

Forum Académique sur la Sécurité en Europe (F.A.S.E.)
Edition 2010: L'Europe et le Moyen-Orient: l'heure de l'UE?

Résumés des interventions / Abstracts



Strasbourg, 30 et 31 mars 2010
Institut des hautes études européennes (IHEE)

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PANEL 1

L'Iran entre défis et opportunités *Iran: challenge or opportunity?*

1.1

The strategic preferences of Iran and the future of Iranian-American relations

Arshin Adib-Moghaddam

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London

Abstract [EN]

What are the strategic preferences of the Iranian state? This question has been at the heart of the 'Persian puzzle' that western decision-makers have been trying to put together at least since the Islamicised revolution in 1979. It is a central question indeed, for it sets the parameters for the international politics of the country and the foreign policies of Iran towards the outside world. It explains Iran's hostility to the Taliban and al-Qaeda type movements, the country's suspicion towards the United States in particular and 'the west' in general, and its agonistic policies towards the Israeli state. It is imperative, thus, to start with a sober analysis of the way Iran has been conceptualizing and pursuing the national interest of the state; with an assessment of the psychology that makes Iranian decision-makers tick. To that end, this paper will present a cultural genealogy of the strategic preferences of Iran and will carve out areas of mutual interest with the 'west' and the zones of conflict that have hampered movement towards rather more amicable relations.

1.2

A new EU-Iranian energy partnership to enhance European energy security

Antonio Dai Pra

European Consulting Brussels

Abstract [EN]

Over the last decade energy security has become one of the most important issues for European Union and its Member States. The chronic lack of energy resources associated to the unreliability of its most important gas suppliers spur the EU to further diversify its supplies of gas. At the same time the strong demographic growth and the lack of investments in the development of new gas and oil fields impose Iran to start reconsidering the role of foreign investors in its economy. This paper asserts the feasibility for an energy partnership between the EU and Iran, evaluating the political and economic implications of such a strong cooperation. A strong European commitment to support the modernization and the development of the Iranian oil and gas industry can allow Iran to strengthen its role in the EU energy market, increasing EU energy security and decreasing the Russian threats over the old continent.

PANEL 2

L'Europe dans le conflit arabo-israélien: l'heure de l'UE,
mais l'UE est-elle à l'heure?

*Europe's involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict: the hour of the EU,
but is the EU on time?*

2.1

The business of politics, the politics of business: turning EU Economic power into political influence

Rory Miller

King's College, University of London

Abstract [EN]

This talk will examine how Europe has attempted to transform its economic success in the Middle East into political influence in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Up to the present day the received wisdom remains that a rise in economic ties will lead to a rise in political influence. And yet, nowhere has the Community's belief that its impressive economic success be translated into political influence been so regularly rebuffed. Nowhere has the common accusation that the EU is an "economic giant but a political pygmy", appeared to be more apt.

2.2

The EU and the Arab-Israeli conflict: towards a new diplomatic engagement?

Amnon Aran

City University London

Abstract [EN]

Since the collapse of the Oslo Peace Process between Israel and the Palestinians in September 2000, the trajectory of Arab-Israeli relations has been one of conflict intensification. Military confrontations – the Second Palestinian Intifada, the Israel-Hezbollah 2006 War, and the 2008-2009 Gaza War – have been one fuelling factor. Domestic and international political developments have been another. These include: the expansion of Jewish settlements and the shift of the Israeli political landscape to the right; the divide in the Palestinian national movement and the establishment of Hamas as a leading force in Palestinian politics; Iran's growing military, economic, and political involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

These political and military developments are endangering the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a bi-laterally negotiated two state solution. At the same time, however, this solution is still deemed by the international community, under the leadership of the US, as the basis for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the broader Arab-Israeli dispute. This seeming paradox, I shall argue, presents the European Union (EU) with the opportunity of assuming a leading diplomatic role in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.

PANEL 3

“Quitte ou double”: l’Afghanistan au carrefour
des relations entre l’UE et les Etats-Unis

“Take it or leave it”: Afghanistan at the crossroad of EU-US relations

3.1

Obama and Afghanistan: a reality check for European expectations

Alessandro Marrone

Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

Abstract [EN]

The election of Barack Obama raised high expectations in Europe about a new American multilateral approach to Middle East. These expectations have been disappointed with regard to Afghanistan. Indeed, the Obama administration has undertaken a unilateral review of the ISAF’s strategy with little engagement of European partners, which have witnessed the year-long debate in the US with marginal influence on the final decision. Decision which in turn reverses, to a certain extent, previous unanimously agreed NATO commitments on Afghanistan, and implies a dramatic increase of US troops. At the same time, Europe’s difficulties to speak with a single voice on Afghanistan and to make available adequate resources encourage the US to think and act unilaterally, despite of the European efforts to put the new strategy in a multilateral framework epitomized by the London conference. Part of the reasons of these developments also lie in the different views of multilateralism and war on the two sides of Atlantic, which have not radically changes since Obama’s election.

In conclusion, Obama seems to be more in line with past American presidents than the Europeans thought in 2008, and the cultural, political and capabilities gap between Europe and the US persists.

3.2

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): the best example of international military cooperation

Krzysztof Danielewicz

Eurocorps

Abstract [EN]

During the lecture the author will present a short history of Afghan wars from XIX to XXI century, the history of USA and NATO (ISAF) involvement in Afghanistan as well as the current ISAF structure and Polish military participation in Afghanistan. The author will prepare a Power Point presentation based on his practical experience from ISAF in 2007 and 2008, so as to provide the audience with an opportunity to see and learn from ISAF mission through soldier’s eyes.

PANEL 4

Le multilatéralisme finalement?

Les relations transatlantiques et l'avenir du Moyen-Orient

Multilateralism at last? Transatlantic relations and the future of the Middle East

4.1

Between Ploutos and Pallas Athene: the impact of EU diplomacy in the Middle East

Monica Gheorghita

Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Roumanie

Abstract [EN]

In Winston Churchill's words, nations behave wisely once they have exhausted all the other alternatives. This applies equally to the Middle East experience.

Stabilizing the broader Middle East region is the defining strategic challenge of our times. It is a challenge in diplomatic, economic and military terms, given the multifaceted stakes involved and the intricate links between the forces that shape the conflicts. US and EU diplomacies cannot pursue a policy menu *à la carte*. A successful approach to the Middle East issues needs a comprehensive strategy that requires all partners to be active and creative, since what happens in the region fundamentally affects European and American interests. For Europe, we talk about a neighborhood issue. After the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, it has become a duty for EU to be both payer and full player in the region.

4.2

Les Etats-Unis et l'Europe : partenaires ou concurrents ?

Denis Bauchard

Institut français des relations internationales (IFRI)

Abstract [FR]

Depuis des siècles, l'intérêt de l'Europe pour le Moyen-Orient s'est toujours affirmé, non sans rivalités entre les puissances européennes. L'arrivée relativement tardive des Etats-Unis sur la scène – leur engagement politique peut être daté de la fameuse rencontre entre le président Roosevelt et Ibn Séoud le 14 février 1945 – a fondamentalement changé la donne. Aux désaccords sur la politique à suivre, se sont ajoutées des rivalités économiques et la volonté d'affirmer un leadership. Cette confrontation a pris un tour aigu avec l'administration Bush. Avec le président Obama, il semble que les Etats-Unis et l'Union Européenne puissent établir un véritable partenariat et conjuguer leurs efforts pour faire du Moyen-Orient une zone de paix et de prospérité. Mais le chemin sera sans doute long et semé d'embûches.