

## ITALY'S DEPORTATION POLICY



On May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the first repatriation of illegal immigrants found in international waters south of Lampedusa took place. The migrants were returned to Libya.

On the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 3 Italian military patrol boats (two belonging to the coast guard and one to the financial police), arrived in the commercial harbor of Tripoli. Apart from the ship's crews, representatives of the Italian State were present at the harbor. They were direct witnesses of the scarce respect of the Libyans for human and humanitarian rights. Other witnesses present on that morning: two French journalists that - authorized by the general command of the financial police – had been on board the Italian patrol boat named “Boviencio” for two weeks. One of these was François De Labarre for Paris Match who will later describe what he saw in a news article (published on “Migrante”, June 15<sup>th</sup> 2009).

**Less than human beings.**

On that day, faced with the immigrants' initial resistance to disembark once realized that they weren't in Italy but in Libya, the Libyan personnel (military and civilian), proceeded immediately to the use of force. In an indiscriminate and abusive way and with excessive brutality.

The use of sticks (wooden oars were also used), whips, punches and kicks, pushes and shoves to force the immigrants to disembark and to be placed inside containers loaded on trucks. On one side the women (in a smaller container), on the other the men (the larger one). Three pregnant women were left on the pavement because they were not able to walk. A few of the immigrants were dehydrated and were also left on the pavement only to be later picked up and thrown inside the containers with the others. It was like a horror movie, yet it was just a taste of what the immigrants would have to face in the following days and months, this time away from the eyes of witnesses and in the hands of their jail-keepers.

### **The three Italian vessels.**

On May 20<sup>th</sup> 2009 three patrol boats of the financial guard arrived in Libya to take part in joint Italian-Libyan operations to counter illegal immigration (the boats were docked in the harbor of Zuwarah). From this moment on the rejection of immigrants at sea became a routine.

The only difference with the May 7<sup>th</sup> repatriation being that the transfer of the immigrants from the Italian military boats (if they found them first) to the Libyan boats took place prevalently in the open sea. The patrol boats would take care that their intervention always take place in international waters (be they in the SAR - Search and Rescue – jurisdiction of Italy, Libya or Malta). The 3 patrol boats operated under the Libyan command with a Libyan flag. On board the boats there were Italian financial police personnel (1 official and 14 financial police agents had arrived in Tripoli for the task) that was to act as “observer” and assist in logistics.

From May 2009 to December of that same year, over 1000 illegal immigrants would be repatriated, almost all of them would be taken back to Libya by the Italian-Libyan patrol boats. In spite of these measures, in the same period of time about 1600 illegal immigrants would manage to make their way to Lampedusa. Yet altogether the rejection policy decreased the flow of illegal immigrants going from Libya to Italy, and that was exactly the result that the Italian government wanted to achieve.

With the arrival of the patrol boats from Italy immigrant rejection techniques were refined: The patrol boats would receive data on the location of the immigrant boats from Italy. The Italian-Libyan patrol boats would then adopt an evasive tactic: they would approach immigrant boats while concealing the Libyan flag (the boats themselves were Italian and thus would not alarm the immigrants). The Italian personnel would approach the immigrants at first, while the Libyans (who would wear civilian clothes) remained silent (so as to trick the immigrant into thinking he/she was on an Italian vessel). The immigrants would then be transferred one by one from one boat to the other, women first, who would be taken below deck. Then the men would be transferred aboard. They would be taken to the opposite side of the boat, away from the sight of their travel companions, and would then be handcuffed one by one (in at least one case an immigrant tried to escape by jumping in the water but was soon recovered and handcuffed).

Thus, one at a time all the men would be transferred on board the patrol boat and handcuffed. The women would not be handcuffed but would instead be locked below deck. In this way the patrol boat would be able to return to Zuwarah or Tripoli where the immigrants would be turned over to Libyan authorities. When the immigrants would realize that they were being returned to Libya, it would be too late for them to react. There lingered a guilty silence over what happened after the immigrants' were turned over to the Libyans. (It must be stated, though, that the trick used by the patrol boat to return the immigrants to Libya was necessary for security reasons. The crew of a patrol boat is comprised of 14-15 men while the carried immigrants were picked up in groups of 80-100 at a time. The risk of a mutiny during the transfer or during the return trip to Libya was quite high).

### **The practice was condemned by the European Court.**

Because of this “rejection” policy, on February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012 Italy was found guilty by the European Court of Strasbourg and condemned to pay compensation (14.000 euro each) to 24 immigrants (13 Eritreans and 11 Somalis – two of which have meanwhile died) out of the 210 immigrants that were repatriated on May 7<sup>th</sup> and who appealed to the European Court with the support of the CIR (Italian Council for Refugees) of the former union leader Savino Pezzotta.

The Strasbourg sentence refers to the violation of the Convention for Human Rights regarding inhumane and degrading treatment, the risks that deportation entails for illegal immigrants and the policy of collective expulsions in general.

Italy's defense was to state that “Libya is a secure place”, and that “Tripoli respects the international duties on access to asylum”. None of the various witnesses, some more unforthcoming than others, could corroborate this thesis (the Ministry of Defense was surely informed by the crews of the coast guard patrol boats and the military attache. The Interior Ministry through the crew of the financial police patrol boat and it's representatives in Tripoli – the Embassy and its personnel). Even the reiterated statements (by the Italian Interior Ministry and its provisional Minister) that in the successive repatriations the immigrants would have a chance to apply for political asylum, were lies. Who would receive their applications? How? How were the nationalities of the immigrants ascertained? Also, the immigrants were not aware that they were being taken back to Libya.

### **Human Rights violations reported.**

Amnesty International raised many questions about the repatriations, as did U.N.H.C.R. and Human Rights Watch, but none of these convinced Italy to ask Libya about the fate of the repatriated migrants, or that there be a better handling of them by the part of their jail-keepers and better quality of detention.

From the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2009 on, every time that an immigrant repatriation took place, no information regarding the immigrants returned to Libyan authorities was ever offered. Worse yet, none was ever requested by Italian authorities.

This policy was implemented up until February 26, 2011, when Italy – following the beginning of the Libyan civil war – revoked all bilateral accords. Presently, contacts with the new Libyan government are being taken to re-enact the co-operation in the immigration sector. Functionaries of the Italian Interior Ministry are again stationed in Tripoli. There are on-going verifications taking

place to evaluate the damage done to the patrol boats that were given to Libya at the time (thus the idea of re-enacting this specific bilateral co-operation). For the time being the flow of immigrants coming from Libya has greatly decreased in part due to the fact that the sub-Saharan illegal immigrants present in Libya run the risk of being taken for the many colored mercenaries that have fought on Ghaddafi's side.

### **But what really happened to those that were shipped back to Libya?**

Once taken back to Libya, the repatriated immigrants were imprisoned in one of the many identification and expulsion centers operating in the country. These were overcrowded structures where promiscuity reigned among disastrous hygienic conditions, no medical assistance, no registration of those interned, no degree of justice or possibility of an appeal. All of it was topped off by the daily abuses (beatings, rapes, cases of pedophilia, tortures). The illegal immigrants were jailed by the Libyan police that decided, arbitrarily and discretionally, when to free the captives.

In December 2009 mandate was given to some Libyan jurists to study a law that could regulate the matter by creating the crime of “clandestinity”. The law – that was never completed, approved or implemented – would have introduced the possibility of judgement of the illegal immigrant by the prosecutor, who would have had three alternatives: sentence the immigrant to time in prison (so at least the prisoner would know how long he would stay there), sentence the immigrant to a fine or order that the person be expelled from Libya. This new law – and this was the real danger – could have determined the fact that after corrupting prison guards or the police to get out of jail, the immigrant would have yet another mouth to feed.

The crime of clandestinity had been introduced in that same period of time in Italy as well (law n. 94/09, 07.15.2009) and one cannot exclude a connection between the two initiatives (the Italian law would be later rejected by the European Court of Justice because it was “in contrast with the European directives on the repatriation of illegal immigrants” and had already received negative opinions by the Italian constitutional court and court of cassation).

### **The repatriations continued undisturbed until 2011, but even now...**

Either way, the operations at sea of the Italian-Libyan patrol boats continued undisturbed from May 2009 to the beginning of 2011. The boats given to Libya have now increased to 6 and the personnel of the Italian Financial police stationed in Libya has also been proportionally increased. The presence of Italian military personnel on board the patrol boats was meant to be a deterrent for abuses and mistreating on the part of the Libyan military. This thesis proved partially untrue when the U.N.H.C.R., in July 2009, officially reported cases of mistreatment undergone by immigrants on board a vessel of the Italian navy (the “Orion”) that had picked up a boatful of illegal immigrants in international waters on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2009. In that particular case the immigrants had also been searched and the things that were confiscated from them were put in bags and handed over to the Libyan military. Of course the immigrants' things disappeared (about the presumed mistreating it must be said that the Italian navy generally filmed all assistance/boarding operations at sea and that there would thus be documental proof in defense of the Italian ship. It must also be noted that the illegal immigrants often tend to emphasize sufferance and tribulation in order to strengthen their request for asylum).

The truth is that in this mechanism of co-operation between the two countries, if Italy were to object to the treatment of the immigrants after their repatriation, Libya could have just refused to take the immigrants back. This could be an element that justifies the behavior of the Italian government but also – on ethical terms – an aggravating circumstance.

Lately, on board the patrol boats, apart from the Libyan coast guard crew and the Italian “observers” there were also – dressed in civilian clothes – functionaries of the Libyan police whom – during the trip – would question the illegal immigrants on the details of their journey and on the identities of their traffickers.

### **Italy, Libya and Human Rights.**

Ghaddafi's Libya had never signed Conventions on human rights nor had they ever recognized the status of refugee or the right to political asylum. Thus, on juridic terms, Libya could – differently from Italy – act with more liberty. Nevertheless Libya was bothered by the international accusations and had developed an accentuated susceptibility over the matter. It was thus more prudent, from the Italian point of view – and for mere political convenience – to leave the matter alone. It wasn't certainly an ethical nor moral problem for Libya – after over 40 years of a bloody dictatorship – to be accused of mistreating illegal immigrants. There was no public opinion with which one could confront oneself. The Italian situation was, of course, different.

Italy then tried to wipe away the burden of wrongdoing by resurrecting an old project. It financed simultaneously the construction of 3 centers for the assistance of immigrants in the Libyan locations of Gharyan, Kufrah and Sebha. Yet Italy never actually completed these centers for fear that by financing and handing over the structures to Libya it could be found partly responsible for their transformation in potential concentration camps.

Nothing was ever built in Sebha, while in Gharyan the existing structures were turned into a Libyan police station. As for Kufrah, what had been built was turned into a center for health assistance of immigrants (an infirmary with about 150-200 beds and a cafeteria). Regarding the structure at Kufrah – which hadn't yet been completed by 2010 – it is doubtful whether, once handed over to the Libyans, it could have effectively been used for the immigrants and not for the local population, seen as it is located in a peripheral location (like the oasis of Kufrah) that is lacking adequate health structures.

One last note regards the CIR. It is one of the few NGO's that have operated in Libya through another private Libyan humanitarian organization. This organization is the “International Organization for Peace, Care and Development” (I.O.P.C.D). It is administered by Khaled al Humaidi, son of the Revolutionary Council member Kweldi al Humaidi, brother-in-law of Saadi Ghaddafi.

Clearly the I.O.P.C.D. has not helped the CIR much in monitoring the abuses that were taking place in the detention center but perhaps it has helped the illegal immigrants make their case against the Italian state. Khaled al Humaidi has been involved in the past in an investigation by the prosecution of Perugia for arms dealing.

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from ANSA press agency, 06.24.2009

During the ceremony organized by the UNHCR in occasion of the world refugee day we learned of the rejection of a boat with 72 illegal immigrants on board. The 72 were taken on board a coast guard patrol boat and were then transferred at sea into a unit of the Libyan navy (that would be one of the three vessels with Italian-Libyan mixed crew). A note by the Interior Ministry says: “We have recently completed the transfer to Libyan authorities of 72 illegal immigrants, the majority of whom of Nigerian nationality (44 men and 28 women) during a joint Italian-Libyan operation against illegal immigration. Seen as none of the 72 illegal immigrants has expressed the will to seek asylum, jointly with the Libyan authorities, the migrants were transferred to a unit of the Libyan navy that will take them back to Tripoli”.

## TURKEY'S OTTOMAN EMPIRE NOSTALGIA



Since the early days of the Arab Springs, Turkey has been rediscovering its vocation for an hegemonic role in the Middle East and in North Africa. Building on its powerful military, its renewed economic strength and its Muslim connotation, Ankara is reviving its ancient glory. It is a choice that is definitely related to Turkey's difficulties in joining the European Union; it has found fertile ground in the political instability in the region; has been favored by the fact that the government in Ankara is guided by the leader of an Islamic party like Recep Erdogan and is now freed from a controversial close relationship with Israel. From a subordinate political position with respect to Europe and NATO, Ankara has now become a central player in Middle Eastern affairs.

Turkey now plays across the board: they are initially hostile and then become neutral with regard to an armed intervention in Libya (in the hope of carving out a role of mediation which did not follow). They host on their territory the Syrian political and armed opposition while at the same time Ankara is negotiating options or diplomatic sanctions against Damascus together with the U.S. and the Arab League, but clearly opposing an armed intervention. Prime Minister Ergodan visited Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, the Arab League in a crescendo of relationships and proposals. Turkey is increasing its influence in NATO, is developing unopposed military operations against the Kurds in Iraq and is colonizing Iraqi Kurdistan economically.

Politically, Ankara has appropriated the democratization process in the Middle East by establishing close relations with the new leaderships, while it has broken its relations with Israel. In all this, on U.S. request Turkey has decided to authorize the installation on its territory of a radar system against Iran, but at the same time it is collaborating with Tehran in the fight against the Kurds (there was also talk of a possible joint military operation in Iraqi Kurdistan). Finally, Ankara cooperates with France on Syria, but then enters into collision with Paris on the Armenian genocide.

## **New-Ottomans**

Behind all this activism, is Turkey's desire to be the star of a new political and social order that is sweeping through the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa. There is also the Turkish belief - supported by the statements of those involved – that the strategic importance that the U.S., NATO and Europe now grant to Ankara is essential for any future balance in the region. If you add to this: Turkish nationalism which has been fueled by the role of the military over the years, the ill-concealed pride of being a military and economic power (Turkey is the 13th economy in the world) and the desire - better said ambition - to return to the glory and prestige of the past, we reach the conclusion that this phase of expansionism is nonetheless aimed at re-establishing a military-political-economic Turkish "neo-Ottomanism".

Here is an analysis of the current trend of Turkish politics and the strategies:

The freezing of the relations between Tel Aviv and Ankara took place in the wake of the attack against the Turkish ship "Marvi Marmara" by Israeli forces on May 31, 2010. In order to prevent her from reaching Gaza, nine Turkish nationals were killed by the Israelis. The situation was exacerbated by the failed Israeli apology and by the Palmer Commission's controversial opinion that led to the breakup of the bilateral diplomatic relations. Prior to that, in 2006 Turkey had condemned the Israeli attack on Lebanon and in 2009 the embargo on Gaza. The Turkish decision, combined with a subsequent and overt declaration on Palestinian rights (including the request for recognition of a Palestinian state at the UN), gained strong sympathies in the Arab world. But it has also caused a shift in alliances in the region, with Israel approaching Cyprus, Greece and Armenia and Turkey getting closer to the post-Mubarak Egypt and Palestine. In the background stands the fight for the control of the hydrocarbon reserves in the southern Mediterranean;

After the fall of Mubarak, the weakening of the strategic axis between Egypt and Saudi Arabia has allowed Ankara, in the absence of adequate competition, to exercise the role of leading country in the region. Since February 2011, at the beginning of the first rallies in Cairo, Erdogan had spoken to Mubarak inviting him to crush the opposition. After the fall of the Rais, the Turkish PM then embarked on a triumphal tour in Cairo along with about 200 entrepreneurs to strengthen the economic relations (Turkey exports approximately 3 billion dollars worth of products a year to Egypt), to formalize a strategic relationship (Erdogan proposed the creation of a bilateral strategic Council) and to export Turkey's secular Islamic model (in this case going into apparent collision with the Muslim Brotherhood). The creation of an axis, now only political and economic, but hopefully tomorrow also military, between the strongest country in the region (Turkey) and the most influential one in the Arab world (Egypt) is a key element of the Turkish penetration in the region;

The strategic importance of Turkey as a bridge and a crossroads between Asia and Europe, now geographically emphasized by the instability in the Middle East, was quickly transformed by Ankara in a negotiating element in the relationship with the U.S. and Europe. Turkey wants to represent American interests in the area - obviously with margins of maneuver for its own interests - to the detriment of the same role now played by Israel. They intend to do so thanks to the renewed prestige of a country that feels it can negotiate without any complexes with the leaders of the world. Ankara is savoring the taste of revenge against the European Union and their refusal of a Turkish membership in the EU.

The penetration of Turkish politics in the region has taken up the space once occupied by Saudi Arabia in the Arabian Peninsula. During the various Arab Springs, Riyadh has dedicated resources to the support of extremist religious groups. Ankara instead has worked in favor of moderate popular movements. Turkey intervenes in the region careless of the conflict between Sunnis and Shiites and does not play with religious orthodoxy. Ankara has therefore more room for maneuvering. Moreover, Turkish secularism as opposed to Saudi Wahabi Islamic fundamentalism is far more acceptable to Western powers. At the same time, Riyadh is concerned by the potential contagion that may arise from the libertarian gusts blowing in the region. In this regard, Turkish concerns are limited. Democracy and human rights are a tool for the Turks, while they are a reason for concern for the Saudis;

The electoral victories by Recep Erdogan and his success limiting the role of the military have allowed the leader of the AKP to pursue a more Islamic-centric foreign policy. In this new configuration Turkey has the ability to export its Islamic secular model as opposed to other extremist religious approaches;

Turkey is currently also benefiting from other favorable exogenous circumstances: the Greek economic instability (Turkey's eternal rival and competitor), the possible transit of pipelines from their Asian deposits to Europe, its growing influence in the Caucasus.

## **New Challenges**

The problem now facing Turkey is whether it will be capable of turning a series of favorable events into a stable political and economic sphere of influence at both a regional and possibly continental level. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish foreign policy had suffered a steep decline with respect to the former territories under its domain. A first phase of rejection, caused perhaps by a never dormant nationalism, led Ankara to refuse to treat with equal dignity the newly established States once under the Ottoman umbrella. For decades followed a Turkish foreign policy geared on isolationism and on the differences with the Arab world (the Turks being not Arabic), rather than on the commonalities (the Islamic religion was in ideological opposition with Ataturk's Islamic secularism). Erdogan's Turkey's has reversed the terms of the approach in the country's foreign policy. Religion has become a vehicle of penetration, the Turkish political model is now offered as an example and not as a tool to differentiate the Turks from the Arabs.

A number of issues are still unresolved. The first one being what the real strategic aspiration of Turkish foreign policy is. Being the largest country in the Middle East – this being a theoretical element before the advent of the Arab Spring and now having taken shape - is taken for granted by the Turkish leadership - and not only for historical reasons - and thus may be only a tactical move in the direction of obtaining major objectives in the future. The Turkish desire to enter the European Union goes in this direction.

Then there is the issue of the increasing regional instability. If on one side this may favour Turkey's strategic importance, it could also determine a contagious backfire. We should not forget about the Kurdish problem with the upsurge in PKK attacks over recent months. This is an issue involving 15% of the Turkish population and concerning a geographic area spanning across Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran. The Syrian crisis, the American withdrawal from Iraq, Erdogan's intention to negotiate with the Kurds (which saw the opposition of the military but also of the PKK's extreme

wing) could trigger an escalation of terrorism.

Finally, we must not neglect the reactions from other political actors in the Middle East. While Turkey takes for granted its primacy in Middle Eastern affairs, it is not obvious whether such approach may be acceptable to other Arab countries. There is surely a conflict between the Turks and the Saudi's hegemonic interests in the Gulf. Egypt still has not the strength to exercise its cultural role in the Arab world, but this does not mean that it will passively accept Turkish expansionism in the future. In addition this, the Egypt of today - with the yet untouched role of the military leadership - could be radically different from the Egypt of tomorrow under the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood (who certainly have nothing in common with the Turkish view of Islam turkish) and/or the Salafists from the Nour (not coincidentally funded by Riyadh). Furthermore, there is Qatar's activism, whom, just like Turkey, has carved out a role for its policies during the various Arab Springs. This was done with the participation of its military in the bombing of Libya and continues thanks to the persuasive power of the al Jazeera network. The fact that Qatar is a small country is balanced by its economic and strategic importance as attributed by the U.S.. Finally there is Iran and its nuclear ambitions. They are a reason for concern to Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United States, but also for Turkey. What today is mere bilateral distrust or indifference could become outright hostility tomorrow.

In a nutshell, Turkey and its current Middle Eastern policy may provide opportunities to Ankara's expansionist intentions, but it could also become a source of problems. It is not enough to be a military power with a strong economy to assert a leading role in a region where instability is endemic, democracy is lacking and conflict is constantly forthcoming. It does not suffice to claim a historical legacy to claim a leading role over a geographical area. You cannot expect a re-edition of the Ottoman Empire with the same balance of forces and influences that it had in the past. It is not yet clear whether this concept has indeed been assimilated by Turkey.

## THE “GAS WAR”



The title of the present study may appear outdated or at least out of place in the current contingency in which the research efforts of modern technology are targeted primarily at renewable energy resources that produce no polluting emissions and reduce the use of depletable fossil fuels (coal, crude and natural gas) which are among the main causes of the pollution of the atmosphere (dust and gas emissions) and of the resulting climate change (the increase of temperature of the planet).

The "gas war" seems even more out of place if you are referring to the recent essay of energy expert Jeremy Rifkin ("the Third Industrial Revolution", October 2011) which, with no doubt, decreed the end of the carbon era and predicts a fair and sustainable future in which:

- hundreds of millions of people around the world will produce green energy in their homes, in factories and offices;
- they will share this same energy with others in the same way they now share information through the Internet.

If this is a potential scenario for the future, the media is currently depicting a new "Cold War" evolving around natural gas between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Following the trail of the era that ended in 1991 during which competed the rival spheres of ideological influence - communism and liberalism – the new cold war is now fought to control the markets, namely the natural gas markets, that affect the lifestyle of the world and, in particular, of European countries.

The United States do not suffer from the considerable dependence that European countries have on the Russian Federation in terms of supplies of natural gas. The U.S., in an attempt to reduce this "interference", have encouraged modern technologies for the production of a type of gas known since the end of World War II: shale gas. It is not easy to extract and it is contained in-between horizontal layers of shale rocks.

In recent years, the extraction technique has been developed following both the depletion of some conventional gas deposits and the increased demand for gas. Currently conventional gas is the one extracted with a traditional technique, through the drilling perpendicularly though the earth's surface; non-conventional gas is instead the one contained between two layers of shale, shale gas.

To extract it a far more advanced technique of extraction is required:

- Firstly, the vertical drilling (as for the conventional gas) is used to reach the chosen layer of schistose rock;
- Secondly, the procedure requires the "horizontal crushing" of the rocks during which water at very high pressure mixed with chemical additives and sand is pumped against the schistose layer until an "output corridor" for gas is obtained (chemical additives facilitate the crushing; the sand serves to purpose of keeping the output corridor open).

The U.S. has considerable reserves of shale gas, as we shall see in the following table. Furthermore, shale gas has a greater carbon content if compared to conventional gas and therefore a higher yield.

We should also highlight, for the purposes of putting the new "Cold War" in its updated version, that the State Department for Energy has recently authorized U.S. group "Cheniere Energy" to start the export of shale gas on international markets. It is clear that the United States aspire to reduce the Russian interference and are trying to create an alternative for European countries in the supply of gas.

### GAS RESERVES COMPARISON

| Area                          | Conventional Reserves (billion m <sup>3</sup> ) | Non-conventional Reservers (billion m <sup>3</sup> ) | Comparison between the two reserves (1) |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|
| North America                 | 8,8   | 109  | +                                       |
| South America                 | 7,5   | 60   | +                                       |
| Europe                        | 4,8   | 15,5   | +                                       |
| Former USSR countries         | 18  | 56,5   | +                                       |
| <b>Middle East and Africa</b> | 87,4  | 80   | -                                       |
| Central Asia and China        | 5,6   | 100  | +                                       |
| Oceania                       | 6,6   | 74   | +                                       |

- (1) : + in favour of "non conventional" reserves;  
 - in favour of "conventional" reserves.

At this stage we should introduce a further important aspect of this topic: at present, does a gas war have any sense at all since air pollution and the resulting climate change are mainly attributable to the use of "exhaustible" fossil energy resources?

Why are we not using only renewable sources of energy that do not produce emissions? There are numerous answers to these questions:

the high cost of renewable energy sources' systems (photovoltaic, wind, etc.);

psychological concerns against the risk of nuclear power plants as a result of a series of catastrophic events (Chernobyl, Fukushima, etc.);

the difficulties faced by the recycling of solid waste for biomass;

the indifference of the international community, distracted by more immediate needs and pressing against climate change, and the absence of a global governance regarding this specific area.

In summary, the road for the survival of the planet is well known, in some cases we're on our way, in others we are facing hurdles that could take us to the so-called "point of no return", when no further corrective action will be effective anymore. For how long? And in the meantime?

At present, natural gas still maintains its role as a vital source of energy for various reasons, the main ones are:

as already stated, the absence of a "global governance" capable of imposing a law (not a framework convention, as the Kyoto Protocol) defining the measures to be implemented and the ones against the countries defaulting;

the plants using "renewable" energy resources are still not economically competitive; the definition of the rules of behavior and associated fines have been postponed (see the conclusions of the recent summit in Durban), pending a binding agreement that will come into force only in 2020;

according to a recent report presented in Bologna (*Salone internazionale dell'Industrializzazione Edilizia*) on October 7 2011, Italy has produced 11% of its energy through renewable resources in 2010. By contrast, Italy is number one in the world for the number of solar panel plants installed in one year (2010) having doubled the power generated by them in 2010 from 3.6 gigawatts to 6.9 gigawatts in 2011.

The confirmation of the role of gas as a primary "utility" also involves the hunting and hoarding of new deposits. It is during such clashes that the media talk about "gas wars" and pose the question "is this still the Cold War?".

This is especially the case when the location of the gas fields or the territories through which a pipeline will pass are still matter of controversy.

Here we shall limit ourselves to the contrasts in the eastern Mediterranean, between the two

Cypruses ("Aphrodite" field) and between Israel and Lebanon ("Leviathan" field), and in the Black Sea between Russia and Ukraine over the supply of natural gas to Europe through Ukraine.

### **Eastern Mediterranean**

The existing tensions between the two republics on the island of Cyprus (Greek Cyprus and Turkish Cyprus) has been aggravated with the start of the drilling on September 12, 2011 by Greek Cyprus of the "Aphrodite" field, on the southern end of the disputed island. The reserve is located in the "Exclusive Economic Zone" in Greek Cyprus. The local government has contracted for the exploitation of the field a U.S. Company, "Noble Energy", acting in joint venture with an Israeli company.

Turkey, on the basis of a previous agreement signed with Northern Cyprus, has put in place the monitoring and surveillance of the Aphrodite field believing that the proceeds from the future exploitation should also be shared with the Turkish Cypriots (this is the heart of the dispute); Turkey has also deployed warships in the Aegean Sea, disputed between Turkey and Greece.

Please note that Northern Cyprus has been under Turkish influence since 1974 (year of the military coup in Greece and the following Turkish invasion in the Northern part of the island) and until 1983 when it obtained independence and was "federated" to Turkey that still keeps a detachment of 35 thousand Turkish soldiers in Cyprus.

The EU, for its part, has sought to reduce the tension between the two Cypruses and has attempted to revive the attempts for the reunification of the two republics. An impossible mission given the 2004 special referendum in which Greek Cyprus declared it was against any reunification.

A similar controversy is taking place in the south-east of the island facing the Mediterranean coast between Israel and Lebanon for the exploitation of the "Leviathan" field, with an estimated capacity of 280 billion cubic meters, following an agreement between the aforementioned U.S. Company "Noble Energy" and the Israeli "Delek".

Israel proclaims its ownership on the field against the interference of Lebanon while the Lebanese President, Michel Suleiman, on September 5<sup>th</sup> last year met with the CEO of ENI, Paolo Scaroni. The meeting, according to the media, highlighted the willingness of the company ENI / Gazprom-Russian to get their hands on "Leviathan" gas in order to convey it through the "South Stream" gas pipeline, which will be mentioned later.

### **Black Sea ( Russia and Ukraine)**

During the final phases of the Cold War, Ukraine has come to be in a state of subordination and, more generally, cultural marginalization with respect to the Soviet Union. This subordination had become an "indissoluble union" whereby many young Ukrainians chose to "exile" to Russia, the Russian language became a guarantee of future success and accommodation once schooling was over.

However, certain events led to the breaking of this union:

-The nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in 1986 (we are in the early years of "perestroika" by Gorbachev);

-the creation in Ukraine of the Ukrainian People's Movement (1989), a mass movement that brought together nationalists and "communist reformers" with the objective of recovering the wealth looted from Moscow and giving birth to democratic reforms.

With independence (August 24, 1991), the first presidents of the Republic were from the Communist Party (Leonid Kravchuk, Leonid Kucma) and guaranteed the control of the country, despite difficulties in various areas of management.

Then, with Russia facing internal instability, Ukraine also showed its weaknesses:

-a Russian-speaking minority in the East (from Kiev to the border with Russia);

-an economy characterized by the exhaustion of coal deposits: it was therefore necessary to acquire gas supplies from abroad. To be underlined that the pipeline infrastructures through its territory belong to Ukraine;

-the Crimea issue (an autonomous region in the post-Soviet period) with the port of Sevastopol leased to Russia and the distribution of the Black Sea fleet (with the "best bits" ceded to the Russian Federation).

At the ideological level, all this has been reflected into the splitting of the Ukrainian population between those "for" and "against" Russia, or rather pro-Russian and pro-Western. In this regard, the presidential elections of 2004 witnessed an event of great importance: the so-called "orange revolution", from the color of the scarves worn by the pro-western rallies. The elections were won by Viktor Yanukovich, pro-Russian, but the outcome was not accepted by Viktor Yushchenko and Julia Tymoshenko's pro-western party that claimed the results were rigged. Following a protest in the streets, the runoff was repeated and was won by Viktor Yushenko, pro-Western, whose mandate began on January 23, 2005.

The "gas war" between Russia, in the role of the main supplier of gas (though at reduced prices), and Ukraine, whose heavy industry was threatened by the exhaustion of coal deposits on its territory and whose population faced difficult times during the winter, falls in this context.

When Ukraine requested to reduce the price it paid for gas, Russia responded that, in case of insolvency, supplies would have been suspended. Ukraine reacted by shifting on its own network the quantities of gas destined for Europe. Russia reacted and raised the price of gas to market prices. In summary, the contract for the supply of gas from Russia to Ukraine reflects the evolution of relations between the two countries and the struggle for leadership between pro-Western and pro-Russians that has been taking place in Kiev.

In this regard in 2009, during the negotiations for a new contract for the supply of gas, the Ukrainian Prime Minister in office, Julia Tymoshenko, although pro-Western, attempted a rapprochement with Moscow following disagreements with President Viktor Yushenko, also namely pro-Western. The contract signed was strongly in favor of Russia and led to the denunciation of Tymoshenko who was sentenced to seven years of imprisonment and the disqualification from public office for three

years.

Returning to the price of gas supplies, the last episode was the Treaty of Kharkiv (Ukraine) in April 2010; with this treaty the President of the Republic Janukovich has tried to solve two problems that most beset the management of Kiev:

-the price of gas supplies to Ukraine: \$ 226 per 1000 cubic meters (compared to 336 USD of the 2009 contract);

-the extension of the lease of the Sevastopol naval base until 2042.

As highlighted previously, it should be noted that the Russian gas pipeline on the territory of Ukraine does not guarantee the necessary continuity of operation; to short-circuit this issue and to counter to Ukraine, Moscow has resorted to the construction of two alternative pipelines: the North Stream and the South Stream, the latter would compete with another project, the "Nabucco" pipeline supported by the European Union and the United States in order to reduce the excessive dependence on Russia in terms of supplies of gas!

### **Let's look at some their features:**

-The North Stream is ready to supply northern Europe once the connection between on-shore (which pass through Russian territory) and offshore (across the Baltic Sea) sections are completed. The project, initiated in 2002, was signed in 2005 by a partnership between the Russian company Gazprom, as the majority shareholder (51%), and associated companies in Germany, Holland, and France. The executive director of the project is former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. In September last year the North Stream gas pipeline was connected to the European distribution network. As for 2012 the North Stream will "move" 55 billion cubic meters of gas annually. The imports of gas in Europe in 2007 were 312 billion cubic meters. They will reach 512 billion cubic meters in 2030;

-South Stream will allow the transit of 65 billion cubic meters of gas annually. The project stems from an agreement between Gazprom and Italian oil and gas company ENI in 2008. Gazprom (50% shareholder) has extended the participation of companies from other countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Greece, Serbia, Croatia). The international agreement allowing this new pipeline was signed in 2009 in Sochi, a city on the Black Sea, and both PM Putin and Berlusconi were present. The route of the pipeline is 900 km long and stems from the Black Sea at a depth of up to 2000 meters. The construction will last 5 years and should be completed by 2014.

The "Nabucco" pipeline competes with the North Stream and South Stream projects. It was initially proposed by Austrian company OMV and the Turkish Botas in 2002 with the support of the European Union and of the United States. The development phase began in 2005 with the signature of the members who joined the project between 2005 and 2008. The countries involved are: Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Austria and Germany. The fee is 16.6% for each member.

However, according to recent updates, the Nabucco project is losing interest in relation to the possible purchase by Russia of the existing pipeline infrastructure in Ukraine and thus the U.S.-EU pipeline would face the following developments:

-the supply for the Nabucco pipeline would face difficulties originating from the competition from China for the gas fields in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan;

-furthermore, Turkey has already signed an agreement with Azerbaijan to build a gas pipeline in Anatolia to be fed with the production of the Azeri field "Shah Deniz";

-therefore, the Nabucco pipeline could be economically replaced by two pipelines (two "joints" of the South Stream) with lower capacity but less expensive. This would put out of the game the plan of the United States and the European Union to balance Russia's gas supplies to Europe.

## **Conclusions**

Through the events taken into account thus far, we can now affirm that some sort of gas wars are actually taking place. There are other strategic areas of the planet where further "outbreaks" of conflicts related to new deposits in disputed waters and/or to the definition of the ownership of such reserves are already taking place. One refers to the Arctic Ocean (continental shelf of the North Pole), others are in the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean...

But to put it in jargon, what about climate change? Is it possible to underestimate the predictions of industry experts that affirm that by the end of the century (2100) the global temperature will rise by two degrees with the serious risk of surpassing the the point of no return? It is an inescapable problem that involves the responsibility of the entire international community who has the role of solving the issue. Yes, but how?

The definition of a solution is a complex task because several factors will contribute, some of which cannot be determined yet. The outcome of the Durban Summit on Climate Change (November 28 - 9 December 2011) highlights the criteria and the potential guidelines that will be turned into concrete measures, at least referring to the period running from 2012-2020, with controls assigned to certain regional institutions. In fact in Durban:

-the end of the Kyoto Protocol was postponed to 2020;

-a "green fund" of \$ 100 billion USD was established to help developing countries in developing enforce measures against global warming and floods;

-above all, on the basis of a proposal from the United States (that at the time had not signed the Kyoto Protocol), an "ad hoc group" tasked with drafting a binding agreement on climate change that will go in effect in 2020 has been appointed