has been trained in Afghanistan and others in Somalia, with al-Shabab. This author states that the US government suspects that it is also in contact with al-Qaeda in Yemen.<sup>40</sup>

Al-Shabab is the most active terrorist group in Somalia. Founded between 2004 and 2006 while the country was in the throes of conflict and the state weakened, it has connections to al-Qaeda and Boko Haram, as we have seen. Al-Shabab (meaning 'youth'), which announced its formal adherence to al-Qaeda in 2012, is fighting to establish a Wahhabi Islamic state in Somalia and has transnational ambitions.

It is badly debilitated by the African Union (AU) AMISOM mission, but is capable of staging attacks such that of 25 December against the AU's base in Mogadishu. It is mainly active in Somalia, but it has also launched suicide attacks in Kampala (2010), against a shopping centre in Nairobi (2013) and against a bus at the border with Kenya on 22 November 2014. Kenya's antiterrorist policy and proximity make it the target of many of al-Shabab's attacks and a source for many young recruits.<sup>41</sup>

At any rate, we should never underestimate a terrorist group just because it appears weaker, as such groups require few resources to do a great deal of damage and have a proven ability to devise new tactics, techniques and procedures.

### Piracy

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 defines *piracy* as illegal acts of violence or detention committed against ships or aircraft. This offence is a deep-rooted problem – related to corruption, poverty and, again, weakness of states – that poses a threat not only to crews and vessels,<sup>42</sup> but also to the economies of the countries affected by it.

<sup>40</sup> SIMCOX, Robin: 'Boko Haram and defining the "al-Qaeda network"', Al Jazeera, 6 June 2014.

<sup>41</sup> FERNÁNDEZ DE CASTRO, Xavi: '¿Qué lleva a un joven keniano a unirse a Al Shabab?', *El Mundo*, 15 October 2014.

<sup>42</sup> According to the International Maritime Office (IMO), more sailors were killed and wounded in the first nine months of 2014 than in the whole of 2013, when more than 1,200 were affected.

Whereas piracy in Somali waters is decreasing thanks to international involvement,<sup>43</sup> though it continues to be a highly lucrative activity, incidents in western Africa are becoming more frequent. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC),<sup>44</sup> most of them occur in the Niger delta in Nigeria, but also in Benin, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea and Togo, among other countries.<sup>45</sup> In this part of Africa, unlike in the Somali area, attacks are chiefly related to oil thefts.<sup>46</sup> In 2012 actions of this kind in the Gulf of Guinea outnumbered those in Somali waters and the Gulf of Aden.<sup>47</sup> They currently account for more than one-quarter of attacks of this kind reported worldwide.<sup>48</sup>

Of the states worst hit by piracy, only the wealthiest – South Africa, which has been using a satellite surveillance system since 2011, and Nigeria – have professional armies. As a rule, these countries' resources are paltry,<sup>49</sup> and even if a state possesses information and well-trained coastguards, if it lacks the right vessels it will be powerless to address the problem, as Christian Bueger of Cardiff University points out.<sup>50</sup>

International trade is essential to many of the continent's economies, and the security of maritime transport is therefore crucial to the African economy's growth. As the threat is limited to territorial waters, it is the sovereign states that are responsible for taking action and are legally entitled to do so. Therefore, the main tool for combating the phenomenon should be centred on promoting security structures at the national and regional levels.<sup>51</sup>

Along these lines we find the memorandum of understanding drawn up by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in 2008 with the assis-

<sup>43</sup> Currently deployed to the Horn of Africa area are the Africa Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM), the European Union EUTM missions in Uganda and Mogadishu and EU NAVFOR Atalanta; and the NATO naval force (Operation Ocean Shield) and other international vessels.

<sup>44</sup> 'Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa: A Threat Assessment', UNODC, February 2013.

<sup>45</sup> BEN-ARI, Nirit: 'Piracy in West Africa: A bumpy road to maritime security', Africa Renewal, December 2013.

<sup>46</sup> BEN-ARI, Nirit: 'Piracy in West Africa: A bumpy road to maritime security', *op. cit.*

<sup>47</sup> IBÁÑEZ GÓMEZ, Fernando and ESTEBAN NAVARRO, Miguel Ángel: 'Análisis de los ataques piratas somalíes en el Índico (2005-2013): evolución y modus operandi', *Revista del Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos*, no. 1, June 2013. <<http://revista.ieee.es/index.php/ieee/article/view/36>>.

<sup>48</sup> VIRCOULON, Thierry: 'Gulf of Guinea: A Regional Solution to Piracy?', International Crisis Group, 4 September 2014.

<sup>49</sup> HORNERO, José: 'Guinea Ecuatorial, el Golfo de Guinea y España: consideraciones geopolíticas y de seguridad', documento de opinión del IEEE 046/2011, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Cited by BEN-ARI, Nirit: 'Piracy in West Africa: A bumpy road to maritime security', *op. cit.*

<sup>51</sup> MORALES, Samuel: 'Contextualizando el fenómeno de la piratería en el Golfo', documento de opinión del IEEE 73/2014.

tance of the Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) on establishing an integrated sub-regional network of coastguard services in western and central Africa.

On 31 January 2014 the African Union adopted an Integrated Maritime Strategy for 2050 that is indispensable bearing in mind that 38 countries of the continent are coastal or insular and that, of its more than 100 port facilities, 52 handle containers and other types of cargo.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, to support these countries' national capabilities, forces from western countries, among them Spain, are engaged in training the navies of the Gulf of Guinea and a few countries with economic and security interests in the region, such as China, India, South Africa and Brazil, are contributing equipment and funds.<sup>53</sup> No efforts should be spared to combat not only piracy but also trafficking of all kinds, illegal fisheries and, most importantly, the dynamics of collaboration being generated with the terrorist groups that are attempting to spread westwards from the Sahel.<sup>54</sup>

A danger that is closely related to the lack of control of Africa's territorial waters is the possibility of terrorist attacks on merchant vessels and warships; this is already a real threat to international maritime security. Therefore, in addition to regional initiatives, combating piracy and maritime terrorism can be expected to be addressed from a multinational approach, as in Somali waters.

### Armed conflicts

According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), there are currently two dozen conflicts on the continent. Those of greatest intensity in 2014 are the almost interminable succession of conflicts in the DRC, the ever worsening conflict in the CAR and those of weak or failed states and regions: Somalia, the Sahel, parts of the Gulf of Guinea and Libya. In some cases, a few actors have ousted others from the limelight, such as in Libya where the warlords of Somalia have been superseded by the fortunately increasingly weak al-Shabab terrorists, or the DRC where the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR) have risen to prominence following the neutralisation of the M23 group.

The African conflicts are a faithful reflection of the trends observed in the so-called 'new wars'. First, they are essentially internal wars but with

<sup>52</sup> 'Implementing sustainable maritime security measures in West and Central Africa', International Maritime Organization.

<sup>53</sup> ESCRIBANO, Gonzalo and ARTEAGA, Félix: 'Seguridad y recursos en el Golfo de Guinea: algunas implicaciones para España', *ARI* 28/2013, 16 July 2013.

<sup>54</sup> BOLAÑOS, Jorge: 'Piratería en el Golfo de Guinea: nuevo código de conducta regional para contenerla', documento informativo del IEEE 21/2013, p. 5.

vague boundaries, which are normally waged within a state even though they affect neighbouring states directly or indirectly. Several effects are derived from this phenomenon, such as the regionalisation of conflicts and the multiplication of external support.

They are furthermore recurring conflicts limited to localised geographical areas and are related to the identity of peoples and territory, as in the case of Sudan and South Sudan. Natural resources continue to play an essential role in the management and maintenance of the conflicts. The DRC is a paradigmatic example, but so are the Sudans. The exploitation of resources is an important cause of these conflicts, but not the only one. Others are tribal, ethnic or religious disputes not previously resolved.<sup>55</sup>

As we have pointed out, the main cause is the weakness of states, which are replaced by other agents – namely warlords, terrorist groups or organised criminal groups, for example. Given the respective states' inability to stem the violence and chaos on account of their weakness, the international community has deployed civilian and military operations to most of the countries involved in conflicts.

If, like Max Weber, we take *modern state* to mean a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory, we may expect that, as the institutions in many African countries are weak, other actors will continue to use violence.

One of the most important actions carried out in post-armed-conflict situations for consolidating peace is security sector reform (SSR).<sup>56</sup> When the sector is deficient and not in a position to guarantee its citizens' security, such reforms are a condition *sine qua non* for addressing other tasks such as disarmament, demobilisation and the reintegration of combatants (DDR). This explains why many of the international missions currently underway on the African continent involve training and teaching the state security forces and agencies. Such is the case of various missions deployed by the European Union, both civilian (EUBAM Libya),<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> BAÑOS BAJO, Pedro: *Recursos naturales, guerras y corrupción, África a debate*. Ministerio de Defensa, 2009.

<sup>56</sup> The United Nations defines security sector reform as 'a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law', *Securing, Peace and Development. The Role of the United Nations in Supporting Security Sector Reform. Report of the Secretary-General A/62/659-S/2008/39*, 23 January 2008, paragraph 17.

<sup>57</sup> EUBAM (EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya: mission deployed in May 2013 under the umbrella of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to support the Libyan authorities in improving security at their borders.



## The challenges of the thousand Africas, the silenced...

EUCAP Mali,<sup>58</sup> EUCAP Niger,<sup>59</sup> EUCAP Nestor<sup>60</sup> and EUSEC RDC<sup>61</sup> and military (EUTM Mali<sup>62</sup> and EUTM Somalia).<sup>63</sup>

The EUPOL RD Congo and EUVASEC South Sudan police mission to strengthen aviation security at Juba's international airport was completed in 2104. For 21 years, the armed Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and its allies fought against the government of Khartoum for independence. The conflict cost nearly two million lives and triggered the displacement of four million south Sudanese. In 2005, the two sides signed a peace agreement stipulating that the South would enjoy autonomy for six years, followed by a referendum on secession, which turned out to be favourable to the latter. In 2011, South Sudan gained its longed-for independence, but the conflict is dragging on owing to disagreement over the demarcation of the border in this oil-rich area.

In some cases, such as the DRC, important steps have been taken towards peace during the year with a new agreement being reached in Addis Ababa and the Security Council's decision to equip MONUSCO with an intervention brigade, which give us reason to be optimistic about the coming years. In others, such as the CAR, the situation has deteriorated considerably, becoming 'overwhelmed by chaos and anarchy'.<sup>64</sup> In this country clashes between the Muslim rebels and Christian militias, with the struggle for political power and control of natural resources as a backdrop,<sup>65</sup> have plunged the population into a situation of growing violence that the National Transitional Government has proved incapable of stemming.

The situation has also progressively worsened in Libya, which has turned into a battlefield for a host of national and foreign actors and a source of instability that is spreading to the neighbouring countries

<sup>58</sup> EUCAP Mali: mission aimed at providing strategic advice and training the Malian security forces since April 2014.

<sup>59</sup> EUCAP Niger: EU civil mission for the security of the Sahel, which was deployed in the summer of 2012.

<sup>60</sup> EUCAP Nestor: mission deployed in 2012 to increase the maritime capabilities of five countries of the Horn of Africa and western Indian Ocean: Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Seychelles and Tanzania.

<sup>61</sup> EUSEC RDC: mission deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 2005 to provide support to the Congolese government in improving security and governance.

<sup>62</sup> EUTM Mali: mission aimed at training the Malian armed forces.

<sup>63</sup> EUTM Somalia: mission deployed since April 2010 for the military training of the Somali armed forces to strengthen the Transitional Federal Government and the country's institutions.

<sup>64</sup> DÍEZ ALCALDE, Jesús: 'Caos y violencia en la República Centroafricana, y la reacción internacional', documento de análisis del IEEE 05/2014, January 2014.

<sup>65</sup> DEIROS, Trinidad: 'República Centroafricana: la invención de un conflicto religioso', documento de opinión del IEEE 67/2014, 16 June 2014.

and even to Syria.<sup>66</sup> The situation in Mali has become a conflict of medium intensity (according to the IISS's Armed Conflict Database) since the French intervention and the current international missions underway in the country. Nevertheless, the Sahel's vast territory continues and will continue to pose a danger to northern Africa and the neighbouring Europe owing to the weakness of the states and porousness of the borders. As César Pintado points out, so far in the Sahel only Mali hosts an EUTM, but other neighbouring countries also need a deep security sector reform.<sup>67</sup>

The spread of irregular conflicts involving militiamen, paramilitary or terrorists has given impetus to major scourges. One of them is sexual violence,<sup>68</sup> which is targeted mainly, though not exclusively,<sup>69</sup> at women and girls.<sup>70</sup> It is often combined with another major human disaster: an exponential increase in the number of people who flee their homes and end up in refugee and displaced people's camps or struggling to survive in other cities. Refugees and displaced people often fall victim to sexual abuse, disease and malnutrition,<sup>71</sup> and many women are even forced to resort to prostitution to feed their children.<sup>72</sup> The latest major scourge against which a losing battle is currently being waged is the increasing recruitment, forced or voluntary, of children as combatants. This terrible problem – which is especially significant owing to the difficulty of rehabilitating and reintegrating them after the conflict – is particularly common in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but also in Chad, Libya, the Central African Republic, Mali, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan.

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<sup>66</sup> ECHEVERRÍA, Carlos: 'Imparable deterioro de la situación en Libia', *Revista Ejército* no. 882, October 2014, pp. 113–15.

<sup>67</sup> PINTADO RODRÍGUEZ, César: 'Las UOE, el Sahel y la arquitectura africana de paz y seguridad. Sinergias y oportunidades para una nueva misión', documento de opinión del IEEE 125/2014.

<sup>68</sup> The United Nations has a website on combating sexual violence in conflicts: [www.stoprapenow.org](http://www.stoprapenow.org).

<sup>69</sup> It is widely thought that an increasing number of men and children suffer rape and other types of abuse, though figures are very low as it is rarely reported owing to the stigma attached.

<sup>70</sup> The United Nations agencies estimate that 60,000 women were raped during the civil war in Sierra Leone (1991–2002), more than 40,000 in Liberia (1989–2003), 60,000 in the wars in the former Yugoslavia (1992–95) and at least 200,000 in the past 12 years of war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. <<http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/about/bgsexualviolences.html>>.

<sup>71</sup> In the camps in Niger, 21% of the children suffer from malnutrition. See 'Mali's conflict refugees: responding to a growing crisis', Oxfam Briefing Paper 167, January 2013 (available from Oxfam's website).

<sup>72</sup> ESTÉBANEZ, Pilar: 'La mujer en conflictos armados y guerras', in *El papel de la mujer y el género en los conflictos*, Ministerio de Defensa, Secretaría General Técnica, 2012. (*Cuadernos de Estrategia* no. 157, pp. 287–95).

### Exponential demographic growth

Between 1950 and 2000 Africa's population tripled. Around 1.2 billion people lived on the continent in 2014 and the number is growing, being expected to reach more than 4 billion by the end of the century.<sup>73</sup> The risk posed by this demographic growth is that many of these people live in states unable to meet their public services, food and security needs.

According to UNICEF,<sup>74</sup> western and eastern Africa will be the main focus- es of demographic growth. It is reckoned that by halfway through the cen- tury, two-thirds of Africa's population will live in these two regions. The population of Nigeria alone will reach 440 million, two and a half times its current size, and it is already the largest on the continent with 184 mil- lion inhabitants. Well behind it are Ethiopia, with nearly 100 million, Egypt with 85 million and the DRC with 71 million. The expected growth will pose a threat to what in many cases are already deficient public health services<sup>75</sup> – one of the areas that are indispensable for development.

The poorer the country or region, the greater the tendency towards high- er fertility rates. This pressure will increase in places where the starting point is not precisely encouraging. The statistics reported in the Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis<sup>76</sup> (MODA), compiled by UNICEF for 23 African countries in 2014, show that most children under five suffer from shortages in areas such as nutrition, health, water, hygiene and housing, which in many cases are crucial to their survival.

Under these circumstances it is more than foreseeable that the popula- tion's needs will not be met – especially in cities, where most of the popu- lation will be living within less than 25 years and where already evident shortcomings will need to be addressed in housing, transport, energy, employment, underemployment, education and health.<sup>77</sup>

The first and most urgent need of all, according to David Bloom,<sup>78</sup> is to find jobs for the productive population, as otherwise they could be a major source of social and political instability and a threat to society,<sup>79</sup> which would worsen problems such as crime, violence, substance abuse, pros-

<sup>73</sup> 'Generation 2030: Africa', UNICEF, *op. cit.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> KANTOROVÁ, V., BIDDLECOM, A. and NEWBY, H.: 'Keeping pace with population growth', *The Lancet*, vol. 384, no. 9940, 26 July 2014, pp. 307–8.

<sup>76</sup> Further information on the website: <<http://www.unicef-irc.org/MODA/>>.

<sup>77</sup> 'World Urbanization Prospects: highlights', Naciones Unidas, revision 2014.

<sup>78</sup> BLOOM, David: 'Africa's Daunting Challenges', *The New York Times*, 5 May 2011.

<sup>79</sup> ROSHAN, Tony: 'Youth, Crime and Urban Renewal in the Western Cape', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31:1, pp. 209–27. Cited in MAGO, Stephen: 'Urban Youth Unemployment in Africa: Whither Socio-Economic Problems', *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 5, no. 9, May 2014.

titution, gangs and many others.<sup>80</sup> Unemployment among young people has been a crucial problem on the continent for some time, as it stands at more than 12% in most countries. Sierra Leone has the highest rate: around 60%.<sup>81</sup>

Secondly, it is necessary to stem the high fertility rates by making contraception more readily available so as to delay motherhood or limit the number of pregnancies. According to this professor of Economics and Demography at Harvard, African leaders need to realise that if fertility rates are kept in check, the 'demographic dividend' will allow resources to be diverted to infrastructure development, technological progress and better living conditions in general.

But the challenges are not exclusively African. With interconnections at all levels, spurred by globalisation, Africa's demographic changes will be felt beyond its borders: from China's appetite for African resources to the European implications of future migratory movements or Africa's emerging role as a consumer and as an investment market that is increasingly taking Asia's place.

Unless it assesses and faces up to the challenges posed by this demographic growth, the world will be incapable of maintaining the objectives proposed by the post-2015 agenda in the direction established by the Millennium Declaration towards prosperity, peace, equity and environmental sustainability. To quote the United Nations Population Information Network (POPIN), 'there is no doubt that the population problem in Africa is real and challenging'.<sup>82</sup>

### Collective security initiatives

With such a complex security outlook for the continent and, by extension, the whole world, conflict management depends on the international organisation with the greatest legitimacy to do so and which seemed ideally suited to seeking solutions: the United Nations. Nevertheless, the history of the UN's interventions on the African continent has had its ups and downs, marked by a process of change and adaptation.

The idea that it should be Africans themselves who commit to their own security is ceasing to be mere rhetoric and is gradually becoming a reality; despite its shortcomings, it is already in motion. Therefore, the blue

<sup>80</sup> CARMICHAEL, Fiona, and WARD, Robert: 'Youth unemployment and crime in the English regions and Wales', *Applied Economics*, 32:5, pp. 559-571. Cited in MAGO, Stephen: *op. cit.*

<sup>81</sup> MAGO, Stephen: *op. cit.*

<sup>82</sup> *Population and Development in Africa*, conference of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

helmets' missions are now much more conservative and limited to security aspects in order to attempt to get Africans to take increasing responsibility for peacekeeping. In this regard, the current trend seems to be for a bigger role for regional organisations or coalitions headed by a leader nation, legitimated by a mandate of the UN Security Council.

Since the start of the new millennium, it could be said that no part of the planet has made such important progress in regional cooperation in security as Africa.<sup>83</sup> The most important regional institution in this regard is the African Union (AU).

The AU was officially established in Durban (South Africa) in 2002, as the successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which until then had not played a satisfactory role. Since its creation, its main activity had been to encourage the decolonisation of the continent, a process that practically ended with the independence of Namibia and the end of apartheid in South Africa (that of Western Sahara has yet to be completed).

With nearly all the African states as members – except for Morocco<sup>84</sup> – the AU was established with the intention of progressing towards the continent's economic and political integration and strengthening cooperation among the African states.

Perhaps one of the fields where the transformation of the OAU into the AU has been most radical is security.<sup>85</sup> Whereas the OAU was based on the principle of the inviolability of national sovereignty, the AU's security agenda does not consider the 'absolute sovereignty' of states to be an inviolable principle and explicitly allows<sup>86</sup> interference in internal matters.

This emerging actor in international affairs still needs to overcome a great deal of problems in order to be fully operative. The first and foremost is lack of appropriate funding and human resources to undertake the tasks entrusted to it. Despite the continent's macroeconomic growth, 90% of the AU's budget depends on external funding, especially from the European Union.

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<sup>83</sup> PATRICK, Stewart M.: 'African Union Peace Operations: From Rhetoric to Reality', Council on Foreign Relations, 7 November 2014.

<sup>84</sup> Morocco is not a member of the AU because this organisation recognises Western Sahara as an independent state.

<sup>85</sup> ROMERO JUNQUERA, Abel: 'La arquitectura de paz y seguridad africana. Un compromiso de la Unión Europea', *La importancia geoestratégica del África Subsahariana*, monografía del CESEDEN 117, 2010.

<sup>86</sup> The AU is the only regional organisation that explicitly recognises the right to intervene militarily to protect the population from atrocities. Article 4(h) of its Constitutive Act states: 'The right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.'

Even so, the AU has made major headway towards giving Africa a say in tackling African peace and security issues, which are addressed using mechanisms that range from conflict prevention and early warning to peacekeeping or crisis intervention.

Nevertheless, major improvements are needed, such as boosting the capabilities of many states to deploy forces, training for civilian and military professionals who take part in AU actions and reduction of dependence on external funding in order to adopt decisions with greater independence and legitimacy.<sup>87</sup> It is furthermore necessary to specify the responsibilities of the AU and United Nations and also of the Regional Economic Communities (REC): the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECOCAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

A new sub-regional organisation worth stressing is the G5 Sahel, which was recently founded by Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad in February 2014 to coordinate their development and security policies, with particular attention to combating jihadism.

As the AU is more tolerant of casualties than the UN,<sup>88</sup> it is tempting to maintain the sequential model used for the CAR. This model consists of initial intervention by the AU – in this case MISCA – followed by a longer-lasting UN peacekeeping operation: MINUSCA, which took over from the previous one in September 2014.

Nevertheless, although it is increasing, the AU's activity on the ground has been scant. It takes part in very few of the peace or security sector reform operations currently underway on African soil.

The longest-running and most significant AU mission at the time of writing this article is that of Somalia (AMISOM: African Union Mission in Somalia), which replaced IGAD's regional mission in 2007. Its aims are: to support the structures of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government; to implement a national security plan; to train the Somali security forces; and to support the creation of a secure environment that allows humanitarian assistance to be distributed. Without a doubt its most successful objective is in combating al-Shabab. However, this mission has been supported by the UN and is funded almost entirely by external donors, especially the EU.

Another mission in which the AU takes part is UNAMID, the hybrid operation with the UN in Darfur, which absorbed the AU's AMIS mission in 2007 to monitor compliance with the Peace Accords in the territory. This

<sup>87</sup> GONZÁLEZ BUSTELO, Mabel: 'La Unión Africana: ¿un nuevo actor global en paz y seguridad?', IECAH, 4 June 2013.

<sup>88</sup> PATRICK, Stewart M.: *op. cit.*

mission is also totally dependent on external actors – particularly the European Union and United States – for logistics and funding.<sup>89</sup>

The same is true of the latest mission undertaken by this organisation: ASEOWA (African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa), to combat the Ebola crisis in the east of the continent, which is chiefly funded by the European Union and the AU and, to a lesser extent, by China and several private donors.<sup>90</sup> This mission was deployed invoking article 6 of the organisation's mandate relating to humanitarian assistance. Although its funding is essentially external, it is a highly significant initiative of the AU aimed at alleviating the effects of this lethal virus and, once again, providing the essential human resources that are needed. It is to be hoped that, as is occurring and has occurred with other international organisations, it will take things one step at a time, progressing thanks to the lessons learned and the greater commitment of member states.

The rest of the missions on the African continent are the responsibility of the EU, especially in the field of training, and of the United Nations. NATO is also involved on the continent, but with a less significant role.

The EU had nine missions underway in October 2014. Five of them were civilian: EUBAM Libya, EUCAP Mali, EUCAP Niger, EUSEC DR Congo and EUCAP Nestor (in Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia and the Seychelles). Two were military: EUTM Mali and EUFOR RCA. A further two missions in the Horn of Africa were considered both civilian and military: EU NAVFOR Atalanta and EUTM Somalia.

Around the same time, NATO was running Operation Active Endeavour (in Mediterranean waters), operations to combat piracy and support the work of the AU in Darfur and Somalia, and missions designed to provide assistance in developing African peacekeeping capabilities: the African Standby Forces (ASF).

The United Nations had deployed MINURSO to Western Sahara, MINUSCA to Bangui (CAR), MINUSMA to Mali, MONUSCO to the DRC, ONUCI to the Ivory Coast, UNAMID to Darfur, UNISFA to Abyei (Sudan), UNMIL to Liberia and UMISS to South Sudan.

Of the above operations and missions, Spain took part in Atalanta, EUTM Somalia, EUCAP Nestor, EUTM Mali and EUFOR RCA, deployed by the European Union; in the United Nations UNOCI mission; in the NATO maritime surveillance missions; and in national projects such as Support for CAR in Gabon and Support for Mali in Senegal.

<sup>89</sup> ROMERO JUNQUERA, Abel: 'La arquitectura...', *op. cit.*

<sup>90</sup> LOUW-VAUDRAN, Liesl: 'The AU's Ebola mission: it's not all about the money', ISS, 22 September 2014.

Also worthy of note are the increasingly visible multilateral dimensions such as the EU–Africa strategic alliance – a very significant framework because it includes Morocco. The centrepiece of European cooperation with the neighbouring continent has been the European Development Funds<sup>91</sup> and the relationship has been progressively consolidated through successive summit meetings and strategies. The Lisbon Summit of 2007 thus envisaged the birth of the first Africa–EU Joint Strategy, which is structured into eight partnership areas: peace and security; democratic governance and human rights; trade, regional integration and infrastructure; Millennium Development Goals; energy; climate change; immigration, mobility and employment; and, lastly, science, information society and space.

Although the indecisive implementation of the strategy has been criticised,<sup>92</sup> its seven years of existence can be positively regarded according to Díez Alcalde.<sup>93</sup> First of all, this author states, Europe’s financial support for many African development programmes has increased; Africa’s national democratisation processes have been backed; trade between both continents has been strengthened; the transformation of African agriculture has been funded; and, in the peace and security field, the European Union has collaborated through the African Peace Fund on developing Africa’s capability to manage, solve and prevent crises, and it has provided financial support to all the African missions deployed to Somalia, Mali, the Central African Republic and Sudan.

Although it is not a fully-fledged collective security initiative, as it is neither a United Nations enforcement mission nor an action of this kind, the initiative of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) can be regarded as such insofar as its objective is human development, which is a condition *sine qua non* for security, as we shall see. The indicators of these goals are furthermore both causes and consequences of risks and threats to peace, stability and security.

### Millennium Goals

In September 2000, the world leaders met at the UN headquarters in New York at the so-called Millennium Summit. They adopted the Millennium Declaration, which was signed by 189 United Nations members and was later developed into a number of goals to be achieved by 2015.

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<sup>91</sup> DÍEZ ALCALDE, Jesús: ‘África: avances, desafíos y su alianza estratégica con la Unión Europea’, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>92</sup> BELLO, Oladiran: ‘La asociación UE-África: Una encrucijada estratégica’, FRIDE, 2010.

<sup>93</sup> DÍEZ ALCALDE, Jesús: ‘África: avances, desafíos y su alianza estratégica con la Unión Europea’, *op. cit.*, p. 40.



The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) take as a basis agreements adopted at previous United Nations conferences and summits. They embody the commitment of all nations to achieve quantifiable progress in the fields of human development: reducing poverty, hunger, disease, environmental deterioration, sexual inequality and lack of education and access to water and sanitation. Lack of improved living conditions is, as we shall see, the cause and consequence of security risks and threats as a much broader concept than state security, as without security there is no development, but nor is there security without development.

It might be said that important achievements have been made on all fronts, but we should not lose sight of the fact that the starting point was a highly deficient situation in many African countries.

### *Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*

According to the United Nations progress report of 2014<sup>94</sup> on the MDGs, extreme poverty – defined as an income of less than 1.25 dollars a day – was halved worldwide between 1990 and 2010. This means that 700 million fewer people live in extreme poverty. But decreasing extreme poverty is not the same as eradicating hunger. One of the targets of this goal was to halve the number of people living in dire poverty between 1990 and 2015. The statistics, which according to the United Nations report are a major hindrance, especially in weak countries, indicate that the overall goal has been met. However, there is less reason for optimism in regional terms. Forty percent of Africans and nearly half of sub-Saharanans live on less than 1.25 dollars a day – that is, beneath the poverty threshold.<sup>95</sup> The overall progress is undeniable, but it is meagre in certain regions and countries.

According to the 2014 report of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on food insecurity in the world,<sup>96</sup> it can be generally stated that Africa, especially the sub-Saharan region, is progressing slowly in combating famine because it is badly affected by conflicts and natural disasters. In this region of the planet, one out of every four people is undernourished. Therefore the goal of eradicating poverty and destitution in all countries has yet to be achieved and is a fundamental element of the United Nations Development Programme and of the post-2015 development agenda.

But this indicator of extreme poverty does not explain why two countries with the same GNI have different development rates. The fact is that pov-

<sup>94</sup> 'Millennium Development Goals', United Nations, 2014 report.

<sup>95</sup> 'Generation 2030: Africa', UNICEF, *op. cit.*

<sup>96</sup> 'The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2014', FAO.

erty cannot be measured with a single indicator, such as the monetary indicator of 1.25 dollars a day, or even generally. Therefore, since 2010 the UNDP has been using a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).<sup>97</sup> This index complements the monetary measurements of poverty with people's deprivations and needs. It signifies a qualitative improvement in the data and information that can be inferred from them, as in addition to telling us who is poor it also tells us why and what development policies are most appropriate. It likewise includes nearly all the data needed to analyse the Millennium Goals: poverty, nutrition, primary education, child mortality and health.

The data published in 2014<sup>98</sup> on this new poverty gauge indicate that some 1.6 billion people live in multidimensional poverty – more than 30% of the inhabitants of the 108 countries studied. Of these 1.6 billion MPI poor, 29% live in sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, according to this index, the 10 poorest countries in the world are Niger, Ethiopia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Somalia, the Central African Republic, Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Ethiopia has the second highest percentage of poor in the world, after Niger, where 89.3% of the population is poor according to these parameters and 68.8% of the population is destitute; this percentage is higher than in the other countries analysed. In Ethiopia and Burkina Faso, nearly 60% of the population is destitute.

There is no doubt that poverty and famine are causes of destabilisation and insecurity and directly affect several of the risks and threats we have examined in relation to Africa, such as migratory movements and affiliation with and support for terrorist groups, pirates or armed factions in armed conflicts.

### *Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education*

As well as a right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>99</sup> education is a parameter that is relevant to conflicts<sup>100</sup> and other security challenges: education can ease latent tensions in a country through participation and syllabus content. In countries in conflict, education can play an important role in protecting civilians, especially girls,

<sup>97</sup> Further information on the website: <<http://hdr.undp.org/es/content/indice-de-pobreza-multidimensional-ipm>>.

<sup>98</sup> Data available from the UNPD website: <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>>.

<sup>99</sup> United Nations General Assembly. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 1948. Article 26: 'Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.'

<sup>100</sup> SMITH, A., and VAUX, T.: *Education, conflict, and international development*, London: Department of International Development, p. 2.

against the worst effects of these conflicts. In addition, in countries that are emerging from conflicts, education plays an important role in the reconciliation process.

It is clear that the countries with the highest illiteracy rates do not have access to elementary development levels.<sup>101</sup> According to UNESCO, 'literacy is a human right, a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development [...] essential for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.'<sup>102</sup>

Although in some countries progress was made at the start of this decade – the 2014 United Nations report on the MDGs indicates that disparities in the enrolment of girls and boys are being eliminated at primary school – education is at a standstill in many other aspects and the 2015 target of halving illiteracy, which is part of this goal, is very far from being achieved. Unless things change, according to Manos Unidas,<sup>103</sup> in the future one out of every two illiterate people will live in Africa. Six of the nine countries with the highest illiteracy levels among young women are also in Africa: Nigeria, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Egypt and Burkina Faso.

Nevertheless, once again the progress is undeniable. In North Africa, universal primary schooling is recorded as 99% in 2012<sup>104</sup> (up from 80% in 1990), and the figure stands at 78% in sub-Saharan Africa. The increased unrest following the ill-termed Arab springs has probably had a negative impact on North African statistics.

### *Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women*

Gender equality, in addition to a goal in itself, is an indicator for the rest of the MDGs. It is closely linked to the objectives of mother and new-born health and helping prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. The empowerment of women and their participation in conflict-solving processes has a direct impact on these countries' stability and development.

The UNDP points out that women and girls often suffer discrimination in access to health services, education, political representation and the labour market, to cite a few examples. The Gender Inequality Index

<sup>101</sup> UNESCO, International Literacy Day 2013.

<sup>102</sup> UNESCO, International Literacy Day 2014.

<sup>103</sup> 'África y Asia, los continentes con más personas analfabetas del mundo', Manos Unidas, Madrid, 8 September 2014.

<sup>104</sup> Although the United Nations report is dated 2014, the statistics it reflects relate to 2012.

(GII)<sup>105</sup> measures gender disparity in three important aspects of human development: reproductive health, which is measured by rates of maternal mortality and teenage births; empowerment, which is insufficiently measured<sup>106</sup> by the proportion of seats in parliament occupied by women and the proportion of women to men aged over 25 with at least secondary education; and, lastly, the economic situation expressed in terms of women's participation in the labour market, measured by the labour market participation rate of the female and male population aged over 15. According to the 2013 figures,<sup>107</sup> the 10 lowest scores on the continent for this index<sup>108</sup> are for women of Niger, Chad, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Liberia, the Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Mauritania and Sierra Leone.

Although only three African countries have a female head of state<sup>109</sup> – compared to six in Europe – this is indicative of a considerable improvement in women's political status in Africa, though it cannot be used to assess gender equality.<sup>110</sup> Nevertheless, according to the 2014 report on the MDGs, women's involvement in politics has continued to increase in the world. This overall trend is also observed in most African countries, with the notable example of Rwanda, where 57% of members of parliament are women.

In other respects, such as women's control of their own bodies and their health, Africa still has a long way to go. Practices such as female genital mutilation, sexual violence or child marriages are barriers that are difficult to overcome and hamper nations' development. Compliance with the goal of empowering women and girls will give impetus to development and poverty reduction. Healthy, educated women responsible for their own lives contribute to the health and wealth of their families, communities and nations.

<sup>105</sup> See <<http://hdr.undp.org/es/content/el-%C3%ADndice-de-desigualdad-de-g%C3%A9nero-idg>>.

<sup>106</sup> Insufficiently measured in that women's empowerment consists of five components; women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally. See 'Guidelines on Women's Empowerment', UN Population Fund (UNFPA). <<http://www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/guide/iatfwemp.gdl.html>>.

<sup>107</sup> Data available at: <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>>. Date accessed: October 2014.

<sup>108</sup> For the countries on which there are data. For example, there are no data on Nigeria or Angola.

<sup>109</sup> At the date of writing this article, in November 2014 in Liberia, where women played a leading role in fighting for peace, led by Leymah Gbowee in 2003, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has been prime minister since 2006. In Malawi Joyce Banda has been president since 2012. And finally, in the Central African Republic, Catherine Samba-Panza has been president since January 2014.

<sup>110</sup> Liberia, for example, scores very poorly on the GII.

#### ***Goal 4. Reduce mortality among children under five***

UNICEF statistics<sup>111</sup> point to a fall in child mortality rates in Africa, especially since 2000. Even so, the continent still accounts for half of all child deaths.

According to the MDG Report 2014, one out of every eleven children born in Africa dies before the age of five. This proportion is fourteen times higher than for developed countries. Only by combating the diseases that cause the highest mortality on the continent, most of which are avoidable or curable, will this figure be modified.

#### ***Goal 5. Improve maternal health***

Improving maternal health is closely linked to child mortality. If a mother dies, her new-born is considerably more likely to die as well. The United Nations report on this goal once again indicates that there is still much to be done. Indeed, although the progress is undeniable and the overall target has been met – maternal mortality has dropped by 45% since 1990 – 57% of all maternal deaths take place in Africa.

Most of these deaths are avoidable. According to a quotation often repeated by international organisations' websites, Doctor Mahmoud Fathalla, professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and chairman of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Advisory Committee on Health Research, 'women are not dying of diseases we can't treat... They are dying because societies have yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving'.<sup>112</sup>

#### ***Goal 6. Combat HIV/<sup>113</sup> AIDS,<sup>114</sup> malaria and other diseases***

As the WHO Regional Office for Africa pointed out in its 2010 MDG report,<sup>115</sup> three of the seven goals were directly related to health: goal 4, reduce child mortality; 5, improve maternal health; and 6, the one in question. However, other goals are monitored and controlled through health-related indicators, such as goal 1, eradicate poverty and hunger; 7, environmental sustainability; and 8, global partnership for development.

<sup>111</sup> UNICEF. Division of Data, Research and Policy. *Op. cit.*

<sup>112</sup> FATHALLA, Mahmoud F.: 'Human rights aspects of safe motherhood', Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology, vol. 20, issue 3, pp. 409–19, June 2006.

<sup>113</sup> HIV: human immunodeficiency virus.

<sup>114</sup> AIDS: acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

<sup>115</sup> 'Towards reaching the health-related millennium development goals: progress report and the way forward: Report of the Regional Director', WHO Regional Office for Africa, 2010.

Therefore, health should be a commitment of primary importance to achieve other development goals. Health, or rather disease, together with terrorism, is perhaps the threat that has been teaching us most clearly for some time that risks and dangers are global. The recent Ebola crisis, which began in December 2013, and its leap to Europe and the United States in particular, has brought us closer to Africa. The WHO reported that a total of 19,497 people had been infected and 7,588 had died as of 24 December 2014. The worst affected countries, as the chart shows, were Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.

	<u>INFECTIONS</u>	<u>DEATHS</u>
GUINEA	2597	1607
LIBERIA	7862	3384
SIERRA LEONE	9004	2582
MALI	8	6
NIGERIA	20	8
SENEGAL	1	0
SPAIN	1	0
USA	4	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19497</b>	<b>7588</b>

Table 1: Ebola situation - 24 December, 2014. Own elaboration. Source: WHO

According to the 2014 report on the MDGs, efforts to combat malaria and tuberculosis have achieved good results. It is estimated that the actions undertaken to combat malaria prevented more than three million deaths from this disease in little more than a decade, from 2000 to 2012. It is thought that 90% are sub-Saharan African children aged under five.

Mumps, tetanus, meningitis, syphilis, diarrhoea, AIDS, pneumonia, polio, dengue fever and yellow fever are just some of the most deadly diseases in Africa. The Ebola virus, which made the headlines in Europe in 2014, has been known for more than three decades, but we are witnessing the most severe outbreak ever recorded. According to experts such as Thomas Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC), unless appropriate measures are put in place, it could become a pandemic like AIDS.<sup>116</sup>

According to the report by UNAIDS,<sup>117</sup> the number of people infected by HIV is continuing to drop in most of the world, having fallen by 38% since 2001. Once again, sub-Saharan Africa is the worst affected part of the world, with approximately 25 million people – nearly 71% of all those infected in the world – especially young women, with HIV. Although the number of AIDS-related deaths in this region fell by 39% between 2005 and 2013, it accounts for 74% of deaths from this cause in 2013. Northern Africa, however, recorded a significant increase in the number of deaths from AIDS, 66%.

According to the data provided by this report, 81% of HIV carriers live in only 10 countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe; and half of them are Nigerians and South Africans. Gender disparities and certain social norms are conducive to the transmission of this disease. Girls and young women are the worst affected group. According to Doctor Pilar Estébanez, a specialist in combating AIDS, it is tragic that HIV transmission from mother to new-born is still taking place even though it is easy to prevent by treating the mother shortly before she gives birth.<sup>118</sup> According to the founder of Médicos del Mundo, although the solution is easy and cheap, nearly 250,000 children were born with HIV, transmitted by their mothers.

There are encouraging figures, but this progress should not lead authorities to lower their guard – as indicated by the fact that 22 million people do not receive medication for their illness, equivalent to half of Spain's population.

Malaria is a curable disease provided it is diagnosed in time. Although there have been cases in Central America and Southeast Asia, it is practically limited to sub-Saharan Africa. There is prophylactic treatment to prevent contagion and there are also experimental vaccines. Although the overall mortality rate in Africa has fallen by 49% and that of children by 54% since 2000,<sup>119</sup> this disease claims half a million lives every year, most of them children.

Without a doubt, the disease of 2014 and, no doubt, of 2015 is Ebola. This is not so much for its high morbidity and mortality – as thousands

<sup>116</sup> PELIGRI, Justin: 'CDC director on Ebola: "Only thing like this has been AIDS"', CNN, 10 October 2014. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/10/10/politics/cdc-director-frieden-ebola-aids/>>. Date accessed: October 2014.

<sup>117</sup> 'The Gap Report', UNAIDS, 2014.

<sup>118</sup> ESTÉBANEZ, Pilar: 'Acabar con el sida es posible', *Público*, 1 December 2014. <<http://www.publico.es/actualidad/559387/acabar-con-el-sida-es-posible>>. Date accessed: 4 December 2014.

<sup>119</sup> WHO data: <<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs094/en/>>.

of people die of malaria or AIDS every day – but because it has reached the West and because of the high number of infected people who die from it.

Although the Ebola virus was first detected in 1976, in two simultaneous outbreaks in a village in Sudan, Nzara, and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yambuku, near the river Ebola – after which it is named – it has been an international concern since the beginning of 2014. Therefore, in August the director general of the WHO declared this outbreak to be a 'public health emergency of international concern' (PHEIC). He furthermore recommended travel restrictions for people suspected of being ill and gave the go-ahead to the use of experimental medications.

This particularly virulent outbreak was detected in Guinea in March and has spread across several countries in the region, a phenomenon not previously witnessed. The spread of the disease was due to the flawed health systems of the most badly affected countries, lack of experience in treating the virus, funerary rituals and the high geographical mobility of the population living at the borders of the worst hit countries: Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. In the latter two countries, the disease spread rapidly as they are war ravaged with a population as malnourished as the public health systems.

It is a further example of how the challenges and threats of globalisation are interrelated. By December 2014 the virus had also found its way into Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, Spain and the United States, although there have been few cases.

The virus has sparked an urgent health crisis and a few migratory movements, and has had a devastating impact on the economies of the worst affected countries. The economic cost of the outbreak in 2014 and 2015 has been estimated by the World Bank as 32 billion dollars in the three worst hit countries – Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone – whose economies were growing before this outbreak.<sup>120</sup> The International Monetary Fund had estimated the growth of Sierra Leone at 14% for 2014, Liberia had been growing by 10% since 2005 and Guinea was praised for its economic and political reforms.<sup>121</sup>

Although there is no doubt about the importance of this outbreak, the Ebola virus is not the only one that has the world health authorities on the alert. 2014 also witnessed outbreaks of the Marburg virus in Uganda; of polio in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria; and of yellow fever

<sup>120</sup> KOTTASOVA, Ivana: 'World Bank: Cost of Ebola could top \$32 billion', CNN, 9 October 2014. <<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/09/24/business/ebola-cost-warning/>>. Date accessed: November 2014.

<sup>121</sup> KOTTASOVA, Ivana: 'World Bank: Cost of Ebola could top \$32 billion', *op. cit.*



in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While these outbreaks are not significant compared to the virulence of Ebola, we should not lose sight of them bearing in mind that, until this highly virulent outbreak, Ebola was a low-profile disease. The lesson learned from this crisis is that, in terms of international health security, the world is not prepared, as countries do not have an early warning capability. It is necessary to train specialists in all countries to implement the International Health Regulations adopted in 2005.

### *Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability by 2015*

As with the previous goal, climate change can influence the other goals, for example by increasing poverty or boosting the spread of diseases like malaria.<sup>122</sup> Climate change is furthermore directly linked to migratory movements and, in some cases, to armed conflicts.

In Africa, climate change is a threat to the economic growth and survival of populations that are already vulnerable. Food security and access to water and health will be particularly affected.<sup>123</sup> Considering the current interdependence between countries, the impact of climate change on resources or commodities in a place will influence prices, supply chains, trade and political relations in other regions. Climate change will thus increasingly influence economic growth and human security.

According to the 2014 MDG report, there are still major trends that are threatening environmental sustainability. Global carbon dioxide emissions continue their upward trend. This report shows that in 2011, they were nearly 50% higher than those recorded in 1990. Nevertheless, this report also tells us of successful global actions, such as the international measures adopted to eliminate substances that reduce the ozone layer and the increase in the percentage of protected land and coastal maritime areas in the world.

The agreement reached in November 2014 between the United States and China to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, although not without criticism<sup>124</sup> – 2030 may be too long to wait for China to curb greenhouse gas emissions – is an indispensable step in the right direction. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), no continent will suffer the effects of climate change as much as Africa, owing to its geographical location.

<sup>122</sup> TANSER, Frank C., SHARP, Brian, and LE SUEUR, David: 'Potential effect of climate change on malaria transmission in Africa', *The Lancet* no. 362, 2003, 1792–98.

<sup>123</sup> IPCC (2014). *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. Chapter 12, Human Security (p.2).

<sup>124</sup> WONG, Edward: 'China's Climate Change Plan Raises Questions', *The New York Times*, 12 November 2014.

### **Goal 8. Global partnership for development**

The target is to promote an open and predictable trade and financial system by 2015 that includes commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction. Other aims include basic needs of many African countries, such as combating youth unemployment or improved access to medication. These targets are far from being met.

The most significant progress has been made in politics. Although many leaders continue to cling to power using non-democratic means and coups d'état are impossible to eradicate completely, as Jesús Díez Alcalde states, 'on the horizon, and until 2015, more than 30 electoral processes will again put to the test political stability and democratic governance in Africa, which is the essential underpinning of the consolidation of African progress.'<sup>125</sup>

In its assessment of this goal the United Nations<sup>126</sup> values very highly the evolution of official development assistance, trade and debt – essential to achieving the rest of the MDGs – in Africa. Although many countries have not met the target for official development assistance (ODA) of 0.7% of GDP, in 2013 it amounted to 134.8 billion dollars, the highest contribution to date. The trading system has also improved for developing countries, with 80% of imports from developing countries to developed countries now free of tariffs. Finally, the burden of debt has continued to be low: approximately 3% of export revenues.

As the MDG indicators are designed to measure progress in combating poverty and deprivation without bearing in mind the point of departure, Africa seems to be progressing less than it actually is.<sup>127</sup> In this regard, the MDGs are unfair for this continent, as, although there is still a long way to go, the improvements are vague.

But overall, the standard of living has improved in Africa. African poverty rates have continued to fall, despite the adverse effects of the world crisis. Maternal and infant mortality rates have dropped by 47% and 44% respectively on the continent. These advances, which are no doubt positive, will be reflected in the growing demographic pressure in Africa, one of the main present and future challenges posed by the continent.

### **Interests and risks for Spain**

Spain's geostrategic position – as a member of the European Union that shares land and maritime borders with Africa, and with two Spanish cit-

<sup>125</sup> DÍEZ ALCALDE, Jesús: 'África: avances, desafíos y su alianza estratégica con la Unión Europea', *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>126</sup> 'Millennium Development Goals', United Nations Naciones Unidas, *op. cit.*

<sup>127</sup> EASTERLY, William: 'How the Millennium Development Goals Are Unfair to Africa', *World Development*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2009, pp. 26–35.

ies located on that continent – affords it a key role in fostering and reinforcing cooperation with this continent. Our country is the most evident bridge between Africa and the European Union, for better or for worse, as it is an area of transit for all kinds of immigration and for scourges such as illegal trade in drugs and human beings, and even for the jihadist threat.<sup>128</sup> These phenomena are global and Spain, owing to its position and exposure, is aware of its leading role.

Spain's National Security Strategy<sup>129</sup> states especially that 'three areas will be vital to Spanish interests in the coming decades: the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea'. In these regions, wealth and opportunities are combined with threats such as illegal trafficking, ethnic conflicts, terrorism, weak states, underdevelopment and ideological extremism.

Especially close to Spain is the Sahel, where the frailty of the states is conducive to the establishment of jihadist terrorist groups, the proliferation of criminal networks and the spread of interethnic conflicts. Strengthening these countries' security will amount to strengthening the security of Spain and, by extension, that of Europe, and the European Union should therefore pay special attention – much more than it has to date – to these borders. Otherwise, the peace and stability of the region in its broad sense – that is, on both sides of the Mediterranean – will be threatened by drug and people trafficking, by terrorism, and by the weakness of states such as Mali, Niger and Mauritania.

It is therefore essential to give priority to the area between the Maghreb and the Sahel, and between the Gulf of Guinea and Horn of Africa, as the target of diplomatic, economic and military action. For this purpose, it is necessary to enlist the help and partnership of neighbouring countries such as Algeria (51% of our gas comes from this country), Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Mali. As well as the cooperation of the European partners, the commitment of regional security organisations is important, such as the African Union and Economic Communities of West and Central African States.

Therefore, as the Spanish defence minister Pedro Morenés stated, 'it is necessary to build a common security space with our closest neighbours in the Spanish area of direct interest that allows security and stability to be projected onto the arc that stretches from the Horn of Africa to the Gulf of Guinea, across the Sahel.'<sup>130</sup>

We should bear in mind that the role of the Gulf of Guinea states in Spanish trade, although small, has increased significantly thanks to their

<sup>128</sup> DÍEZ ALCALDE, Jesús: 'Cooperación Unión Europea-África Occidental: garantizar la seguridad compartida', documento de análisis del IEEE 43/2013, p. 15.

<sup>129</sup> *National Security Strategy...*, *op. cit.*, Gobierno de España.

<sup>130</sup> MORENÉS, Pedro: 'España, frontera europea con el Magreb y el Sahel', *Política Exterior*, September 2013.

abundant natural resources, particularly energy.<sup>131</sup> The deterioration in the area's security situation, especially governance, could curb this trend and affect the security of supplies to Spain.

In July 2014<sup>132</sup> Morenés announced to Congress that advice and military training programmes would be prepared for the Gulf of Guinea countries interested, like those of the European Union in Mali. The idea is to go from strategy to 'concrete actions' and to react to growing insecurity. It is possible and desirable for these programmes to bear fruit in 2015.

Apart from initiatives to strengthen common security, it is essential to improve information and analyses on Africa to gain a better understanding of national and shared priorities. In accordance with the report of the Real Instituto Elcano 'España mirando al Sur: del Mediterráneo al Sahel', published at the end of 2014, we wish to point out the urgent need for greater and better knowledge of the situation of the neighbouring continent. It is true that features or factors are known, such as those pointed out in this chapter – the connection between terrorism and organised crime, for example – but others of particular importance, such as radicalisation, a phenomenon also being witnessed in our country, are largely unfamiliar to us.<sup>133</sup> And without proper knowledge, it will not be possible to carry out a risk analysis based as closely as possible on reality to avoid being caught out again.

From both an economic and geopolitical perspective, Spain's southern boundary is a border par excellence. Therefore, it is also a European Union border. Here lie the most marked development differences in the world. Nothing that happens in northern and western Africa in security terms can be alien to Spain<sup>134</sup> and the EU.

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<sup>131</sup> ESCRIBANO, Gonzalo and ARTEAGA, Félix: 'Seguridad y recursos en el Golfo de Guinea: algunas implicaciones para España', *ARI* 28/2013, 16 July 2013.

<sup>132</sup> MORENÉS, Pedro: 'Comparecencia del ministro de Defensa ante la Comisión de Defensa del Congreso de los Diputados, para informar sobre la política de defensa con respecto al sur del Mediterráneo, el Sahel, la República Centroafricana y las operaciones de mantenimiento e imposición de la paz que allí se desarrollan', 9 July 2014.

<sup>133</sup> ARTEAGA, Félix (coord.): 'España mirando al Sur: del Mediterráneo al Sahel', informe Elcano 18, November 2014, p. 171.

<sup>134</sup> ECHEVERRÍA, Carlos: 'España, frontera Europea con el Magreb y el Sahel', *Política Exterior*, September 2013, p. 74.





## The United States, in pursuit of a new security strategy

Ignacio Rupérez

### Chapter four

#### Abstract

2014 has been a difficult year for the Obama Administration. First, the midterm elections held in November resulted in a Republican Senate, after the Republicans had already assumed control of the House of Representatives in a previous election. This implies that President Obama will have to face increasing challenges at both foreign and domestic levels in terms of new initiatives and legislation. Against this backdrop, the role of the US in the world and its prominence in the international liberal order is again being called into question, as are the scope, organisational make-up and powers of the Federal State. With only two years left of his presidential term, President Obama is being criticised for failing to fulfil all of his electoral promises. While President Obama is better valued abroad than at home, he is nevertheless acclaimed for his efforts to reform the health sector, solve the problem of illegal migration and achieve economic recovery, as well as for his capacity to operate in a world that is far more complex than his peace-building, consensus-building and negotiation policies and initiatives. His Administration in particular and the Democrats in general are having to contend with increasing political polarization at the domestic level and the spectres of unfinished and announced wars internationally, amid growing competitiveness from Chi-

na, Russia and other nations. All these tensions coincided and intensified when President Obama announced his intention to normalise relations with Cuba. Regarding Spain, increased bilateral relations of all types and the positive image enjoyed by President Obama once again sharply contrast with the discreet level of political relations, visits, summits and dialogue, among others, between the two capitals.

**Keywords**

Obama, Middle East, Iran, ISIS, Midterm.



## Introduction

It appears to be widely held that the United States is witnessing an evident decline in its status of sole world superpower and leader of the global order it played a decisive role in building after the Second World War; and also in its exemplarity as a country and as a model of democracy, economic might, military efficiency and cultural drive. Since 2008, Obama's two presidential terms have given rise to two increasingly polarised assessments of the country and its president, from various critical stances both within and outside the United States. These assessments are even more marked during election periods. Their accuracy, motivations and observations deserve to be described and examined.

Albeit with manifestations of its own, the United States has not been spared the pessimism and anxiety that all the western countries are experiencing in politics, culture and the economy, though surveys point to a change of trend between January and December 2014.

Since 2011, two out of every three Americans polled had been responding that their country was on the wrong track<sup>1</sup> and the results of the November elections confirmed this pessimism. However, by the end of 2014 this figure had almost fallen to five out of ten, and for the first time in a long while the majority acknowledged that the past year had been one of the best they remembered.<sup>2</sup> This appears to indicate that the economic factor does not wholly account for the Democrats' setback.

GDP had grown by 5% in the last quarter of the year, inflation stood at 1.6%, the budget deficit was under 3% despite the huge debt and unemployment was less than 6%. These figures are enviable compared to those of Japan, Germany or any other OECD major power. Indeed, President Barack Obama was justified in proclaiming that 'the United States has produced more jobs in its recovery than the rest of the industrialised world put together'.<sup>3</sup>

## The elections

Despite the recovery, in the November elections – which the Republicans managed to present as a referendum on Obama's foreign and domestic

<sup>1</sup> Rasmussen Reports, 19 November 2014. <[http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/archive/mood\\_of\\_america\\_archive/right\\_direction\\_or\\_wrong\\_track/november\\_2014/27\\_say\\_u\\_s\\_heading\\_in\\_right\\_direction3](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/archive/mood_of_america_archive/right_direction_or_wrong_track/november_2014/27_say_u_s_heading_in_right_direction3)>.

<sup>2</sup> Rasmussen Reports: 'Americans share a brighter view', 2 January 2015. <[http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public\\_content/lifestyle/general\\_lifestyle/december\\_2014/americans\\_share\\_a\\_brighter\\_view\\_of\\_the\\_year\\_ahead](http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/lifestyle/general_lifestyle/december_2014/americans_share_a_brighter_view_of_the_year_ahead)>.

<sup>3</sup> ZAKARIA, Fareed: 'America's prospects...', *The Washington Post*, 20 November 2014. <[http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/fareed-zakaria-america-prospects-are-promising-indeed/2014/11/20/eb91209a-70f3-11e4-ad12-3734c461eab6\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/fareed-zakaria-america-prospects-are-promising-indeed/2014/11/20/eb91209a-70f3-11e4-ad12-3734c461eab6_story.html)>.

policy – voters harshly punished the Democrats, even more than the polls had predicted.

The result pointed to a society that is increasingly critical of his Administration and of the tactics of the two major parties, which are becoming more and more dependent on a minority (around 1% of the population) that funds the campaigns: some 4 billion dollars in 2014.

Following the midterm elections, the Republicans now control 69 of the 99 state legislative chambers and govern in 31 states, compared to the Democrats' 18, and have the largest majority in the House (246 congressmen) since Harry Truman's Administration. The poor turnout among young people and the minorities influenced the Republicans' victory, but, as *Política Exterior* pointed out, 'if the Republicans want to win in 2016, they are going to have to prove they can govern constructively and not just against the White House, with which they now share responsibility'.<sup>4</sup>

Far from being daunted, Obama again took the initiative by dismissing Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, issuing an executive order to prevent five million undocumented immigrants from being deported, signing the most important environmental agreement with China to date and, on 17 December, announcing in coordination with Havana the decision to normalise diplomatic relations with Cuba after more than half a century of hostilities that have helped consolidate the Castro regime more than weaken it.<sup>5</sup> These are clear signs that Obama is willing – even if by systematically resorting to vetoing proposals from the Capitol – to salvage his historical legacy during the final stage of his term.

The first vetoes at the beginning of January were for a Republican project to impose new sanctions on Iran and the new Congress's agreement to construct the controversial Keystone XL oil pipeline to carry tar sands oil from the oil sands of Canada to the Gulf Coast.

Coupled with this is a situation deeply marked by the economic crisis – the so-called Great Recession that began in 2008 – which has been overcome in macroeconomic terms but not in the everyday lives of many citizens (most of the middle class), whose purchasing power had continued to wane. The improvements in macroeconomic statistics had not found their way into the private accounts of a population that was still vulnerable and insecure.<sup>6</sup> We are talking about a population and a country sensitive to and concerned by growing inequalities, with a global fear of

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<sup>4</sup> 'El ocaso de la era Obama. Oleada republicana en Estados Unidos', weekly report in *Política Exterior* no. 914, 17 November 2014.

<sup>5</sup> 'Estados Unidos. Obama dobla sus apuestas', weekly report in *Política Exterior* no. 916, 1 December 2014.

<sup>6</sup> STIGLITZ, Joseph: 'La era de la vulnerabilidad', and KRUGMAN, Paul: 'Los plutócratas contra la democracia', *El País*, 26 October 2014.

Ebola and jihadism and, as in other countries, increasingly frustrated by inefficiency, the abuse of power and cases of corruption.

All these feelings were unleashed in the public reaction to the death of a young black man who was shot six times by a white policeman who mistook him for a thief in Ferguson, Missouri, and were further heightened when the local authorities responded by sending a force, complete with tanks, that befitted a theatre of warfare more than a peaceful US town with 21,000 inhabitants. Obama had to intervene on 18 August, stating that 'there is a big difference between our military and our local law enforcement, and we don't want those lines blurred', and on 20 August his Attorney General and Justice Secretary Eric Holder travelled to the town to try and stem the rioting. A similar situation occurred on 20 November in Brooklyn, New York, with similar demonstrations. All the media recalled that more than 400 people are shot to death by the police every year, most of them young blacks.<sup>7</sup>

Prominent intellectuals such as Francis Fukuyama regarded this unrest as the symptom of a more serious ill – political decay, as described by Samuel Huntington<sup>8</sup> – that will be difficult to stem without a 'major shock to the political order'. In *The Unwinding: Thirty Years of American Decline*, George Packer, winner of the 2014 National Book Award, provides a vast array of examples of the decay Fukuyama describes in places ranging from New York to Texas.

But it is quite another matter to claim that the only superpower of the 1990s is in decline – as Walter Russell Mead concluded in 2014<sup>9</sup> – and that its neoliberal system is falling apart.

As long as the majority of Americans remain willing to defend their strategic interests and hegemonic position in the world, such negative predictions are unlikely to come true. Indeed, such forecasts have been repeated cyclically since the 1960s and so far have always proved wrong.

'The United States has not suffered anything like the economic pain much of Europe has gone through, but with the country facing the foreign-policy hangover of the Bush-era wars, an increasingly intrusive surveillance state, a slow economic recovery and an unpopular health-care law, the public mood has soured', writes Russell Mead. 'On both the left and the right, Americans are questioning the benefits of the current world order and the competence of its architects. Additionally, the public share the

<sup>7</sup> 'We don't belong here', *The Economist*, 28 November 2014, p. 39.

<sup>8</sup> FUKUYAMA, Francis: 'America in Decay', *Foreign Affairs*, September–October 2014, p. 5–26. HUNTINGTON, Samuel: *Political Order in Changing Societies*.

<sup>9</sup> RUSSELL MEAD, Walter: 'The Return of Geopolitics', *Foreign Affairs*, May–June 2014. <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141211/walter-russell-mead/the-return-of-geopolitics>>.

elite consensus that in a post-Cold War world, the United States ought to be able to pay less into the system and get more out. When that doesn't happen, people blame their leaders.<sup>10</sup>

In the opinion of G. John Ikenberry, a professor at Princeton, Russell's pessimism and alarmism is not justified. He does not believe that China, Russia and Iran, among other adversaries, are in a position to destroy the international post-Cold War order. 'It is a misreading of China and Russia, which are not full-scale revisionist powers but part-time spoilers at best, as suspicious of each other as they are of the outside world', he writes.<sup>11</sup>

### A domestic assessment of 2014

In an article published in *The New York Times* on 30 December, Steven Rattner summed up the key points explained above in a series of graphs that help understand the United States' main advances and setbacks under the Obama Administration. They clearly show the best (growth, employment and plunging oil prices), the worst (unequal distribution of wealth, stagnating wages and political polarisation) and the middling to bad: implementation of the healthcare reform.<sup>12</sup>

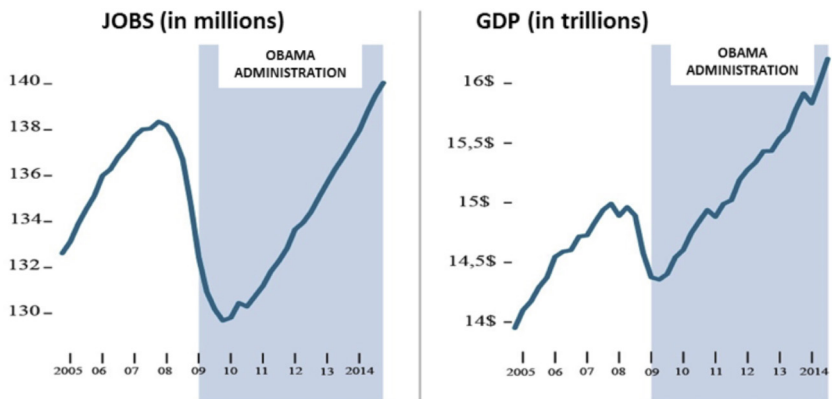


Figure 1: The economy picks up speed. Own adaptation. Source: Steven Rattner

Even the most pessimistic had to admit at the end of 2014 that the economic uncertainty that began in 2008 – and for several year was regarded by US leaders as the main threat to the country's security – had been overcome with the creation of 241,000 jobs monthly.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> IKENBERRY, G. John: 'The illusion of geopolitics', *Foreign Affairs*, May–June 2014, pp. 80–90.

<sup>12</sup> RATTNER, Steven: 'The Year in Charts', *The New York Times*, 30 December 2014. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/31/opinion/the-year-in-charts.html>>.

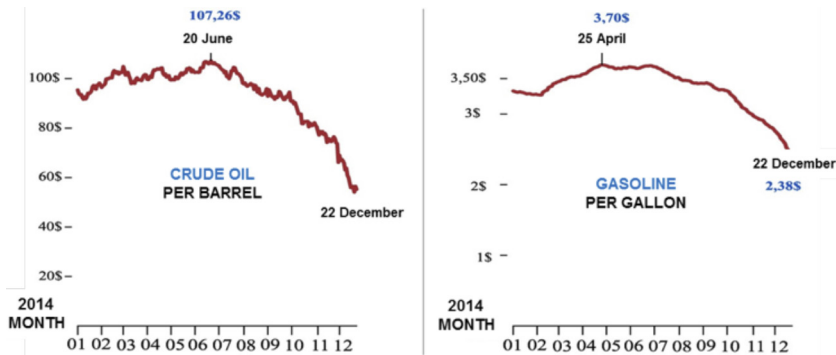


Figure 2: Plunging oil prices. Own adaptation. Source: Steven Rattner

Plunging oil prices in autumn confirmed a forecast that Obama had spoken of in various addresses. Standing at 107 dollars in June, by 22 December oil was down to 55 dollars per barrel and had already slid below the 50-dollar mark at the time this book went to press. For a country that still imports approximately 26% of the oil it consumes, this marked a major saving and added impetus to growth.

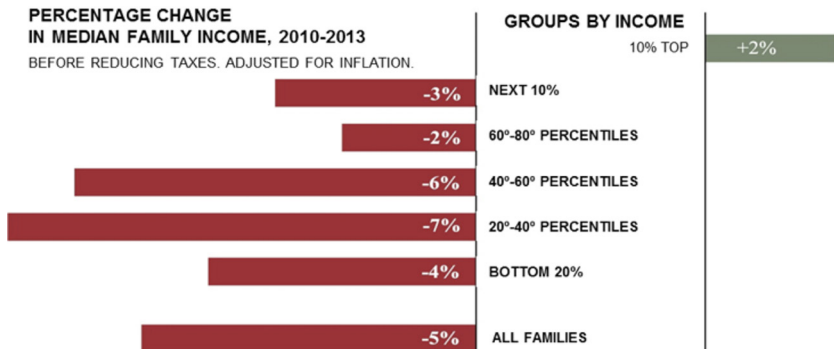


Figure 3: Inequality gets even worse. Own adaptation. Source: Steven Rattner

With salaries frozen, inequality continued to grow. Federal Reserve figures indicate that only the wages of the 10% most highly paid Americans rose between 2010 and 2013.

The November figures showed that the average hourly wage had risen by barely 0.8%, adjusted for inflation, with respect to the previous year. Average wages per family stood at 53,500 dollars, slightly better than in 2012, but still well below 2008 levels.

A new survey by Pew Research showed that polarisation continued to increase: 94% of Democrats were to the left of the average Republican, 24% more than in 1994. And 92% of Republicans were to the right of the average Democrat, 28% more than twenty years previously.



al of thousands of minors from Central America; and external problems, with a Middle East at boiling point.'

*November–December 2014:* 'Collaborators like Gates, Panetta and Hillary Clinton accuse the president of lacking decision in Iraq and Syria. The handling of foreign policy comes on top of the existing rift in US politics.'

### An external assessment

The main US think-tanks' assessments of Obama's performance in foreign affairs in 2014 largely agreed with these headlines and almost unanimously conveyed the image of a weak, passive and ineffective president vis-à-vis threats such as the renamed ISIS or Daesh in Syria and Iraq, the provocations of China and the blatant aggression of Putin's Russia in Ukraine.

'Much of the blame has been laid at the United States' door, but there is much more behind what's happening than the US government's tactical mistakes or its unwillingness to commit ground troops to new fronts of combat', pointed out the president of the Carnegie Endowment in her summary of the year.<sup>13</sup>

'In the Cold War, America's role in the world was self-evident – to lead the fight against the Soviet Union and communism worldwide', she added. 'Individual decisions weren't obvious, and there were often agonizing tensions between that overriding goal and American values. But Americans largely shared a commitment to what they understood to be their country's necessary purpose abroad.'

With the collapse of the USSR, this clarity disappeared and since then Americans have been confused, not knowing whether they should maximise their power or spread their democratic culture, whether they should continue to be the world's policeman even when not directly threatened, or whether they should stay at home and concentrate on dealing with their own shortcomings.

President Obama has undoubtedly enjoyed a better reputation in Europe than in his own country, despite having inherited a serious economic crisis and two long, costly wars. Difficulties in putting an end to the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, respecting dates and withdrawal plans under the new circumstances partly explain the deterioration in his image in surveys.

After observing for months how the inaptly termed Islamic State took control of Mosul and many other minor cities of Iraq, on 8 August Oba-

<sup>13</sup> TUCHMAN MATHEWS, Jessica: '2015, a world confused', Carnegie Endowment. <<http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/12/10/2015-world-confused#.VlqKdw3q0bg.twitter>>.

ma ordered air strikes to halt their advance. Forty-five days later, on 23 September, after refusing to intervene directly in the Syrian war for more than three years, he extended the strikes to Syria.

The debate had been approached in terms of regime change vs. nation building, obeisance to international law vs. exceptionalism, unilateralism vs. multilateralism, and interests vs. values. Behind all this was the search for a new national security strategy that would clarify when, how and where to commit money, lives and political capital. As of the beginning of 2015, a suitable strategy had yet to be agreed on to replace the containment of the Cold War period.

It has been said in this respect that the president was not capable of putting an end to wars – only of withdrawing soldiers from conflicts still underway.<sup>14</sup> He endured stigma, characterisation and caricature for unfulfilled promises and apparent paradoxes: a president who regarded modernising the country, reforming institutions and infrastructure as his main task, but was using military force in six countries – Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia – all of them Muslim, with no easy way out in any of them.<sup>15</sup>

However much we criticise the United States, which genuinely has interests everywhere – often not very well handled – it is only logical that, as the leading superpower, nothing of what it does or does not do escapes universal scrutiny, as occurred with the British Empire and Imperial Spain in their own day.<sup>16</sup>

However, it is not easy to doubt its huge political, cultural, economic and military clout, just as nor can we be sure of its rapid recovery. But its human potential, constantly enhanced by repeated migratory flows, and its huge technological creativity ultimately shown in the field of energy

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<sup>14</sup> On this controversy, the following authors and articles in the November–December 2014 edition of *Foreign Affairs* are recommended 2014: BOOT, Max: 'More Small Wars. Counterinsurgency Here to Stay'; BETTS, Richard K: 'Pick Your Battles. Ending America's Era of Permanent War'; BRENNAN, Rick: 'Withdrawal Symptoms. The Bungling of the Iraq Exit'; TOMSEN, Peter: 'The Good War? What Went Wrong in Afghanistan - and How to Make It Right', and ROSE, Gideon and TEPPERMAN, Jonathan: 'A Hard Education: Learning From Afghanistan and Iraq';

<sup>15</sup> See GARCÍA ENCINA, Carlota: 'Un balance de la política exterior y de seguridad de Barack Obama', Real Instituto Elcano, October 2012; TOVAR, Juan: 'La política exterior de los Estados Unidos y la expansión de la democracia', *Tirant lo Blanc*, 2014; 'La crisis de la política exterior de Obama', *Política Exterior*, November–December 2014; BENE-DICTO, Miguel Ángel and BARBERÁ, Rafael: *Estados Unidos 3.0. La era Obama vista desde España*, Plaza y Valdés, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Pérez (*La leyenda negra*, Gadir, 2002) and John H. Elliot (*Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830*, Yale University Press, 2007; *Spain, Europe and the Wider World 1500-1800*, Yale University Press, 2009), among other authors, have compared the unpopularity of Imperial Spain and the United States, which is inevitable for imperial superpowers that are a universal reference.



production, will guarantee it years of pre-eminence despite the growing multipolarity, disparity of interests and perceptibly increasing strategic rivalry.

Anti-Americanism and pessimism about the continuity of the US-promoted liberal order in international relations have been recurring trends, especially since 1989, following the disappearance of the Soviet Union. They are cycles that correspond to the expansive and contractive phases in American power in the world and tend to flare above all in election periods.

Anti-Americanism and pessimism, expansion and contraction are therefore related. They are phenomena that occur in succession, overlap and coincide in a superpower which, despite not having ceased to intervene in external affairs since the Second World War, is more concerned than ever about its domestic problems: the quality of its life and its politics, that of future generations, the poor state of public infrastructure and disproportionate expansion of the state machinery. The latter point worries US citizens as much as involvement in or abstention from others' crises.

Everything is intensified by the growing appeal of rival powers, especially Russia and China, and by a certain rise in the models of the so-called 'illiberal democracies'. These are authoritarian democracies which, in certain sectors of both the left and the right throughout the whole of the West, are presented as models for countries that lack the necessary maturity and an appropriate social structure for liberal democracy.

It is thought that, in such circles, this model of authoritarian democracy and state capitalism could compete with the western model of democracy. Today its appeal seems doubtful and a Chinese-, Russian-, Castro- or Chávez-style democracy does not bear comparison with the western models and the international liberal order of which they are part.

Be that as it may, Joseph S. Nye<sup>17</sup> stresses that 82% of Americans continue to regard their country as the best place in the world to live in and, despite everything, 90% approve of their democratic system of government.

Nye and other authors<sup>18</sup> have harshly criticised the inefficiency of government action, the disorder in planning and implementing decisions, the decreased functionality of the system, as it has been taken over by professional politicians of the two main parties who alternate in government, and the progressive distancing from citizens and their problems.

<sup>17</sup> NYE, Joseph S. Jr.: 'Estados Unidos no es el Imperio Romano', *El País*, 10 October 2014.

<sup>18</sup> HAASS, Richard N.: *Foreign Policy Begins at Home: The Case for Putting America's House in Order*, Basic Books, 2013. FUKUYAMA, Francis: *Political Order and Political Decay. From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalisation of Democracy*, Profile Books, 2014.

The same criticisms are heard and read in the European Union, where they are levelled against the respective capitals, but also against Brussels, with the illusion of political regeneration and denunciation that democracy is a sham owing to an expansive oligopoly of politico-financial power.

Paradoxically, it is acknowledged that the government of the United States was designed precisely not to be efficient – that is, to prevent it from becoming a threat to citizens and their freedoms. With good intentions, and sparking a debate on the presence and size of the state system, it thus so happens that this inefficiency seems to have contributed in the long run to people's lack of confidence in public institutions. This lack of confidence affects not only the government and administration, but also universities, enterprises, the media, the judiciary and many other areas.

Indeed, thanks to America's decentralised federal system, the state and local administrations are more highly regarded than the federal government and Washington, making it a new Babylon.

But the deficits the Obama Administration is said to have accumulated since 2008, against a backdrop of deep social concern over the economic crisis, the poverty to come and the decay, have led to a heightening of this criticism, both in extension and, sometimes, its irrationality and lack of plausible reasons. Political polarisation within and outside Congress, the visible strengthening and radicalisation of populist tension and the particular aversion some have to President Obama appear to have helped intensify an aggressive malaise.<sup>19</sup>

A few years ago Francis Fukuyama, like Samuel Huntington before him, aroused almost as much interest in his predictions and ideas, whether or not mistaken, as in the valuable controversies they triggered. In his latest book, Fukuyama<sup>20</sup> likewise considers that the United States' political institutions, which enabled the country to become a thriving democracy with notable success, are now in a process of decline, chiefly because the division of powers established in the Constitution fostered a progressive political paralysis by making it difficult for the three powers to collaborate with each other.

He argues that the quality of parties' action and the government's efficiency have therefore been progressively falling and parties have become polarised in their ideologies, while powerful corporate interests have the power to veto political measures which are not to their liking or which they consider possibly damaging.

<sup>19</sup> RUPÉREZ, Ignacio: 'Cuenta atrás del presidente Obama', *Sistema Digital*, 20 November 2014.

<sup>20</sup> FUKUYAMA, Francis: 'America in Decay. The Sources of Political Dysfunction', *Foreign Affairs*, September–October 2014.

The political system has thus degenerated into a 'vetocracy', with scant interest and very little ability to address the problems that are currently most significant in politics and in citizens' daily lives.

### Without Reagan and without Clinton

With pronounced irony, more than one analyst recommends that the Republicans acknowledge for once and for all that Ronald Reagan and his era are a thing of the past and that the country is home to eleven million illegal immigrants, has become an energy exporter, now has a widespread social security system and needs to address firmly the problems of climate change and of improving the quality of roads, bridges and other infrastructure. These are problems of paramount importance that will undoubtedly be given priority attention in 2016, both in the parties' primary elections and in the presidential elections.

In his addresses on the state of the Union and to the United Nations General Assembly, Obama underlined his country's superiority in the world, despite all the criticisms and doubts.

Speaking at West Point on 28 May 2014, he listed the basic principles of security and foreign policy as an approach to a national security strategy for a new world.

He stated that today the United States has no military peer and reiterated his decision to put an end to long, costly military operations. He defended the permanence of the liberal order in international relations, a system established by the allies after the Second World War and to whose shaping the United States made a decisive contribution with initiatives, efforts and leadership. He nevertheless acknowledged that the current world situation is marked by tension between war and peace, disorder and integration, and hope and fear, and that the uncertainty of unexpected and new situations may cause disorientation and trigger mistaken decisions.

Despite this confusion, the undeniable progress from which much of mankind benefits and the deep interrelations created by the global order between nations, systems and people make it difficult and inadvisable for any nation to be isolated.

He reaffirmed his country's intention to address these and other global threats through collective action with the country's allies, from whom he again demanded more active support.

Obama therefore has never eschewed his country's commitments, but is calling on the allies to help meet them because they are in fact everyone's commitments. He does not rule out the possibility of military intervention, but will only employ it when diplomacy has failed. He defends the withdrawal of his troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, but does not rule out the

presence of US soldiers in other theatres in operations against al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups.

Obama thus supports the use of force when he considers it necessary to protect his own people, but rules out sending troops unless in exceptional circumstances. The country will no longer involve itself in unending wars. This means, according to President Obama, that America will fight in the wars it chooses, not in those terrorists prefer – in other words, major movements of troops that are increasingly difficult to sustain and ultimately trigger extremist attitudes among the local populations.

According to Obama, the world turns to the United States not so much for the country's economic and military might but for the ideals it upholds and the burdens it is prepared to bear for the sake of realising and furthering ideals. Resorting to arms would be a lesser evil, a last resort or a need as pressing as it is shameful. He rejects the so-called *clash of civilisations* and also the prospect of an ongoing war of religion which is in fact a haven for extremists incapable of constructing and creating – apostles of hatred and fanaticism. On the contrary, the president views the future of mankind as dependent on the unity it achieves vis-à-vis those that divide it, mistakenly separating it by tribe, sect, race or religion.<sup>21</sup>

How do these principles fit in with the forced return, with the air force and thousands of ground troops, initially for advice, training and support for the Iraqi army, the Kurdish peshmerga and moderate Syrian rebels?

We appear to be witnessing the beginnings of an undesired but necessary military surge, once again in coalition. According to Obama, Daesh only understands the language of force, and the United States decided to intervene for that reason.<sup>22</sup>

Twenty-seven countries attended the conference called by the White House in Paris on 27 September to coordinate the response to Daesh. The essential element of this response, in Washington's view, was to regain the lost support of the Sunni against the jihadists, especially in Iraq, following the replacement of the Iraqi prime minister, Nuri al-Maliki, and the signing of a security and defence agreement with the new Baghdad government headed by Haider al-Abdi who, like Maliki, hails from Dawa, the clandestine Shia movement that played a prominent role in combating Saddam's dictatorship.

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<sup>21</sup> STEWART M., Patrick: in 'The Internationalist', Council of Foreign Relations; 'President Obama's UN Speech; Defending World Order', 24 September 2014: 'A World of Troubles, Obama at the United Nations'.

<sup>22</sup> RUPÉREZ, Ignacio: 'Estado Islámico, Califato Universal', *Sistema Digital* (24 July 2014) and *Es Global* (25 July 2014); and 'Paradoja, caos y revolución', *El Siglo*, 23 July 2014, no. 1069.

Iraq had been divided into three areas – Kurdistan, the Sunni territory of Daesh and the provinces with a Shia majority to the south of Baghdad – and not even Iraq's Kurdish president, Fuad Masum, ruled out the possibility that this or a similar breakup could become permanent, with a four-province Sunnistan between the Iraqi Kurdistan and the rest of the country.

### The risks of a half-hearted war

Based on the lessons learned in Afghanistan and Iraq, President Obama has clearly opted for a limited war: aviation, few or no regular troops, special forces, assistance to local combatants and pooling efforts with allies, among other features.

The problem of this action lies not only in the deliberate limiting of troops in a war that cannot be won without forces on the ground, but also in the reluctance to pay the necessary price in terms of politics and image. Daesh may be everyone's enemy, but not with the same intensity.

Pending a wrestling match with the new Republican majority in 2015, Obama has likewise opted for diplomacy over the Iranian nuclear issue. Success with Iran would have positive effects on peace in the Middle East, the regional balance and the president's own prestige. In view of the common threat posed by Daesh in Iraq and Syria and by the Taliban in Afghanistan, Washington and Tehran have found themselves forced if not to coordinate directly at least to collaborate on defending their interests, which are increasingly convergent.

The effort to stem the proliferation of nuclear power in Iran and of chemical weapons in Syria has likewise brought the United States and Russia closer together, but this cooperation is unlikely to be maintained unless a new balance or *modus vivendi* is achieved between Russia and the West in Ukraine.

In the White House's opinion, bridging the 35-year gap with Iran would help ease the growing rivalry between Sunni and Shia in the Middle East, and between the main regional powers that are vying to fill the gaps created first by the end of the Cold War and later by the Arab uprisings. An Iran that no longer feels isolated and cornered would have fewer incentives for possessing nuclear weapons.

Twenty-five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 forced Europe and the United States to review their relations with Russia and the future of NATO, the alliance that has been pivotal to North Atlantic security for more than half a century.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> KISSINGER, Henry: 'World Order', *Penguin Press 2014*, pp. 1–10 and 361–74; IGNATIEFF, Michael: 'The New World Disorder', *The New York Review of Books*, 5 September 2014.

For the time being at least, it seems premature to maintain that Europe and the Middle East have ceased to be priorities in the United States' global strategy.

Addressing the UN General Assembly in September 2014, Obama stated that his country's policy in the Middle East and North Africa for the two years that remained of his term would consist in using the means at his disposal, including military force, to secure the United States' interests in the region.

He undertook to respond to aggressions against partners and allies, as in the Gulf War (1990–91), to guarantee the free flow of energy supplies to the region – even though the United States is becoming less dependent on external energy – and to dismantle terrorist networks in the area.

As far as possible, he added, the United States will strengthen allies' capability to combat the terrorist threat, always respecting the sovereignty of nations and endeavouring to act not only against manifestations of terrorism but also against its deep-rooted causes. Finally, in reference to the regimes of Bashar al-Assad and Iran, he reiterated that the United States will not tolerate the use of weapons of mass destruction or the development of nuclear weapons in the region.

Obama's references to possible US military actions, expressed with a certain amount of circumspection, are nearly always followed by allusions to the necessary effort the allies must make to complete and share such actions.

In Obama's view, the main danger to the world is not of his country intervening too much in third countries but of doing nothing, thereby creating leadership vacuums that no other country is capable of filling.<sup>24</sup>

The new coalition against Daesh is the third to be promoted and led by the United States since that of 1990–91 against Iraq after it invaded Kuwait and that of 2003, also against Iraq, to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. Both coalitions were flawed as to the action of partners, misgivings, weakness, withdrawal, evident incompatibility between countries, and limited achievement of the aims years after the invasion and occupation operations which, as was to be expected, were an undeniable military success.<sup>25</sup>

This time the enemy might be common, but only some of the allies would be willing to fight in Syria. Not all the allies wish for the total defeat or destruction of Islamic State, as its place could be filled by an even worse faction: the Kurdish peshmerga, as Turkey and Iran fear; Jabhat al-Nusra

<sup>24</sup> ECHEVERRÍA, Carlos: *Relaciones internacionales III. Paz, Seguridad y Defensa en la sociedad internacional*, UNED, 2011, pp. 17–34.

<sup>25</sup> Articles by this author in *Sistema Digital*: 'Juntos pero no revueltos contra el yihadismo', 16 October 2014, and 'Una coalición improbable', 18 September 2014.

or Khorasan jihadists, as the United States fears; or the army of Bashar al-Assad, as all the allies fear, for example. While the western allies are wondering how to tackle Islamic State, the Sunni regional allies are calculating how far they can go, because it is they who should manage the situation in Mesopotamia after the war ends, when westerners of the Coalition have gone home.

It seems necessary to recall the mobility and volatility of alliances in the Middle East, which are extremely common. As the jihadist danger increases, we are tending to regard the Syrian dictator less negatively – as the lesser of the ills compared to the others. It is precisely here that the most marked differences may arise to the detriment of the Coalition's political and military unity. Bashar al-Assad or Islamic State? Should they both be destroyed? If so, which would be the first target?

For the time being – at least with respect to the United States' strategy – it is not known in what state Syria and Iraq would be left after the weakening or destruction of Daesh.

Without ground support, air strikes alone will not succeed in ousting the jihadists from their positions. They might abandon them to avoid being bombed, only to return after the strikes to resume their fight. The Iraqis and Kurds, for example, can succeed in combating them in a more lasting and effective way, provided they are sufficiently well equipped and trained. When Islamic State is defeated, someone will have to occupy and re-shape the vast space of Syria and Iraq, rebuild the Sunni's morale, cities and homes, and those of the minorities who have endured war, exile and suffering due to jihadist repression. The region will probably need a new configuration and balance that may differ substantially from the previous one.

'What would America fight for?' asked *The Economist* on the cover of its 3 May 2014 issue. 'America is no longer as alarming to its foes or reassuring to its friends', added the subtitle of a long feature.<sup>26</sup> In Mesopotamia and Ukraine, Obama's United States has replied to this question in the past year, but it has failed to convince many.

The return to geopolitics, the invention of geo-economics, the presence of the so-called *revisionist states* like Russia, China and even Iran, the deep criticism and no less pronounced hostility that the West is witnessing towards the state of democracy, the system of governance and the economic situation, or the dangerous combination of nationalism, authoritarianism and irredentism that is appearing in large countries eager to further their positions, among other factors, appear to be components of a widespread malaise in which everything is bundled together. In short, Ukraine would appear to call into question the relative decoupling from Europe

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<sup>26</sup> 'The decline of deterrence', *The Economist*, 3 May 2014, p. 37.

announced by the United States; and Mesopotamia would also hamper its wish to replace the Middle East with Asia Pacific, also relatively.

Famous treatise writers such as Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski are sure of the United States' leading role in contributing to the stability of the Middle East and Asia Pacific, though this was before the crisis and the current variables of Ukraine and Mesopotamia.

They liken French–German reconciliation to Chinese–Japanese reconciliation as similar phenomena that would generate an overall pacification synergy, and predict an equally positive result for the rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Both internationalists agree that it would be difficult for a superpower from outside the respective region to impose order in it and that exclusively military solutions are unfeasible.

In the Georgian war of 2008 and Ukrainian war of 2014, observers such as Robert Kaplan<sup>27</sup> saw a return to a type of international relations that many believed to have been superseded, characterised by territorial domination, the military factor and spheres of influence, to the detriment of major cross-cutting issues of governance and standard of living.

Following the German reunification and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the international post-Cold War order in Europe was based on the expansion of the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance; in the Middle East, on the alliances of the United States and its western allies with the main Sunni nations (Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and the Persian Gulf), containment of Iraq and Iran and the United States' firm alliance with Israel; and in Asia, on the United States' security agreements with Japan, South Korea, Australia, Indonesia and other countries as a counterweight to and containment of China.

Russia in Europe, China in Asia and Iran, and extremist jihadism in the Middle East are currently a challenge to this order. We are witnessing the reappearance of an Asia with national rivalries, territorial claims, and military and naval rearmament; an Eastern Europe with whose territorial arrangements and received influence Russia does not agree; and a Middle East where highly heterogeneous forces are questioning the territorial allocations established a century ago by the Sykes-Picot Agreement, among other factors.

### Normalisation of relations with Cuba

The messages launched simultaneously by Presidents Barack Obama and Raúl Castro on 17 December announcing the agreement to normalise

<sup>27</sup> KAPLAN, Robert: *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells us about Coming Conflicts and the Battle against Fate*, Penguin Random House, 2013, and *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*, Random House New York, 2000.



diplomatic relations took nearly everyone by surprise and immediately triggered all kinds of reactions.

A few began speculating about a possible trip by Obama to Havana, as they had previously about his trip to Tehran, which would have the same momentous significance as Beijing for President Nixon in 1972 and Camp David for President Carter in 1978. Others moved the date of the official end of the Cold War – up until now considered the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 – to 17 December.

At most, the agreement was only the beginning of the beginning of the normalisation of bilateral relations that will someday lead to the lifting of the highly complex system of economic and trade embargos established in 1961 and harshened by the Helms-Burton and Torricelli Acts, as well as by the sanctions dictated by President Bush II's administration.

Although still in force, the embargo has been eased since the 1990s, especially since 2009 with the Obama Administration. Travel, visits, investments, remittances and trade flows have multiplied, much to the relief of a country in a precarious economic and social situation and with a needy population. During his first term in office, Obama had facilitated communication between families on both sides of the Straits of Florida and also the sending of dollars, which are so necessary to life on the island.

Before the announcement of normalisation, Obama agreed to invite Cuba to the Summit of the Americas in Panama in April 2015. Before that, at the funeral for Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg on 15 December 2013, he had shaken hands with Raúl Castro before the cameras of much of the world. It was obvious that something was cooking, but until 17 December few were aware of the silent diplomacy that had been going on for 18 months between the United States and Cuba with the aid of Canada and the Vatican.

Cuba is a country in a state of ruin whose system has managed to scrape by owing to the escape valve of emigration and flight, and until 1991 the constant, generous subsidy from the Union; and after that, with a subsidy from Venezuela and a relative opening up to China and international trade.

Fifty-five years on from the revolution, the Castro system has not even been capable of abolishing rationing or the black market. Instead, it has merely consolidated scarcity, poverty, the disappearance of agriculture and industry, spurring anyone who could to leave the country however they could – by boat, though the United States immigration quotas, as political exiles, etc. This phenomenon of fleeing, separating people and families – very frequent among young people and professionals – has been so widespread that it is precisely in the handling of migratory issues, a very delicate question for the United States, that America and Cuba have

reached an effective understanding over the decades to regulate human flows through successive migration agreements, as well as on issues related to the drug trade and other types of illegal trafficking. In 1977 presidents Castro and Carter signed an agreement to establish related offices in Washington and Havana.

This means that, despite their political rivalry, the two countries have been closely connected, with many communication channels open to some extent, as evinced by the notorious activity of spies caught on either side of the Straits of Florida. Paradoxically, their release provided an opportunity and an excuse for normalising relations.

The normalisation of relations with Cuba, a development greeted with satisfaction throughout Latin America, will help improve relations with the Latin American countries: not only those that have followed or attempted to follow the Cuban model or have shown sympathies with it, but also with countries that look to Havana not so much with an ideological affinity as in response to its anti-imperialist call. Following 17 December, Obama will have increased possibilities of mitigating this problem, and for ensuring the success of the Panama Summit, which both he and Raúl Castro will attend.

Most of the United States' Hispanic population, who are of Mexican origin, greeted the news with satisfaction. The Cuban minority, however, were deeply divided between those in favour of turning over a new leaf (the youngest) and those who advocated maintaining the embargo (which they call a blockade).

'It is a victory for repressive governments the world over', declared Marco Rubio, a congressman of Cuban origin for Florida and possible Republican candidate for the White House in 2016.

It only benefits 'the heinous Castro brothers', pointed out Jeb Bush, also in a pre-campaign, while Obama stressed that the 54 years of embargo and absence of relations have been a complete failure. A few weeks later Cuba released 53 political prisoners. Formal negotiations were due to start at the end of January in Havana.

Plummeting oil prices, which have wreaked havoc Venezuela's economy, may also have helped speed up the agreement with the United States, but it is difficult to foresee the impact normalisation will have on Cuba's domestic post-Castro transition.

### **Bilateral relations**

'In recent years the pendulum of Spain–US relations has swung towards a mid-point, of balance', Charles Powell, director of the Real Instituto Elcano, told *La Vanguardia* in January 2014. 'We have gone from the en-

thusiasm of Aznar's period to the cooling of Zapatero's day and are now at a more equidistant point between these two positions'.<sup>28</sup>

Spain ceased to be a problem for the United States some time ago, except for the effects of the economic crisis at certain moments. Nor is it of special interest to Washington.

Mariano Rajoy, Spain's prime minister, travelled to Washington in 2014 and the King and Queen, then still Prince and Princess of Asturias, paid a visit at the end of 2013, but there have been no bilateral summits or other high-level visits over the past year. The only events worthy of mention on account of their political significance are the visits to Madrid of Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs at the United States Department of State, and Ray Mabus, Secretary of the Navy.

Nevertheless, the Spanish Defence, Justice and Interior ministers have frequently travelled to Washington, as part of the solid bilateral relations in their respective fields: military cooperation, combating jihadist terrorism and illegal trafficking in general.

Spain decided to take part in the missile shield project by undertaking to host four Aegis destroyers at its Rota base from 2014 onwards. Similarly, as well as participating in various international military missions under the aegis of the UN, the European Union and NATO, Spain is cooperating with the United States in the campaign to combat Ebola, has taken in former Guantanamo inmates and has authorised the passage of marine infantry detachments through Morón base.

There has been close and growing bilateral cooperation in the military field (in a relationship that dates back sixty years), in combating terrorism – of great importance to the United States – and in protecting intellectual property. Spain has been struck off the United States' blacklist of countries that tolerate or promote piracy in intellectual property.

In other respects, the United States is one of the leading investors in Spain, and Spanish investments in the United States have increased very significantly in the past decade. There are more than 700 Spanish companies in the United States devoted to renewable energy, infrastructure and financial services.

The trade, educational, scientific, cultural and social ties between the two countries have been strengthened and President Obama continues to be one of the most popular and highly valued foreign leaders in Spain – partly because the traditional anti-Americanism has diminished, espe-

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<sup>28</sup> POWELL, Charles: 'La relación entre España y los Estados Unidos...', *La Vanguardia*, 13 January 2014. <<http://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20140113/54398052159/relacion-espana-eeuu-potencial-no-satisfe-cho.html>>.

cially in certain left-wing sectors. Political ties, however, are somewhat inconspicuous.<sup>29</sup>

Prominent among the most highly valued contributions made by these relations is Spain's major role in strengthening the Atlantic axis, its value as a sure and trusty ally in numerous delicate operations, and the benefits derived from relations in defence matters, particularly the income and jobs generated by the Rota and Morón bases, or by the contract with Navantia for the maintenance of the four Aegis destroyers.<sup>30</sup> At the end of 2014, however, we have yet to see any high-level visits, especially by President Obama or the Secretary of State, John Kerry.

All in all, despite the absence of problems, the richness and variety of constantly growing bilateral trade and the appeal Spanish life and culture holds for Americans, Spain's political class and public opinion consider that Spain deserves greater public and political recognition by the United States. A step in this direction was the brief meeting between Rajoy and Obama at the G20 Summit in Brisbane in November.

Spain's image in the United States has improved in pace with its recovery from the crisis and it could improve even further if our country, criticised in Washington for its low military spending, were to decide to bring this expenditure up to the 2% of the budget the United States recommends for NATO countries.

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<sup>29</sup> According to Charles Powell, the election of Obama seemed to sweep away a not inconsiderable portion of the anti-American sentiment accumulated over the previous years: *El amigo americano*, Galaxia Gutenberg, 2011, p. 644.

<sup>30</sup> James Costos, US Ambassador to Spain, 'Siempre adelante. Juntos. Beneficios mutuos de nuestra relación en materia de defensa', *El Mundo*, 29 July 2014.

## Trade at the service of geopolitics: present and future of the principal international agreements (from Bali to the TTIP)

José Alberto Plaza

### Chapter five

#### Abstract

This chapter describes the current situation of both multilateral and regional international trade regulation. It focuses on the issues that were particularly significant in 2014. In both cases important new pathways have been opened for new trade opportunities in the coming years. The Bali Ministerial Conference was a success in reviving the Doha Round. Despite the fact that during most of 2014 there were serious doubts that its results could be put into practice, on 27 November a historic agreement was reached by the World Trade Organization to accept the negotiated package. This crucial decision makes it possible to resume multilateral trade negotiations. On another note, the negotiation of regional integration agreements has been increasing over the past year, with the European Union at the forefront of this complementary means of opening trade. The number of new agreements and the surge of intercontinental initiatives suggest that the importance of agreements of this kind will be even greater in future. Finally, this article also examines how close globalisation is through global value chains. Businesses around the world need to be part of these international production chains in order to survive the increasing competition in international trade. Countries whose businesses manage to become part of these international value chains will stand a better chance of surviving in a globalised environment. The downside will be for enterprises that are left out of these global trade relations due to lack of an adequate regulatory framework or capabilities.

**Keywords**

International trade, World Trade Organization, Bali Ministerial Conference, regional integration agreements, global value chains, worldwide competitiveness.

### Introduction

Initially, the world economic crisis that began in 2008 chiefly affected the developed economies, according to the statistics on gross domestic product (GDP) growth. The Global Economic Prospects 2014 showed that the world economy recorded negative growth in 2009 and bounced back to a growth rate of 5.2% in 2010, only to slide to 3% in 2013. In 2014 this recovery is expected to gather momentum and the world economy should achieve a growth rate of 3.6%.

The advanced economies have been less dynamic than the global economy in recent years. Indeed, although the United States recorded growth rates very close to or higher than 2%, the Eurozone rose above 1% in 2014, with negative rates in the previous two years. Of the advanced economies, those of the Eurozone have fared the worst, while the emerging economies have underpinned global growth during the toughest years of the crisis. However, the fact that the growth rates of China, India and Brazil have fallen adds uncertainty to the stability of the world economy in 2014, bearing in mind the stagnation of the Eurozone.

World trade in goods and services fell sharply in 2009, but made a rapid recovery in 2010 and 2011, and in 2014 its growth was higher than that of global GDP. Everything indicates that countries initially reacted to the crisis by significantly reducing imports and even impeding exports, leading to a reduction in world trade. However, in the subsequent years it may be inferred from the aggregate figures that trade has driven world economic recovery.

According to the theory of international trade, what occurred in 2009 was the worst possible scenario: a protectionist reaction to the economic crisis, with policies that were even detrimental to other countries and subsequently exacerbated the global situation. What happened in the years that ensued corroborates that fact that, after overcoming fears of the balance of payments crisis or of major imbalances, countries have generally chosen to maintain and deepen their trade relations. However, in order for international trade to be the driving force behind the growth of a country or region, or indeed of the world, there must be rules that facilitate trade operations, for if trade flows increase it is because, among other factors, there are regulations that are conducive to this.

The regulation of international trade is highly developed in some areas, such as goods, and less so in others, such as investments and the relationship between trade and the environment. Furthermore, over and above the trade issues that are examined, the rules agreed multilaterally by the World Trade Organization (WTO) are very different from integration agreements involving only two WTO members, two areas of integration, advanced and developing countries, or solely developing countries for the

purpose of fostering South–South trade. Therefore, when evaluating regulation designed to facilitate trade, it is necessary to consider both the subject-matter and the scope of application.

Multilateral trade regulation began with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade of 1947, which already laid down agreements on regional integration for trade in goods as an exception. This exception was extended to trade in services under the General Agreement on Trade in Services, when the WTO was established in 1995. However, the scope for establishing agreements between countries or regions is not limited to these exceptions but also extends to fields which have not been covered by multinational negotiations to date.

The current landscape of international trade regulation is complex. On the multilateral level, there are the agreements reached at the Bali Ministerial Conference in December 2013. These are the initial results of the Doha Round, which should have been implemented in 2014. However, India blocked their implementation, sparking a bittersweet sensation: agreements of great importance and interest to all WTO members had been reached, which, owing to the particular way things work, were in suspense until 27 November 2014, when the General Council<sup>1</sup> unblocked the situation.

The deadlock in the negotiations on the multilateral trade regime, which lasted until the end of 2013, and the waiting period that dragged on throughout 2014 have spurred WTO members to increasingly negotiate regional integration agreements in recent years. As we shall see, 2014 saw the crystallisation of a few of these new initiatives, which were negotiated in parallel to the Doha Round, as the various WTO members did not expect to achieve a wide-ranging multilateral agreement. The result of this negotiating activity is a dense and complex web of agreements.

The first part of this chapter will examine the results of the Bali Conference, which gave fresh impetus to multilateral trade negotiations that, after being blocked by India in July, were finally adopted by the General Council on 27 November 2014.

It will go on to analyse the situation of regional agreements in 2014, noting that, although many attempt to liberalise trade, they are also aimed at creating strategic relations at the regional or interregional level.

The final part of the chapter will briefly describe an initiative for an alternative way of measuring trade flows in terms of the added value countries provide to a certain product rather than in terms of the value of the end product. Underlying this new approach, developed by the OECD and

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<sup>1</sup> The General Council is the WTO's highest decision-making body at ministerial conferences.



the WTO, is a change in international trade statistics as measured to date. Although for the time being there are no statistics beyond 2009, this new means of measuring trade flows could influence trade policy decisions, as they will be based on statistics that are a more faithful reflection of real trade flows between countries.

### **Twenty years is nothing: the resurgence of the multilateral trade regime at the Bali Ministerial Conference**

The WTO is duty bound to hold a biannual ministerial conference that brings together representatives of all the members of the organisation. The characteristic feature of the multilateral trade rules adopted at the WTO is that, save for exceptions, the principle of most-favoured-nation treatment is applied, meaning that favours granted to one member must be granted to the rest of the WTO members in the same way. This is a basic principle of the rules of multilateral trade, and we will therefore see that any exceptions must be part of the WTO's own agreements or have been agreed unanimously by the members subsequently.

Agreements in the framework of the Doha Round were reached for the first time at the Bali Ministerial Conference in December 2013, in four areas: trade facilitation, agriculture, cotton, and development and least-developed country issues. It should be stressed that, after the Geneva Ministerial Conference in 2011, the members agreed to progress on issues where it was possible to reach an agreement without having to wait for all Doha Package matters to be finalised. This basically entailed infringing the single undertaking principle that had underpinned multilateral negotiations to date, according to which 'nothing is agreed until everything is agreed'. It was this decision that made it possible to reach important agreements for all members in certain areas without having to seek a balance between so many disparate interests in all matters.

The Trade Facilitation Agreement is, without a doubt, the most important achievement of the conference and was always considered the least conflictive, because its aim is to speed up customs procedures so that exported goods take less time to arrive at their destination. Normally, whether tariffs are low or high, these formalities can entail a higher cost than export tariffs. It was therefore important to reach an agreement in this area, as all the countries involved in international trade stood to gain by it.

It should be remembered that trade facilitation was introduced as a topic of negotiation at the Singapore Ministerial Conference together with trade and competition, trade and investment, and public procurement. However, following the Cancun (2003) and Hong Kong (2005) ministerial conferences, only trade facilitation remained as a topic of negotiation of

the so-called 'Singapore issues'. Although the rest of the Singapore issues were included in the Doha Round, there was no consensus among members to carry on negotiating on them at subsequent ministerial conferences. In contrast, trade facilitation is an area that has continued to be of interest to all WTO members for more than a decade, even though the final agreement was reached at the Bali Ministerial Conference.

Developments in the Singapore issues underline a decisive aspect of multilateral trade negotiations: that in order to reach an agreement there must be a consensus between all members of the organisation. Bearing in mind that the WTO has 160 members, it is easy to imagine how difficult it is to reach an agreement that is satisfactory to all parties.

Furthermore, the fact that, unlike in other international organisations, each member has a vote<sup>2</sup> that is not proportional to its GDP or weight in world trade means that all members have the power of veto; this has delayed negotiations, because the practice is to adopt agreements through consensus.<sup>3</sup> Logically, this power of veto can be used strategically to aid or hinder the negotiations and to steer them in a particular direction, so that it is not possible to reach an agreement until all the members are satisfied with it.

In the negotiations on trade facilitation, it was necessary to clarify and further three issues essential to speeding up trade procedures and formalities: freedom of transit, fees and formalities connected with importation and exportation, and publication and administration of trade regulations. These three issues were already dealt with in specific articles of the GATT 47 agreement, but the disciplines were considered insufficient.

The agreement is a landmark achievement on account of its coverage and importance to the legal certainty of exports and clarification of customs procedures. If fully implemented, it would greatly facilitate their development. These benefits would undoubtedly require a major effort on the part of some countries to modernise their public administration systems. Therefore, more favourable treatment has been envisaged for developing and less developed countries – basically longer transitional periods for implementing the various measures, depending on the burden this entails on their resources.

In agriculture, three agreements were reached, the most controversial relating to safeguards for food security purposes. The negotiations fo-

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<sup>2</sup> The European Union has the same number of votes as it does Member States who belong to the WTO. Each Member State is also a member of the WTO, though as the EU has a common trade policy, it is the European Commission that negotiates and acts on behalf of the Member States.

<sup>3</sup> The Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO lays down rules on voting, but in practice negotiation is continued until consensus is reached, because an agreement that excludes a member, however small, could undermine the established rules.

cused on the extent to which a member's government can stock up on agricultural products to protect itself from a shortage of food products.<sup>4</sup> This is a strategic issue for developing countries with a weak balance of payments situation and high demand for basic agricultural products.

The clearest case is that of India, where 600 million farmers live on the verge of subsistence. In 2008 the country blocked the global agreement over what it considered excessive US agricultural subsidies. In July 2014 India blocked what had been agreed at the Bali Ministerial Conference, particularly the Trade Facilitation Agreement, until it was assured of greater guarantees with respect to public stockholding of agricultural products. Unfortunately, these practices may affect trade flows in several ways. First, the prices at which the government purchases these raw materials may be higher than world market prices, putting a brake on imports by maintaining a domestic production that would otherwise disappear. Furthermore, if the stocks are used, the possibility of covering this demand with imports would also be reduced. However, the rules agreed at Bali did not seem to give India sufficient guarantees that public stocks could be maintained, in particular because an interim solution was reached with the commitment to agree on a permanent solution later on. These cases show how difficult it is to reach a compromise that is acceptable to all members, even if the negotiation topics have been restricted to those on which it is considered easier to reach a consensus. However, on 27 November the WTO ratified the decision to maintain the agreement adopted at Bali on public procurement, although interim, until a final solution could be reached.

The negotiations on agricultural issues also included commitments on the part of the developed countries to thoroughly review their export subsidies. This decision stems from the commitment adopted at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference to abolish all kinds of export subsidies until 2013.

This was one of the most important achievements for the developing countries at the abovementioned ministerial conference; however, the commitment was not implemented owing to the impasse in other areas of the Doha Round.

The Bali Conference did not set a new deadline for eliminating these subsidies. However, it was agreed to review the situation at the next ministerial conference and the measures to be examined are listed in the annex to the agreement. These measures range from actual export subsidies to state trading enterprises and also include export credits and food aid.

At the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference the European Union was named as the main culprit of 'export competition' owing to its subsidies for ag-

<sup>4</sup> Public stockholding for food security purposes, WT/MIN (13)/38.

ricultural exports. However, other developed countries use different formulas that are equally harmful to developing countries' potential to export agricultural projects.

Salient examples of the foregoing are the United States' use of food aid programmes and the action of Canadian state trading enterprises. Perhaps the greatest merit of the agreement reached at the Bali Ministerial Conference on this issue is that, from now on, the following will all be considered forms of 'export competition': export subsidies, export credit, food aid and agriculture exporting state trading enterprises.

An issue related to agricultural exports, but dealt with individually, is the cotton trade. Although there are 74 cotton-producing countries in the world, the United States and China account for more than 40% of world production and have the capacity to set international prices. At the opposite end are four less developed African countries, all of them WTO members: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali. Their economies depend on cotton exports, but their production is globally insignificant – meaning that they have no choice but to take the world price as it comes.

The crux of the matter is the subsidies the United States grants its cotton producers, which are pushing down world prices, leading to sizeable reductions in the four abovementioned countries' revenues.<sup>5</sup> Although the agreement on cotton reached at the Bali Conference only contains the specific obligation to hold a debate on the issue twice a year at the Agricultural Committee meetings, the matter has drawn increasing attention in recent years, though so far no final commitments have been reached.

A package of measures for less developed countries was likewise adopted to facilitate these countries' goods and services exports, but no specific commitment was made at the conference.

It should also be stressed that it was agreed at the Bali Ministerial Conference that the revised plurilateral agreement on government procurement should enter into force as soon as possible. This agreement ensures that signatories do not discriminate against the products, services or suppliers of other parties to the Agreement with respect to the government procurement opportunities that are opened to foreign competition. As it is a multilateral agreement, it is only binding for the signatories.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Although the situation of these four less developed countries made this subject a focus of interest during the multilateral negotiations, the United States' subsidies affect not only them but also all cotton producers. Therefore, Brazil initiated proceedings against it, which have lasted more than 10 years. Finally, on 1 October 2014, Brazil and the United States reached an agreement whereby the latter was to compensate Brazilian producers with 300 million dollars and in return Brazil undertook not to initiate actions against the United States (peace clause).

<sup>6</sup> This plurilateral agreement is an exception to the multilateral rules that apply to all WTO members.

The revised GPA entered into force on 6 April 2014, and its main achievements are the inclusion of rules on the use of electronic procurement tools and a new provision for preventing corrupt practices between parties. It likewise promotes the conservation of natural resources and the environment through the application of appropriate technical specifications in tenders.

The coverage of the agreement has also been broadened with respect to goods and services; this will encourage other WTO members to subscribe to the agreement. Forty-three countries are currently party to the agreement (twenty-eight of them European Union members) and ten (Albania, China, Georgia, Jordan, Montenegro, New Zealand, Oman, the Republic of Kirghizstan, Moldavia and Ukraine) have requested accession.

The fact that China has applied for accession is a sign of the competitiveness of the country's economy, because, if it adheres to this agreement, its bidders will have to compete with those of the most advanced countries in its markets, and it will also be under the obligation to open its own public procurement market to competition. Although China's compliance with the WTO's accession commitments has so far left much to be desired, its application shows a wish for greater involvement in world trade.

An assessment of the Bali Conference can only be positive, as it marked the relaunch of the Doha Round under a new scheme based on negotiations that are less ambitious but also provide benefits to all members: developed, developing and less developed. In this regard, it can be considered a major success for the world trade system. As for its estimated economic benefits, the WTO's director-general Roberto Azevêdo stated that the package contributes one trillion dollars to world trade, as well as creating 21 million jobs all over the world.

However, India's blocking of its implementation once again drew attention to the fragility of the achievement. Indeed, as Roberto Azevêdo stated in October 2014, unless the implementation problems of the Bali package were resolved, the WTO would have succeeded in its task of monitoring trade relations and settling trade disputes between members, but it would not have created new trade regulations since its establishment twenty years ago.

Although he considered that the outcome of the implementation of the Bali package was uncertain, if it were not implemented the WTO members would be forced to question the organisation's future function as a forum for trade negotiations. Fortunately the WTO General Council's decision to implement the agreements of the Bali Conference has returned all the Doha Round negotiation topics to the negotiating table.

The difficulty of progressing in multilateral negotiations should not conceal the fact that the WTO's greatest merit is that the group of existing

rules and principles must already be respected by 160 countries. In addition, the application of the principle of most-favoured nation means that favours granted to members must be applied to all the rest without discrimination, except where they unanimously decide otherwise.

Another of the basic features of the multilateral trade system that should be appreciated is the stability it lends the global economy for three reasons: the existence of a set of rules for wide-ranging fields of trade relations to ensure that they are predictable and equitable; the ability to settle conflicts between members; and, lastly, the existence of a forum where an increasingly large and heterogeneous group of countries can discuss trade regulations. The importance members attach to the latter remains to be seen; however, the inclusion of all interests in order to progress towards creating an increasingly stable regulatory framework for international trade is the major contribution of the multilateral trading system to the international economy.

Therefore, although the multilateral trading system's contribution to trade should not be valued solely in terms of what is achieved through trade relations, in 2014 benefits for world growth derived from the agreements of the Bali Ministerial Conferences were finally obtained.

### **Instruments of trade geopolitics: regional integration agreements**

The number of regional agreements in force or under negotiation is rising by the year and therefore the volume of trade in goods and, increasingly, in services covered by agreements of this type is growing. Such was the case during 2014, when initiatives were presented that would have been dismissed outright only a few years ago.

One of the questions most commonly asked on regional agreements is whether they undermine or strengthen the multilateral trade system. Opinions differ and will probably vary over time because, as we shall see, the negotiations for these agreements are highly dynamic. Although it is not possible to examine this matter in depth in this article, it should be pointed out that these agreements pose a challenge to the countries that are not party to them and remain subject to multilateral disciplines.

The agreements are furthermore part of the economic underpinning formed by the geopolitical relationship between these countries, which apply different strategies. Finally, their microeconomic aspect should not be forgotten: that of the enterprises of the countries that are not party to these agreements. The diversity of agreements pushes up the costs of information on which rules are applicable, bearing in mind that, since competition is global, there is the challenge of producing a certain product as efficiently as possible, irrespective of the diversity of existing trade regulations.

Despite this, the fact is that the regional integration processes, chiefly free-trade areas and customs unions, are provided for in the WTO's multilateral goods and services agreements under certain conditions. These conditions stem from the fact that such agreements are an exception to the principle of most-favoured nation – which, as stated, governs multilateral trade – as they grant better market access conditions to countries party to them than to the rest of the WTO members.<sup>7</sup>

As the principle of most-favoured nation is pivotal to the world trading system, the conditions for creating a free-trade area or customs union are aimed at creating the maximum trade benefits for the parties to the agreement and the least harm to non-parties.

In the case of free-trade areas, the tariffs that parties maintain with third parties are not unified, and the requirement laid down by multilateral rules is that these duties should not increase with the creation of the free-trade areas.

In the case of the customs union, tariffs on third countries are unified and cannot increase in relation to those that previously existed. If the tariff levied on a product is raised, negotiations must be held to establish fair compensation. It is understood that, in both free-trade areas and customs unions, trade liberalisation must bring tariffs on all kinds of goods down to zero within a reasonable period,<sup>8</sup> so that selective liberalisation is not carried out in sectors of interest to the parties, to the detriment of third countries.

Freedom to maintain tariffs on imports from third countries, although they cannot be raised with the creation of the free-trade area, is what makes this form of regional integration much more common than a customs union.

In the case of a customs union, a common tariff allows imports from any country belonging to the union which, as a matter of principle, enjoy freedom of movement in all the countries that are party to it, as internal tariffs have been eliminated. In contrast, in free-trade areas, the fact that each country maintains tariffs on third countries' imports makes it necessary to establish conditions to ensure that products partially produced in one of the member countries can benefit from the tariff reduction granted to the countries in the free-trade area.<sup>9</sup>

From the point of view of the multilateral trading system, although both types of regional arrangement are accepted under the abovementioned conditions, customs unions are less of a hindrance to trade with third

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<sup>7</sup> In general, the only existing exceptions to the most-favoured nation principle are those agreed on in favour of developing and less developed countries.

<sup>8</sup> This period must not be more than ten years.

<sup>9</sup> These conditions are technically called *rules of origin*.

countries than free-trade areas. However, as customs unions are more difficult to negotiate and establish, there are relatively few of them, and the European Union, without a doubt, is the union with the greatest significance in world trade.

In 2014, the WTO had been notified of 253 regional agreements, which are in force today. Given this number, it is likely that members of the organisation belong to one or more.

We will now go on to examine the main agreements of the European Union, which is dealt with first as it is the largest and most consolidated customs union and, as such, the main complement to multilateral trade relations.

### **The European Union, at the forefront of trade regulation**

With respect to the negotiating activity of the main actors on the world economic stage, the European Union is the most active member of the WTO in promoting agreements of this kind, but it is also the staunchest advocate of reaching multilateral agreements.

Although there is often said to be rivalry between the multilateral approach and the bilateral or regional approach, the case of the European Union clearly shows that if it is wished to reduce trade barriers, this can be done in both ambits, though we will see cases where it can be inferred that countries reluctant to opening up trade are reluctant in both. Between the two are intermediate strategies aimed chiefly at securing regional influence.

It is appropriate to consider the advantages the European Union offers third countries as a trading partner.

As a customs union, the European Union is still growing: in July 2013 Croatia became its twenty-eighth member. This means that, for any country that has a regional agreement with the European Union, its export market has grown directly.

In addition to the successive geographical enlargements, we should bear in mind the advantages the existence of the internal market affords imported products and the fact that the European Union has institutions that ensure its smooth running – that is, goods and services can move freely without coming up against the feared non-tariff barriers. Within these institutions the Commission plays a prominent role in developing a single market that functions increasingly efficiently.

This has been achieved over several decades with respect to goods, whereas in the field of services the lack of integration was realised considerably later. The adoption of the Services Directive of 2006 establishes



a general legal framework that fosters the exercise of the free establishment of providers of services and their free movement, and encourages high quality.

The essential aspect of this process with respect to international trade is that when the European Union lowers its tariffs<sup>10</sup> and reaches free trade agreements with third countries, imported goods and services will find an obstacle-free market in which they can circulate through all Member States.

Considering the advantages that reduced tariffs and the internal market offer third countries, the European Union has sought trade agreements at all levels in order to secure advantages for its exports. This is no easy task and the European Union has often had to make asymmetric concessions, because one of the difficulties third countries come up against is that the European Union market is highly competitive – an issue that affects not only third countries but also, and to a greater extent, Member States themselves. Indeed, it can be argued that ensuring competitiveness within the European Union is proof that a Member State's enterprises are competitive globally.

Bearing in mind the circumstances described above, it is not surprising that the European Union has thirty-nine regional trade agreements currently in force.

Within this general framework, which conditions an ambitious trade policy, the various strategies followed have progressively shaped the extensive existing network of trade agreements.

It cannot be denied that the European Union's negotiating activity has been influenced by geopolitical considerations, such as establishing closer relations with neighbours which cannot join the European Union for geographical reasons but are considered strategic partners. The most striking cases are the agreements with Morocco, Algeria (not a WTO member), Egypt, Israel and Lebanon in the Mediterranean basin, Montenegro and Macedonia in the former Yugoslav Republic, and Ukraine and Georgia of the former Soviet Union states.

In other cases, such as the agreements with Chile and Mexico, the European Union sought an agreement to prevent losing market share to Canada and the United States in those countries.

Despite these agreements, the European Union abstained from progressing in negotiating regional agreements more than any other WTO member during the early years of the Doha Round. Indeed, processes already underway, such as the negotiation of a free-trade agreement with MERCOSUR, were suspended.

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<sup>10</sup> It should be remembered that, as it is a customs union, there is a single common tariff for all Member States.

However, in 2007, after the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, the European Union launched a new generation of regional agreements without withdrawing its support for the completion of the Doha Round. Apart from broadening access to markets, its aim was to reflect all the elements that had been left outside the multilateral negotiations since 2001. Despite its delay in resuming bilateral negotiations, the European Union has made up for lost time with a huge amount of negotiation activity with trading partners from all over the world.

The new generation of agreements began with the Free Trade Agreement with South Korea, which entered into force in July 2011 and was the first agreement the European Union signed with an Asian country. As stated earlier, as a result of recovering the ambitious spirit that the European Union at least advocated at the Doha Ministerial Conference, the new agreements, in addition to covering liberalisation in the field of industrial and agricultural products and services, include the elimination of non-tariff barriers and provisions on investments, competition, government procurement, intellectual property rights, transparency in regulation and sustainable development (including provisions on protection of the environment).

Although the agreement has not been in force for long and it is difficult to properly assess its effects, the statistics indicate that the balance of trade reduced its deficit with South Korea in 2012 and that a surplus was recorded in 2013. As for the balance of services, a positive figure was recorded between 2010 and 2012 and has been increasing. It would be rash to attribute this development solely to the agreement, but it should be acknowledged that its signing has boosted the trade possibilities for European enterprises, which appear to have taken advantage of them.

Trade in goods between South Korea and Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Spain and Poland has been analysed from 2008 to 2013. In all cases, exports increased from 2011 to 2013. In the case of Germany, the starting situation was a surplus on trade in goods, but it increased following the signing of the agreement. France also started out with a surplus in the years before the signing of the agreement and its average exports between 2011 and 2013 grew by 25.6% with respect to exports to South Korea in 2010. Although Spain started from a deficit on trade in goods before the signing of the agreement, the statistics for 2010 and 2013 show that it has practically been halved, with a considerable increase in exports since 2010.

The most striking cases are probably Italy and the United Kingdom. Both started from a deficit that lasted until 2010 in the case of the United Kingdom and until 2011 in the case of Italy, subsequently progressing to a surplus on trade in goods – slight in 2011 in the case of the United King-

dom and considerable in the case of both countries in 2012 and 2013, and increasing from 2012 to 2013.<sup>11</sup>

Although this analysis includes only five European Union countries, so far the signing of the free trade agreement with Korea has been beneficial to the European Union as a whole and to the Member States analysed, even though the productive structures are very different. Therefore, major growth has not occurred in exports from South Korea, as was feared during the negotiations.

However, a free-trade agreement may not have positive effects for all the Member States. Its signing must be regarded as a shock to the economy and the productive structure must adapt to the new trading conditions.

Not all the European Union Member States can be expected to have the same ability to put it into practice. Therefore, during the negotiation of these agreements, each country attempts to defend its own interests with respect to competitiveness, by endeavouring to ensure that the future agreement is favourable to its possibilities of exporting, and in its most sensitive sectors, by endeavouring to delay liberalisation or establish exceptions. However, the fact that the Commission has to defend the interests of all 28 states requires them all to make concessions and adjustments in the sectors most affected by imports.

Therefore, irrespective of the overall performance of exports or the balance of trade, the effects may be more severe in certain productive sectors than others.

When a country, like Spain, is part of a customs union that has free-trade agreements with third countries, it must assimilate and take advantage of the shock of trade opening triggered by the signing of a free-trade agreement. The more skilled its labour, the greater its sectorial and intersectorial mobility, and the more its domestic regulations facilitate the activities of enterprises, among other factors, the better placed the country will be to make the most of the new trade opportunities. It can thus be seen how, in the current context of Spain (and the rest of the Member States), the European Union's trade policy actions are increasingly related to domestic policies regulating and increasing productivity and that, although competition with our EU partners is an incentive for boosting competitiveness, trade agreements can drive a wedge into our productive structure, to which we need to react.

The negotiations with South Korea, despite being the first to be completed in the framework of the European Union's new strategy of regional integration agreements, are unique in that they have been conducted between a 28-strong customs union and a single country. The approach that

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<sup>11</sup> Source: Eurostat.

was sought was initially negotiation with regional blocs<sup>12</sup> such as CARIFORUM, the Central American Integration System, the Andean Community and ASEAN, or with large countries such as India.

The aim was to prevent negotiations from being excessively fragmented and from progressing slowly as a result. The exception of South Korea is justified by the wish mentioned previously in reference to Chile and Mexico: not to be left behind with respect to the United States' agreements with third countries, for fear of losing a share of their markets.

The United States began negotiating its agreement with South Korea in 2007 and this led the European Union to regard the Asian country as a strategic objective in its own trade relations. Indeed, the EU–South Korea agreement actually entered into force before the one signed with the United States on 15 March 2012. However, throughout the negotiating process, the concessions granted by South Korea to the United States and to the European Union were constantly compared.

Indeed, as part of the European Union's new strategy of trade relations, it is essential to consider the factor of not losing trade advantages compared to the United States. This explains the negotiations with the Central American countries, the Andean Community and, subsequently, the negotiation with Canada.

Therefore, either for purely commercial or geopolitical reasons, in practice countries with the ability to negotiate regional agreements and the wish to extend their export markets are reacting to the completion of free-trade agreements between third countries. The reason is that these agreements are sparking concern about increased trade between parties to the detriment of the trade formerly conducted with others, despite the safeguard established by the multilateral rules.

In the case of the European Union, the larger the network of agreements that exists in a geographical area, the greater the fear of losing market share and also the greater the incentive for new free-trade agreements, as it is a customs union that relies on international trade for its growth.

The association agreement with the Central American countries was signed, even though the negotiations were hampered by these countries' weak regional integration. Furthermore, although an association agreement includes more than purely trade issues, the trade part came into force on 1 August 2013 with Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, on 1 October 2013 with Costa Rica and El Salvador, and on 1 December with

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<sup>12</sup> The idea of negotiations between regional blocs is not new; indeed, it began with MERCOSUR in 1998, and could not be completed when a fresh attempt was made in 2003. Another attempt that also failed to prosper, with negotiations that began more than twenty years ago, was the Gulf Cooperation Council, whose negotiations were called off in 2008.

Guatemala. This means that the effects of the agreement will begin to be noted in 2014.

The European Union began negotiations with the Andean Community for a trade liberalisation agreement. As stated, the initial intention was for agreements to be signed between two regional blocs and not on a country-by-country basis. However, first Bolivia and later Ecuador dropped out of these negotiations, so that in the end it only negotiated with Peru and Colombia. The agreement with Peru entered into force on 1 January 2013 and the agreement with Colombia on 1 August that year. It is to be hoped that the benefits of the agreements with both will begin to be felt in 2014, but there are no statistics yet at such an early stage in the implementation of the agreement.

The fact that the United States was negotiating trade liberalisation agreements with the Central American countries and Colombia and Peru provided the European Union with an incentive to also reach an agreement. However, at least in the case of the Central American countries, Spain had to press for the negotiations to be begun and maintained. Indeed, Spain's support in strengthening trade relations with Latin America has allowed the European Union to devote efforts to negotiating with these countries, at a time when some Member States were calling for negotiations with emerging Asian countries to be strengthened.

The negotiations with Canada ended in 2014. The entry into force of this agreement also marked the beginning of the successive replacement of the Member States' Agreements on Protection and Reciprocal Promotion of Investments with an Agreement on Protection and Reciprocal Promotion of Investments signed by the European Union.

The legal basis for this change lies in the Treaty of Lisbon of 2009, which transferred responsibility for investment policy to the European Union. In this regard 2014 can be considered a decisive year, as it ushered in a new period in which the European Union will finalise arrangements on the protection of investments as part of a trade agreement or as an isolated agreement.

The extent of the investment protection provided by these 'new' agreements had been widely debated in the negotiations with Canada, because it is likely that the agreement with this country will be used as a model for agreements with other countries that offer less legal certainty. Protection standards are lower than in the existing agreements of the Member States. However, today it cannot be considered that the sole aim of these agreements is to protect European overseas investments to the detriment of any interests of the receiving country. Instead, the aim should be to ensure sufficient protection, bearing in mind that investment flows are increasingly two-way, from developing countries to the European Union,

and that a few Member States also wish to preserve a space of their own for regulating investments.

It is difficult to find a balance, and to predict whether the European Union's diplomatic clout – greatly strengthened institutionally by the Treaty of Lisbon – will be able to exert more pressure than that of a single Member State in the event of a dispute. However, whereas in 2009 the European Union was granted competencies for negotiating on investment protection, the results of this changing policy will not be seen until 2014, especially when complex cases of expropriation arise or of major regulatory changes that affect the feasibility of European investments overseas. The transition will last for years, but it is likely that the Commission will speed up the negotiation of agreements of this kind with the countries with which it has already signed trade agreements.

Another regional bloc on which the European Union has set its sights is ASEAN, an area with which it was not possible to establish negotiations between blocs. The agreement with Singapore was signed on 20 September 2013 and agreements are being negotiated with Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand. However, it has not been possible to begin negotiating agreements with Indonesia or the Philippines, countries of great significance within ASEAN.

The impossibility of negotiating with the region as a whole stems from differences in members' degree of development, but also from the large number of subjects the European Union wants the agreements to cover. Singapore, as the European Union's fifteenth-largest trading partner in goods and the most important among the ASEAN countries, has met the standard set by the European Union in its new trade agreements. Furthermore, the European Union's major competitors – the United States, Japan, China and India – have all signed agreements with Singapore. The aim from 2014 onwards is to successfully complete the negotiations begun with other ASEAN countries, so that the European Union strengthens its relations with the Asian countries, which were non-existent on the bilateral plane until the signing of the agreement with South Korea.

As part of this strategy of bolstering trade relations with Asia, negotiations for a trade agreement with India began in 2007, practically at the same time as with South Korea, but so far it has not been possible to complete them. As stated earlier, India blocked the package negotiated at the Bali Ministerial Conference. This is an indicator of how difficult it is for the European Union to advance bilaterally. A further example of the difficulty of negotiating with this country, although it is an emerging economy with a huge potential in the services sector, is that neither the United States nor Japan has sealed a regional arrangement with India.

The negotiations begun for free-trade agreements with Japan and the United States are salient features of 2014.

Reluctance to negotiate an agreement with Japan was considerable, owing to fear of the strength of its industry and technology. However, it has been constantly pressing the European Union to begin negotiations once the agreement with South Korea is concluded. In the end it was decided to commence the process. Six rounds of negotiations were held until mid-2014 and the process was given a favourable review, and has therefore continued. Although there is no way of predicting how the agreement will affect the European Union as a whole and its various Member States, it may be assumed that, with respect to imports, the fact that the European Union market has been opened to South Korea suggests that at least part of the 'technology shock' has already been assimilated and that Japan's productive structure is not going to put so much extra pressure on the European markets.

However, fears are greater regarding the possibilities of exporting to Japan, whose tariff barriers, beginning with the language, are huge. Indeed, unlike South Korea, where the United States has indirectly supported the opening up of the Korean market with its own agreement, in the case of Japan the European Union will be on its own in the struggle to bring down these barriers during negotiations.

The negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)<sup>13</sup> with the United States are, without a doubt, the most important of their kind in which the European Union was engaged in 2014. It is thought that the agreement could provide the European Union with a boost equivalent to 0.5% of GDP and that a large western trading area would be created. However, the existence of such a powerful bloc would influence both multilateral trade relations and trade agreements established by other countries such as the BRICS.<sup>14</sup> It is important for the European Union to reach a free-trade agreement with the United States bearing in mind the negotiations of the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement, which will be examined in due course.

In short, in 2014 the European Union has been active both multilaterally and in negotiating trade agreements with third countries. The European Union's first, more ambitious agreement with South Korea as part of a new global strategy is beginning to look good. If it proves fruitful, this will have been a decisive year for the negotiation of trade agreements with the United States and Japan.

Very few developed countries would then remain with which the European Union does not enjoy preferential trading conditions – practically only Australia and New Zealand, though the Union's trade with the latter is less significant.

<sup>13</sup> Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

<sup>14</sup> The second 'I' refers to Indonesia.

The European Union has reached agreements with many developing countries,<sup>15</sup> though not with the BRIICS except for South Africa<sup>16</sup> and the negotiations underway with India. This is an important point, because despite the progress that can be made through trade agreements, there will always be important countries that are unwilling to grant the European Union preferential treatment unless it makes significant concessions in a sector as sensitive as agriculture or agrees to lower its standards in the trading partnership agreements it negotiates.

For its part, the European Union is not willing to yield in agriculture unless the emerging countries substantially lower their tariffs on industrial products. Therefore, although the European Union has commenced negotiations with the United States and Japan, there will be room for a multilateral agreement to improve the situation.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that in 2014, although – contrary to what had been hoped for years – the Doha Round was not completed, the competition to which the European Union Member States' productive sector is subjected has increased with respect to any earlier date, and a downside to the European Union's strategy of continuing to open markets will be this growing pressure.

This fact forces us to consider the situation of the Spanish economy, in particular its industrial and services sector, which has been grappling with very severe financial restrictions since 2008. The unemployment rate is merely the most evident indicator that the productive sector is seriously damaged; indeed, it is surprising that our exports have performed so well despite such adverse circumstances. The challenge for the future lies in achieving sufficient competitiveness for Spain to find its place in the global economy, bearing in mind that we are competing without our European Union partners and increasingly with third countries.

### **Our trading partners' various strategies**

Outside the European Union, regional agreements are being intensely negotiated, particularly the Trans-Pacific Economic Partnership Agreement in which many of the Pacific coastal states are involved. The core agreement was between Brunei, Chile, New Zealand and Singapore, but the negotiations have been extended to Australia, the United States, Japan, Malaysia, Peru, Vietnam, Canada and Mexico.

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<sup>15</sup> This article merely analyses the European Union's most significant free-trade agreements in 2014, but the Union has agreements with other countries that have not been mentioned as they have been in force for some time, and other very diverse agreements that are not free-trade areas but provide trade preferences granted unilaterally by the European Union.

<sup>16</sup> Includes solely trade in goods.



It overlaps with the United States' trade agreements already in force with countries such as Chile, Singapore, Peru, Australia and NAFTA, and it will therefore negotiate chiefly with Brunei, New Zealand and Japan.

In principle, other APEC countries such as China, Indonesia and Russia could also negotiate accession to this agreement. However, the latent rivalry between China and United States for control of Asian economic and trade matters surfaced at the APEC summit in November, as the United States is in favour of the abovementioned agreement and China, albeit timidly, wants an Asia Pacific Free-Trade agreement that would be restricted to Asian APEC members.

Once again, this situation underlines how regional trade agreements are an instrument of growing importance in geopolitical relations between countries.

It is reasonable to think that, on the part of the United States and the European Union at least, there is a certain intention to isolate China from their network of trade agreements. Although China's economy outperformed that of the United States in GDP in 2014, Chinese production conditions are not considered acceptable by either the European Union or the United States.

Issues such as currency intervention, lack of respect for intellectual property rights, labour conditions in the country, highly polluting production processes, etc. are a concern. All these factors will prevent the United States and the European Union from negotiating a free-trade agreement with China, at least in the near future, on strictly trade aspects.

As the United States is currently negotiating the creation of two major regional partnerships, it is in a key position to set the standards to be applied in both; a particularly important factor is the similarity of the technical regulations that can be negotiated and the leeway for granting preference to the components produced in each of the areas. If the components of an end product can easily be moved through all the countries of both blocs, a major trade area stretching from the European Union to the countries on the other side of the Pacific Ocean will have been created *de facto*. This issue is related to the global value chains that will be examined later on.

Creating these two free-trade areas can help simplify the network of existing trade agreements, which would be a highly positive contribution to enterprise and the multilateral trading system. Although only the case of China has been mentioned, tensions may be sparked with other BRIICS – which will be left out of these agreements, as none is currently taking part in the negotiations – and with other developing and less developed countries. If the two major negotiation processes are successfully concluded, it is difficult to imagine that their rules will not have an impact on the multilateral trading system.

Noteworthy among other regional integration initiatives are those of the most important countries. The United States currently has 14 free-trade areas, the most significant being NAFTA. It should be stressed that the United States has also made a volte-face in its policy of negotiating regional agreements in the past few years, going from negotiating with specific countries it regarded as strategic to the ambitious interregional negotiations described above. Bahrein, Oman<sup>17</sup> and Australia are some of the countries with which the United States has free-trade agreements and the European Union does not.

Japan has 13 agreements in force, one of them with ASEAN – that is, with a regional bloc. Most of its agreements are markedly regional and seek access to the Asian markets, including India. However, Japan has also entered into agreements with three Latin American countries (Mexico, Peru and Chile) and, outside Asia, with Switzerland. Despite these inter-regional agreements, it is evident that Japan's negotiations have focused more on the Asian countries, as part of a strategy to gain influence in the region. The negotiations for a free-trade agreement with the European Union and for the Trans-Pacific Partnership will change this focus and point Japan's trade agreements in a more interregional direction.

As for the BRIICS, the patterns vary greatly. By far the least active in this area is Brazil. Although it is a member of MERCOSUR, this customs union has yet to be firmly consolidated and disputes with Argentina are frequent. Therefore, Brazil neither supported multilateral opening nor has made an effort towards regional opening.

Any trade liberalisation evidently has its risks, but when a country is as powerful as Brazil it is surprising that it does not confide in its abilities to make the most of free-trade agreements. Indeed, Brazil is one of the world's few developing/emerging countries that have not concluded an agreement on protection and reciprocal promotion of investment, and it therefore confides, so far successfully, in the ability of its market to attract investors, even though it offers less legal certainty than other countries.

Its lack of commitment towards negotiating trade agreements and offering greater assurances to investors show that Brazil does not consider itself ready for the challenge of integration into the global economy or is not convinced that opening up is a way of fostering growth. As the past two years have witnessed a reduction in its growth rates, there is concern about the economic and trade model chosen by Latin America's largest country.

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<sup>17</sup> Bahrein and Oman are both members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, a region with which the European Union has been engaged in negotiations for a free-trade area for more than 20 years, but has not succeeded in concluding negotiations.

Indeed, whereas countries such as Peru, Colombia and Mexico are opening up to international trade through various channels, another group of Latin American countries – Bolivia, Argentina, Venezuela and Cuba – reject trade opening both multilaterally and through trade agreements based on the patterns of exceptions established by the WTO.

Leaving aside the case of Africa, perhaps Latin America is the part of the world where the debate on to what extent an economy should open up is still topical, whereas in the rest of the regions it is a recognised necessity. This situation is particularly relevant to Spain, because Latin America has been its traditional area of influence – which our country stands to lose owing to the interest of the United States, China or even Russia in controlling the region.

As of 2014, the Russian Federation has reached 13 regional agreements which are limited to goods and denote a clear strategy of maintaining relations with the former Soviet Union republics. With respect to the conflict with Ukraine, it should be stressed that the Russian Federation agreed on a free-trade area with this country back in 1994, whereas the agreement with the European Union is very recent. It was due to enter into force by November 2014, but was postponed until 2016 due to the conflict. Furthermore, Russia may have regarded this trade agreement as an excessively close move by the European Union towards a country which in Moscow's view should remain in its sphere of influence.

The idea of negotiating a free-trade area between the European Union and the Russian Federation has been debated several times in recent years, but dismissed owing to the lack of legal certainty offered by this trading partner. Following the experience of China's accession to the WTO, where its compliance with trade agreements has left much to be desired in the opinion of many trading partners, it will be necessary to wait and see if Russia is able to honour its commitments. Only if it does so could a more ambitious relationship be considered.

The European Union has attempted to maintain a certain amount of influence through trade agreements with countries of the former Soviet Union, but has only succeeded in the case of Georgia, and has negotiated much smaller commitments with Azerbaijan and Armenia. However, as in the case of Ukraine, it should not be forgotten that these negotiations may spark tensions with Russia.

India has eight free-trade agreements and is also strongly oriented to its own region. It has notable agreements with ASEAN, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. If concluded, the agreement with the European Union would be the first interregional arrangement, but for the time being progress is slow, as stated earlier.

In the case of Indonesia, many of the regional integration negotiations have been conducted within the framework of ASEAN, to which it belongs. It too is inclined towards agreements with Asian countries. In fact it is not party to any outside this geographical area. However, its relations within the region are intense, as ASEAN has reached agreements on free-trade areas with China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

Lastly, South Africa is a member of the South African Customs Union and has concluded agreements to establish free-trade areas with the EFTA and the European Union in goods, and with the South African Development Community. Therefore, it may be inferred that its desire to use trade liberation to promote its development is relatively timid.

A few conclusions may be drawn from this brief overview of the BRIICS' regional agreements in force in 2014.

Firstly, the BRIICS pursue disparate policies: whereas Brazil and South Africa have maintained a very limited opening policy, Russia, India, China and Indonesia have gone further. However, a clear priority can be observed in all cases: to foster trade relations with their closest environment. Therefore, although the BRIICS are growing closer in other matters and may have characteristics in common, they do not share the same trading strategy with respect to regional agreements.

### **Tangible globalisation: global value chains and their trade policy implications**

In the context of international trade regulation, it is worth examining a global trade analysis which, despite beginning to take shape at the start of the crisis in 2008, did not become established in international organisations until 2013 and 2014. It marks a new way of considering and measuring trade relations that will prevail in the twenty-first century.

Traditional trade statistics related to trade in goods and services and left out trade in intermediate inputs, among others. This meant, for example, that many services were not considered relevant to trade but also, perhaps even more importantly, that information on trade flows was erroneous as it failed to take into account two fundamental factors: that in the twenty-first century goods are produced from components that come from many countries; and that goods production is increasingly based on services, and this relationship is growing.

The so often cited phenomenon of globalisation has led international production structures to be termed *global value chains* on account of the added value provided by each link that goes into creating the final product/service. Whereas the spread of the various links in the chain was significantly smaller a few decades ago, today it is much greater in geo-

graphical terms and also encompasses a much wider range of products and services.

This new vision of international trade led the WTO and OECD to embark on the titanic task, dubbed 'Made in the World', of gathering statistics based on the added value each country contributes to the production of a good. The aim was none other than to show the true magnitude of world trade, much of which takes place through internal transactions within multinationals, but also to bring to light how small and medium-sized enterprises contribute to world trade by supplying components and services.

Considering solely the international trade statistics for final goods gives a distorted vision of countries' contribution to world trade. This in turn has implications with respect to valuing each country's contribution to international trade, the employment created by the external sector and what determines investment flows.

The 'Made in the World' initiative was presented by Pascal Lamy, then director general of the WTO, in January 2013, and mention should be made of the document on global value chains submitted jointly by the OECD, the WTO and the World Bank at the G20 Summit in Australia in July 2014.<sup>18</sup>

Although the statistics only go as far as 2009, the document underlines the many and varied implications for economic and trade policy decisions of this new approach, which will be adopted widely over the next years.

The report cites as an example to point out that, within the global value chain scheme, apparently lower tariffs can have a harmful effect on trade.

Let us assume that a disc drive is assembled in Thailand from 10 components produced in that country and 43 components from another 10 countries. The drive is sent to China, where the laptop is assembled, with components from a broad variety of places, and is finally shipped to the United States. Although the tariffs on the components in the various countries are low, their effects are magnified at each stage of production, so that actual protection is greater than that of the tariff levied on the laptop in the United States. Therefore, if the global value chain approach is not considered, actual protection is undervalued, and so are the benefits wider trade liberalisation would have on the world economy.

It is not possible to examine all aspects of this new approach to international trade and the related statistics in this chapter, but it is interesting to stress that one of the issues that are paving the way for global value chains is precisely trade facilitation, the most important agreement reached at the Bali Summit. The factors that influence international trade

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<sup>18</sup> OECD, WTO, The World Bank; Global Value Chains: 'Challenges, Opportunities, and Implications for Policy', Report prepared for submission to the G20 Trade Ministers Meeting, Sydney, Australia, 19 July 2014.

are much broader than was suspected, and non-tariff and regulatory barriers in various countries are thus of greater importance, as is the offering of services that were previously not considered an object of trade.

Perhaps the most important conclusion that can be drawn from the consideration of international trade in which the global value chains play an increasingly bigger part is the role each country will be willing and able to play in this new context in coming years. This is a key issue, because the ability of the enterprises of a particular country to integrate or lead global value chains will determine that country's ability to be present to some extent in international trade relations.

For this purpose, it is necessary to apply policies that allow companies to be competitive on the international level, knowing that, in most cases, as it is not possible to control all the links in the global value chain, the aim is to efficiently provide links. This, repeated countless times, is what in the twenty-first century will determine the success or failure of a country to become integrated into international trade and investment flows, with the resulting effects on economic growth and employment in the various countries.

## Conclusion

This article has surveyed the most important progress achieved in the negotiation of international trade agreements ranging from multilateral to regional.

Despite the success marked by the agreement reached at the Bali Ministerial Conference, throughout most of 2014 the weaknesses of the multilateral trade system were revealed in decision making, because a single country can block the implementation of agreements.

Although decision making by consensus has been questioned, there have been no solid proposals for an alternative, because if a country were excluded from the agreement, it would become a beneficiary of the system without giving anything in return. Therefore negotiations continued from July onwards to find a solution satisfactory to all members.

Despite the difficulty of progressing multilaterally in establishing rules, the number of countries that adopt them is constantly increasing and it should be stressed that, although the number and scope of regional agreements is growing, there are countries that are governed chiefly by multilateral trade rules, particularly developing and less developed countries.

As for regional agreements, two abovementioned trends may be pointed out:

- The fact that more and more agreements of this kind are being negotiated.

- Broadening of geographical coverage, so that overlaps often occur with countries that are party to older agreements and more modern ones.

Owing to regional trade agreements' greater geographical coverage, their entry into force may influence the rules of multilateral trade and these agreements may have greater geographical importance or, alternatively, cause existing geopolitical tensions to surface. The most evident case is the existing tension in Asia, the geographical area with the best growth prospects in the world, between China on the one hand and the United States and European Union on the other, and where none of the three powers wishes to lose trade influence.

Finally, it should be stressed that international organisations have considered it appropriate to establish a new means of measuring trade flows based on the added value each country provides to the production of a product or service. This new approach has brought to light the true importance of international trade and how the harmful effect of trade barriers can be much greater than hitherto assumed.

There is still much ground to be explored, but global value chains based on one country's specialisation in one part of the chain – its contribution of part of the added value to global production – can be enhanced by eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers. This process is sometimes carried out for trade or geopolitical interests.

As the phenomenon of global value chains exists and will increase in importance, the lesson to be learned for countries' economic policy is that they should be sufficiently competitive to provide links for the global value chains that are currently developing and for those that will be increasingly created in the future.

This chapter has shown that trade relations are undergoing a deep transformation. On the multilateral level, 27 November 2014 saw the final acceptance of the agreements negotiated at the Bali Ministerial Conference, which can be expected to give impetus to negotiations on the rest of the Doha Round issues. Furthermore, we will see what influence the regional agreements currently under negotiation will have.

The progressive adoption of the global value chains approach in these negotiations could lead the countries to recognise the need for greater trade liberalisation of both tariff and non-tariff barriers, and in coming years we will therefore witness the true importance of international trade with respect to the various economies.

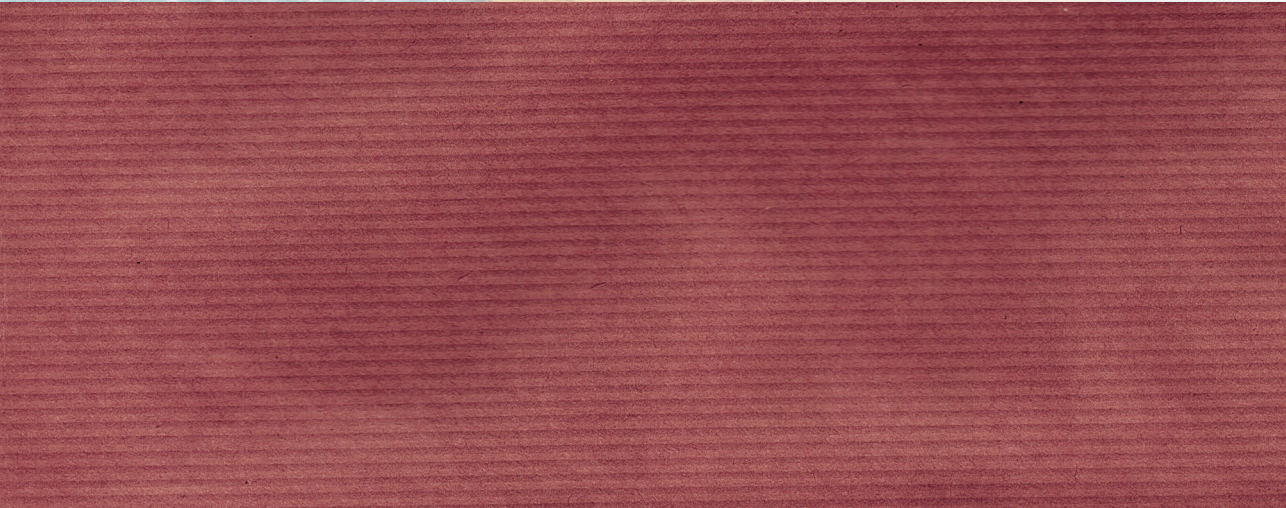
Those that fail to adapt to this change run the risk of missing the global competitiveness train. Strategies such as that of Brazil, South Africa or Russia, unless they are underpinned by trade in raw materials, may prevent these countries from finding their niche in world trade.

Lastly, a few developing economies will not be able to adapt to this change. This will spark tension in the World Trade Organization, in which most economies are represented. If the regulation of international trade and the manner of conducting transactions continue in this direction, existing inequalities will be augmented.



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