



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Master's Degree in International Relations - Global Studies

Chair in History of International Relations

Enrico Mattei and Aldo Moro:

Shaping the Mediterranean Détente in the Cold War

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Introduction

On 27th October 1962, Enrico Mattei died in a plane crash. His death is still a mystery. The man, who turned ENI into a world force, led Italy to play a pivotal and autonomous role in the Middle East and North Africa, challenging not only the oil Companies, but also the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Enrico Mattei figured out the importance of engaging in constructive dialogues with several Middle Eastern and North African countries, making the dialogue across the Mediterranean a purely Italian initiative. Mattei, alongside with several Christian Democrat leaders, aimed at ensuring Italy a place into the post-war oil order and endeavored to pursue bilateral relations with producer countries. That Mediterranean dialogue would turn out to be the embryonal stage of a longer path which will take the shapes of a Mediterranean Détente in the late Sixties. This thesis will focus on the Italian foreign policy which aimed at having a voice in the changing and mangled Mediterranean context during the Cold War. Two men, Enrico Mattei and Aldo Moro, will devise the Italian approach to the Mediterranean area: they laid the groundwork for a special relationship with the Arab countries, by assuring Italy room for an autonomous role in the Middle East and North Africa. By taking into account the choices of these two actors in dealing with the Mediterranean dimension, the analysis will center around three key issues: the Italian approach to the post-war oil order in the Mediterranean area during the Fifties and the Sixties; the Italian role in dealing with the escalating Arab-Israeli conflict after the 1967 June War; and the Italian ambitions and limits in the decade of the oil shock and during the Eighties. Each topic contributes to better explain the path towards the Mediterranean Détente process-building. Mediterranean Détente means referring to a deeply rooted strategy whose evolution will be analysed beginning with the embryonic steps in creating a dialogue between Italy on the one hand and the Middle East and North Africa on the other hand. The first chapter will investigate the early stages of the Mediterranean Détente and the figure and choices of Enrico Mattei in order to better explain how Italy behaved in finding its place in the oil market. A deepening of the oil market will explain the context in which Mattei acted. As it will be specified later, the oil market evolution and the increasing relevance of oil in all industrialized countries paved the way for a new era based on a race to monopolize natural resources so that, in the early Twentieth century, Middle Eastern and North African countries, as oil-rich zones, turned out to be the centre of attraction for world Powers and mighty Companies. Western Powers and the so-called Seven Sisters endeavoured to take control of oil business, by exerting vigorous imperialism on producer countries. The Seven Sisters were as a State within a State. They have established a monopolistic cartel so as to handle their business with no limits. In that context, Enrico Mattei was presented with the occasion to play a lead role in the Mediterranean by encouraging colonies toward national independence,

giving them economic support. In the early Fifties, Mattei was able to take advantage from the spreading Arab nationalism and the increasing decolonization process that undermined Western imperialism to which Italy was strongly opposed. ENI was the key instrument allowing Mattei to engage in energy and trade relations with Middle Eastern and North African countries: ENI, that was established in 1953, provided producer countries with technical and training assistance, by challenging the Seven Sisters affairs and Western imperialism. In the first chapter, the Suez Crisis will be considered as a watershed in the history of ENI in the Middle East and North Africa, since it will allow Italy to gain a favoured channel of communication with several Mediterranean countries, especially Egypt. Western imperialism was seriously affected after the October 1956 Suez Crisis that produced the Anglo-French retreat in the Middle East, by giving Italy the chance to fill that vacuum. In addition, the Crisis put the Western oil Companies on the defensive and made ENI capable of challenging even the oil cartel order. Suez Crisis laid the groundwork for an Italian dynamism in the Mediterranean. Not by chance, ENI's autonomous policies mounted in 1957 and found their apex in the revolutionary Mattei formula that broke the fifty-fifty formula regulating the oil concessions order. The fifty-fifty formula allowed the country to keep just the half of the profits from the oil sales and it could not exert any power on the Companies which operated on the soil of the oil producing country. Mattei formula allowed the oil producing countries to gain the 75% of the profits coming from the oil sales and it provided for the establishment of a mixed society made up of the foreign oil Company and the granting authority, which was actively involved in the exploration and production of oil and in exploiting activities. Italy, which, through ENI, flanked oil producing countries in boosting their economic development wanted to present itself as a Mediterranean bridge and a mediator between the Arab leaders and the Atlantic alliance. However, the US had always looked suspiciously to ENI autonomous policies in the Middle East and North Africa: indeed, Americans and British protested to Italy after the implementation of the 75-25 formula, by alerting that subverting the fifty-fifty formula rule would have harmed the political stability of the Middle East. Mattei did not take care of the Anglo-American warnings and moved forward with his plans. Mattei acted according to specific needs he had to satisfy and he always sought to take advantage from the international context dynamics, challenging the US oil politics and supremacy in the contended Mediterranean area. The US feared that ENI might encourage oil-producing countries to become even more autonomous and after ENI signed an agreement with the USSR in 1959, the US supposed Mattei's ambitions could pose Italy into a position of subservience to the Soviet Block. Not surprisingly, Mattei collected several enemies during his career. Nevertheless, he neither denied nor abandoned his project of leading Italy to defend an area of great interest where it could play an exclusive role. In addition, Mattei, capable of affecting the Italian political scenario, could often rely on the DC political exponents

who strengthened Italy's pro-Arab image. Especially Fanfani's Neo-Atlantist leadership aimed at maintaining loyalty to the Atlantic spectrum, while increasing Italy's international and autonomous role in the Mediterranean. However, Mattei's autonomous initiatives had never fitted with the interest of the US and the Atlantic Powers, which limited Italian ambitions in the Mediterranean. But, as it will be explained in the late first chapter, Italy had differed from the other Western States in that it did not exert an imperialistic power to deal with Arab countries; furthermore, Italy spoke the language of emancipation and economic development. Mattei's efforts and strategies to deal and dialogue with Mediterranean countries enshrined the first step in a much larger plan which was predicted to evolve in the years to follow. Indeed, in the late Sixties, it was soon clear that Mattei's policies had produced a vital legacy for the Italian foreign policy. In the wake of Mattei's dynamism and Fanfani's Mediterranean vocation, the Italian involvement in the Middle Eastern and North African area will be the core of Moro's foreign policy during the years to follow. The second chapter will examine Moro's Mediterranean diplomacy implemented to extend the ongoing process of détente in the changing Middle East, where the Arab-Israeli conflict was escalating. The second chapter wants to show the evolution of the Mediterranean Détente which started as an energy and trade relation and then turned into a political dialogue between Italy and the Mediterranean countries. Moro's interest in the international issues increased in the second half of the Sixties, after the Six Day War. The Six Day War of 1967 produced long-term effects on international policies in the Mediterranean. Namely, the Six Day War internationalized the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and made the Mediterranean a crucial political issue for Italy as well. The conflict has deep roots, which will be analyzed at the beginning of the second chapter in order to assess how Italy and other Powers behaved to deal with the Mediterranean crises. Moro and the Italian government suggested that a new dialogue between Western Europe and the Arab world should be promoted and the EEC should support the end of the Arab-Israeli war, and the establishment of more equitable relations between oil producers and oil consumers. According to Moro the Arab-Israeli conflict should become part of an autonomous policy leaded by the EEC and in this framework, Italy was predicted to play a vital role, while becoming a mediator between Israel and Arab countries. Over that context, Aldo Moro tried to forge the strategy of the double-equidistance: Moro adopted a neutral profile in dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict on the one hand, and he kept the Italian Mediterranean vocation alive, while assuring loyalty to the US international guidelines on the other hand. Moro's diplomacy experienced an evolution in the very late Sixties when the entire world was living a period of socio-political transition. That period of transition opened for a Détente of the relations between the two Blocks and Moro was presented with the occasion to extend that process of Détente to the Mediterranean, by pursuing an autonomous Mediterranean course that challenged the bipolar

system. Indeed, in 1970, Moro sponsored multiple meetings with Arab leaders and political exponents. He visited Morocco, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Iran, Egypt, and received the UAR Economic Minister, Zaki, the UAR Minister of Foreign Affairs Riad, and the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Abba Eban. Bilateral contacts between Italy and the Arab world were part of the Mediterranean Détente process building, in which the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict had to be addressed involving all the Mediterranean countries. Italy continued to maintain a special relationship with the Middle East and North Africa, while containing any tension with the US. Although Moro succeeded in strengthening a climate of mutual trust between Italy and the Arab countries, the Arab-Israeli conflict impeded any attempt of détente in that area, due to the increasing competition among regional and international actors. Indeed, several Middle Eastern and North African countries looked skeptically at the Western Powers and the attempt to promote a dialogue between Western Europe and the Arab World did not provide the desired result. Essentially, Moro aimed at establishing a more active international role for the EEC, which should talk to the Middle East with one voice by promoting energy policies which fitted with the Arab countries' interests. By establishing a more vigorous international role of the EEC, Moro would turn the Mediterranean Détente in an occasion to emancipate Europe from the bipolar system by acting autonomously and with one voice into the Mediterranean area but without jeopardizing the Atlantic dimension. However, Moro's initiatives went unheeded in the Western Europe and both the US and the USSR were unwilling to recognize the EEC any mediating or autonomous role, especially in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Essentially, the second chapter aims at showing the political evolution of the Mediterranean Détente which Italy carried out through bilateral contacts with Arab countries, by carving out an acting space that made the US look suspiciously at the Italian approach. Unfortunately, Moro's attempts to pacify the Mediterranean area collapsed with the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War in October 1973. The third chapter will primarily analyze the Yom Kippur War effects and later the Italian pro-Arab policy in the light of the resulting oil crisis and the terroristic attacks and hijackings at Leonardo Da Vinci-International Airport in December 1973. Until 1973, Moro was able to challenge Cold War constraints without dramatically damaging the Italian position into the Western Sphere; however, the US suspicions were intended to mount. Especially after the Yom Kippur War, Moro's focus continued to be the Palestinian refugee issue, while implementing a more pronounced pro-Arab-policy. The escalating Arab-Israeli conflict and the oil shock forced Moro to abandon the double equidistance strategy by engaging in a more vigorous Mediterranean policy in 1974, increasing Italian relations with the Arab world. Once again, Moro presented Italy as a sincere interlocutor for the Arab countries and all with ENI established new energy agreements. Concurrently, Moro wanted Italy to play a lead role in the Euro-Arab dialogue building-process which took its shapes soon after the oil shock that turned out

to be particularly detrimental for the Western countries. The Euro-Arab dialogue aimed at establishing energy dialogues and cooperation among Western consumer countries and producers. As it will be explained later, the US criticized the EEC autonomous role and showed its concern about the Italian policies in the Mediterranean framework. The US, felt excluded from that energy dialogue, answered back by limiting and arresting any of the EEC plan. The Yom Kippur War, the December 1973 airport attacks at Leonardo da Vinci–Fiumicino International Airport in Rome, and the Euro-Arab dialogue building-process pressed Moro to strengthen his Mediterranean Détente in a mangled Middle East, by trying to bring Détente where it had never appeared. Several times, Moro was said to challenge the US primacy by encouraging a radicalization of the Arab nationalism. The US globalism prevailed and Moro's voice went unheeded into the Atlantic alliance. Despite Italy suffered Mediterranean illusions, Moro defended the Italian Mediterranean vocation by pursuing Italy's Mediterranean interests regardless of Americans constrains, taking a clearer stance into the Arab-Israeli conflict, claiming for the Palestinians' rights protection and their political recognition. On 16th March 1978 Aldo Moro was kidnapped and finally killed on 9th May. Unlike Mattei's plan crash, Moro's death is attributable to some culprits, however, his tragic fate still has some dark sides. Both Mattei and Moro left a significant legacy to the Italian foreign policy. In spite of a partial but significant realignment to the US in the Eighties, that will be discussed in the late third chapter, Italy proved to be capable of preserving and defending a vital dynamism in the Mediterranean by carrying out its own foreign policy even after Moro's death.

FIRST CHAPTER

BUILDING A MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE: THE ITALIAN APPROACH TO THE POST-WAR OIL ORDER

The scramble for oil erupted in the second half of the Twentieth century paving the way for a new era based on a race to monopolize natural resources. Oil, the new powerful variable of the century, substituted carbon and affected relations among international actors, reshaping political and economic balance. Italy attempted to find its place in the new oil market challenging previous orders. This chapter will focus on the Italian approach to gain a voice in the post-war oil order. The petroleum geopolitical context during the Fifties and Sixties will be analysed to better understand how the Italian scramble for oil developed. Although oil was considered the main hydrocarbon only after the war, its significant role was already evident to many western industrials and financiers in the first decades of the Twentieth century. Already in the mid Nineteenth century, streets were enlightened by oil and its consumption considerably increased soon after 1914, when for the first time the assembly line was used to produce the Ford T car¹. Adopting the assembly line as a means for producing cars meant lower production costs, lower prices, which supplied a higher demand for cars. When more people bought cars, gasoline, which is an oil derivative, became part of people's daily life. Moreover, it was said that carbon would be replaced by oil that would have been harnessed to fuel naval engines by assuring operative and storage advantages². Between the nineteenth and twentieth century, the demand for oil dramatically soared, especially in the US and Great Britain and emerging industrials took control of the oil business soon after.

¹ Clark Northrup, C. (2003). The American economy - A historical encyclopedia. ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara. p. 375.

² Dahl, J. Erik (2001). Naval Innovation. From coal to oil. Joint Force Quarterly. p. 50.

1.1 OIL MARKET EVOLUTION IN A PERIOD OF ENERGY TRANSITION

1.1.1 Building petroleum empires

Not by chance, the Americans John and William Rockefeller founded the first oil company in January 1870³. The company took the name of Standard Oil and extracted oil in twelve American States. Standard Oil grew up successfully and evolved into a holding in 1899, controlling other Companies and societies in America. In 1911 the US Supreme Court broke up the holding into thirty-four Companies to stop Standard Oil having a monopoly and for not complying with antitrust rules. Among the new dismembered companies, the powerful Standard Oil of New Jersey had to cut its crude oil reserves and was obliged to search for new sources abroad, looking at Middle East⁴. The very first authorization to extract oil in the Middle East dates back to 1901, when the Persian Mozaffar al-Din Shah Qajar allowed the British Australian engineer William Knox to fund a search for oil and minerals in Persia⁵. While William Knox D'Arcy was given the first oil concession (D'Arcy Concession), meaning that he would have the oil rights to a considerable part of the country, the Iranian government obtained 40.000 pounds and the 16% of the oil company's annual profits⁶. In 1904 d'Arcy, struggled with financial problems and asked the British Admiralty for economic support. The government department valued oil exploitation as a good deal from far-away lands: oil was useful for fuelling the Royal Navy no longer nourished by carbon. The government encouraged another company, English Burmah Oil⁷ to support d'Arcy's searches in Persia. The British government, by easing dialogue and agreements between d'Arcy and Burmah Oil, was establishing an important oil extraction zone just when American Standard Oil seemed interested in investing in that area as well. D'Arcy had the possibility to pursue his explorations in Persia and Burma and conquered a strategic position not far from India, which was the main and original operative market. Based on an agreement in 1905, Burmah had to finance explorations by injecting

³ Davids Hinton, D. and Olien R. M. (2002). Oil and ideology. The cultural creation of the American Petroleum Industry. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, London. p. 38-39. About Rockefeller petroleum affairs: Segall, G. (2001). John D. Rockefeller Anointed with Oil. Oxford University Press; Gould, J. (2006). Rockefeller: Monster Monopolist or Marketplace Hero? John D. Rockefeller and his Standard Oil Company were widely admired and just as widely despised. MindSparks, Culver City; Chernow, R. (1998). Titan The Life of John D. Rockefeller. Vintage Books A Division Of Random House Inc, New York.

⁴ Little D. (2007). American Orientalism: United States and the Middle East since 1945. The University of North Carolina Press, US. p. 85-89.

⁵ Yergin, D. (2008). The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 168.

⁶ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. p. 144.

⁷ The Burmah Oil Company was founded in Glasgow in 1866 by David Sime Cargill taking the name of Rangoon Oil Company. In the same year, after the annexation of the Burmese Kingdom in Upper Burma, all of Burma was brought under the British rule. Gradually, the British oil company expanded its market over Burma and India as the British Indian Government allowed them to do. See Segaram Arumugam, R. (1977). State and Oil in Burma: An Introductory Survey. Institute of East Asian Studies, Singapore. pp. 3-4.

capital. When oil was discovered a new drilling-company was established. The Anglo Persian Oil Company (APOC) was created on the 14th April 1909, one year after a significant oil deposit was found near the Persian Gulf. It was going to be the well-known British Petroleum, one of the most powerful oil Companies in the world⁸. After having built a modern refinery in Abadan district, the Burmah Company had to cope with the difficulties of refining oil due to a different and complex composition of the Persian hydrocarbon. Aware of the huge risk the new refinery was taking, the British government decided to support the APOC concession economically in Persia in exchange for a direct intervention of the management of the Company. It meant that the Company policy would have been affected by the government's urges and desires.

1.1.2 British Affairs in Mesopotamia

At the beginning of the twentieth century Britain controlled a substantial part of oil deposits in Persia. The APOC was not capable of getting concessions in the Ottoman Empire area and Calouste Gulbelkian, an Armenian financier who contributed to the Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC) creation in 1912, promoted the project. Even before the war, Mesopotamia had been the theatre of diplomatic and commercial disputes to get permissions for oil concessions. The TPC represented a new dangerous player on the scene against the British interests in Middle East, especially when the British turned out that the Deutsche Bank had transferred its claims for a concession to this entity⁹. The Deutsche Bank and Royal Dutch Shell¹⁰ held a quarter of the new Company each and the Turkish National Bank, which was a British controlled bank whose 30% owner was Calouste Gulbelkian, held the remaining share. Diplomatic Gulbenkian brought the rival British and German interest, and the Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch Shell as well, into the entity called TPC¹¹. The TPC was finally owned by Deutsche Bank (25%), Royal Dutch-Shell (25%) and Turkish National Bank (50%) that was mainly a British owned banking institute¹². The British government realised that its control in the Ottoman Empire area could be easily challenged by other competitive oil Companies and opted to promote a collaboration between the TPC and the APOC to create a consortium. The government worked successfully and on March 1914 the new consortium was finally established according to the following shares division: the APOC got half of the consortium

⁸ Petrini, F. (2016). *Imperi del profitto. Multinazionali petrolifere e governi nel XX secolo*, Franco Angeli, Milan. p. 79.

⁹ Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 169.

¹⁰ Royal Dutch-Shell was an Anglo-Dutch company established in 1907 after two different Companies (Royal Dutch and Shell) merged to face the giant American Standard Oil Company business.

¹¹ Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 171.

¹² Tonini, A. (2003). *Il sogno proibito. Mattei, il petrolio arabo e le sette sorelle*, Edizioni Polistampa, Florence. p. 23.

property, Gulbenkian took the 5%, and the Royal Dutch Shell and the Deutsche Bank divided the rest¹³. The British government acted as a mediator in negotiations but also acquired APOC shares to make sure that a British Company would be part of Turkish Petroleum. A partnership between the public and private was born in order to ensure the full control of the oil zone for Great Britain. The German and British ambassadors urged the Turkish government to agree in providing a TPC oil concession, as TPC hadn't had any formal guarantee to the right to exploit oil in the Ottoman Empire. It was too late: when the Gran Vizier sent a letter allowing the extraction of oil from Mosul and Baghdad, then world war I happened. It meant that rights to extractions in that area had been granted by a government that no longer existed in 1919. Around the same time, the US were afraid of running out of domestic reserves of oil, while expanding its market abroad. Standard Oil of New Jersey (now Standard Oil) feared the British primacy in Mesopotamia, perceiving it as a dangerous competitor, which was imposing a monopoly over an entire area. American concern grew during the war, when Great Britain and France divided up the Middle East with the Sikes Picot (1916) and San Remo Agreements (1920). The latter gave France the ex-German 25% of the TPC in exchange for the Mosul district that France obtained in 1916, which got into British hands. American Companies were totally out of this partition. Both the American government and oil industry believed Britain was interested in seizing the rest of the world's oil resources before Americans could move¹⁴.

1.1.3 Putting to an end the competition: the establishment of the oil cartel

In the early twenties, the American government adopted closer ties and held intensive dialogue with Britain and asked for an "Open Door" to gain equal access for American capital and business in Mesopotamia, denouncing the San Remo Agreement's imperialistic traits. Reluctantly Britain opened the door to the American Group (a group of several American oil companies) to discuss the possibility of an American entry into Mesopotamia. Some of the reasons why Britain opened the door to the Americans are primarily, by the beginning of the decade, that the US had promoted a dialogue with the Shah of Persia to gain concessions in the north, more precisely where d'Arcy did not cover with his project. British would not allow an American Company to take an important part of their oil influence zone in Persia, so they broke the San Remo agreement from which the US had been excluded to turn the US into the TPC.

¹³History of APOC and Gulbenkian diplomacy: Conlin, J. (2019). *Mr Five Per Cent: The Many Lives of Calouste Gulbenkian, the World's Richest Man*. Profile Books Ltd, London.

¹⁴Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 179.

Britain was forced to act in that way partly because of the TPC legal status vagueness¹⁵ and the increasing anti-British sentiment in America. Moreover, since the US won the war and supported Britain financially until the end of the struggle, Britain could not undermine such meaningful relations in the post-war period. Indeed, negotiations started to let the American Group enter the TPC: although negotiations met enormous obstacles and points to be discussed, the final agreement was finally signed on 31st July 1928 after that Kirkuk oil deposits had been founded by several geological missions in 1927. Especially on that occasion, Britain realised the advantage of having the modern US Companies on board the TPC as they could speed up the oil discovery and all the refining processes. According to the agreement, each Company (Royal Dutch Shell, Anglo Persian, Compagnie Française de Pétroles, and the American Group) would have obtained the 23.75 % of TPC and Gulbenkian the 5% reminder. Finally, the consortium had to change its name into the Iraq Petroleum Company. The agreement included the self-limitation or self-denying clause by which Companies were prevented to unilaterally expand their activities over the region; thereupon they had to work jointly together coordinating their interests¹⁶. The arrangement was known as the Red Line Agreement since Gulbelkian, the West-Mesopotamian mediator drew a red line to define the borders which Companies had to operate upon¹⁷. The red pencil drawn line included Sinai, the Arabic Peninsula, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. Once the oil geopolitics had been defined, the leaders of APOC, Standard Oil, and Royal Dutch Shell met in Scotland at Achnacarry on 17th September 1928¹⁸. A secret agreement was signed putting competition to an end and promoting cooperation, sharing extraction zones and defining common transport costs and sale prices. It was meant to be a hunting-trip, however the secret agreement was signed, establishing a monopolistic cartel among the strongest oil multinationals in world. However, the international oil equilibrium was altered early on by the individual interest of building constructive relations with Middle East actors and leaders out of the Red Line. Standard Oil of California (SOCAL) and Texas Oil, for instance, had not been involved in the agreement and tried to autonomously and concurrently

¹⁵ The key issue was whether or not the Grand Vizier's note represented a valid concession on Mosul and Baghdad by the Turkish Government to the TPC or whether it was a simple expression of interest subject to further negotiations. See Spector Simon, R. and Tejirian, E.H. (2004). *The creation of Iraq, 1914-1912*. Columbia University Press, New York.

¹⁶ Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 188.

¹⁷ On the Red Line Agreement: Black, E. (2019). *British Petroleum and the Redline Agreement: The West's Secret Pact to Get Mideast Oil*. Dialog Press. On the Petroleum Empires in the Middle East: Beltran, A. (2010). *A Comparative History of National Oil Companies*, P.I.E. Peter Lang, Brussels; Vassiliou, M.S. (2018). *Historical Dictionary of The Petroleum Industry Second Edition*, Rowman & Littlefield; Raphael, B. (2000). *King Energy The Rise and Fall of an Industrial Empire Gone Awry*, Writers Club Press, Lincoln (NE); Nersesian, R.L. (2010). *Energy for the 21st Century A Comparative Guide to Conventional and Alternative Sources Second Edition*, M.E. Sharpe, New York.

¹⁸ Falola T., Genova A. (2005). *The Politics of the Global Oil Industry: An Introduction*. Westport Connecticut, London. p. 40.

act with respect to the Companies being part of the Iraq Petroleum Company. This was the main reason why Americans engaged in Saudi Arabia in 1933, promoting collaboration and a good dialogue with the royal family. After several meetings, SOCAL paid Abdul Aziz Ibn-Saud £35,000 in exchange for sixty years of oil concessions from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. Three years later SOCAL gave up the 50% of one of its associates to Texas Oil. Gulf Oil based in Pittsburgh got a concession in Kuwait in 1940¹⁹.

1.1.4 Paving the way for a Mediterranean Détente

Soon after World War II, Standard Oil, which evolved into Exxon and Mobil, both, joined the Red Line agreement, wanting to make contact in the Arabian Peninsula as well, without asking for permission from the French or British. That American initiative in Saudi Arabia ignored the Red Line, seeding the birth of a new consortium for the Saudi oil exploitation in which American Companies were unilaterally involved. The new consortium took the name of Aramco (Arabian American Oil Company). During the following years, four other petroleum Companies (Mobil, Chevron, Gulf and Texaco) joined the Arabian American Cartel. In 1941 five American multinationals (Jersey Standard, Socony, Socal, Texaco and Gulf) exploited the oil wells in the entire Middle East. The Western oil Companies handled their business with no limits and concession agreements were the instruments allowing them to gain total exploitation of all oil reserve territories. Many times, the Seven Sisters supported by their governments, offering protection and money, got by the Arab leaders' power to establish the oil purchasing price, maximizing profits and managing oil resources directly, becoming a State within a State²⁰. Certainly, Britain had become the main actor in the Middle East area during the pre-war years, however its supremacy was challenged by other actors soon after World War II. Not surprisingly, the oil market equilibrium during the Twenties was expected to change, giving rise to American influence especially when the *translatio imperii* occurred. *Translatio imperii* refers to the spread of American dominance on the world scene partly due to financial difficulties of the British labour government. Americans considerably capitalized over the British dominance in the Middle East politically and economically over a period of increasing Arab nationalism. During the war the value of the oil became of increasing importance especially for the US, which started to no longer be an oil exporter but an importer, looking for a deeper role in the Middle East. While several Middle East States became the shared corridors

¹⁹ Tonini, A. (2003). Il sogno proibito. Mattei, il petrolio arabo e le sette sorelle, Edizioni Polistampa, Florence. p. 25.

²⁰ Mattei adopted the locution Seven Sisters referring to the main international oil companies: Exxon, Mobil, Texaco, Standard oil of California (Socal), Gulf oil, British Petroleum, Royal Dutch Shell.

where Allies would pass through to enable the land-lease program, a sense of competition grew among Britain, the USSR and the US on that soil. Although the US did not want to make do with a junior partner role, it did however pursue a low-profile policy without emerging as an imperialistic country eager to control far-away lands. It was a subtle strategy, which allowed the US government and American oil Companies to take advantage of both the political instability of those countries and the financial troubles Britain was facing. Moreover, the American presence in the Middle East was functional to assure the Marshall Plan implementation²¹ in Europe in the post-war period, considering the crucial role oil was playing in all industrialized economies. Ultimately, the American engagement in the Middle East was functional to contain the rise of communism in a strategic area and became even more engaged after the Truman Doctrine implementation²². However, the Arab nationalist revolutions drove transformation in the political landscape, the birth of the State of Israel, and the increasing decolonization process all over the world firmly jeopardized western interests in the Middle East. Subtle shapes of western imperialism continued to exist even if they were strongly counterbalanced by the attempt of many Arab leaders to defend the independence and the resources of their countries²³. It was this context, as it will be explained in the following paragraphs, which encouraged the path toward the Mediterranean Détente. Mediterranean Détente means referring to a deeply rooted strategy whose evolution will be analysed beginning with the embryonic steps in creating a dialogue between Italy on the one hand and Middle East and North Africa on the other hand. The common denominator capable of connecting them was the oil: both Italy, by ENI, and the Middle East wanted to get out of the Seven Sisters grip, looking for energetic independence, challenging the powerful multinationals. Enrico Mattei, the Italian promoter of the mentioned strategy, figured out the importance of engaging in constructive dialogue with several Middle Eastern and North African countries, making the dialogue across the Mediterranean a purely Italian initiative.

²¹ Valdevit G. (2003). Stati Uniti e Medio Oriente dal 1945 a oggi. Carocci, Roma. p. 39.

²² Truman Doctrine emerged soon after the speech by Truman on 12th March 1947. The political instability both in Greece and Turkey and the American risk to lose Mediterranean areas pushed the US administration to intervene. In the speech Truman affirmed that *“if Greece should fall under the control of an armed minority, the effect upon its neighbor, Turkey, would be immediate and serious. Confusion and disorder might well spread throughout the Entire Middle East.”* See Hitchcock, W. I. (2003). The Struggle for Europe. The turbulent history of a divided continent, 1945 to the present. Anchor Books Edition, New York. p. 61 and Di Nolfo E. (2008). Storia delle relazioni internazionali. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 673-674.

²³ Westad, O.A. (2017). The cold War. A world history. Hachette Book Group, New York. p. 450.

1.2 ENI: THE NEW PUBLIC HOLDING IN THE CAPITALIST SPHERE

1.2.1 Italy's Mediterranean vocation

As a country freed by Anglo-American operations, Italy was gradually included in the Atlantic sphere and set up an intense relationship with the US after the end of the World War II. It was soon clear to the Italian government that any domestic or foreign autonomous initiative had to be assessed as to not hampering external needs to maintain such relations. Until July 1947, Italy did not have the right to exert a foreign policy and only after 1954 could it implement an autonomous action abroad²⁴. Within five years after the end of the war, it was included in the Atlantic sphere: the De Gasperi visit to the US predicted the willingness to be tied to the western world, the American financial aid in 1948 to support the Christian Democrats in the elections, the Italian entry into the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949. During the same years, the Italian government attempted a kind rapprochement with the member countries of the Arab League. However, the recent Italian colonization experience in North Africa made the Arab leaders quite sceptical about a new Mediterranean dialogue. Once they joined NATO, Italy got a geopolitical status allowing it to engage in the Mediterranean area: Italy hoped to be the bridge between the Atlantic framework and the Middle East context. Already in the biennium 1947-49, Sforza and De Gasperi highlighted the favourable geographical position and the economic need to play an Arab policy, giving up the Italian colonial apparatus, unlike what France and Britain were doing. Italy was proposing itself as a mediator between two worlds and the perfect interlocutor for the Arab States. The establishment of the Italian role in the Middle East had to come to terms with the Anglo-American interests in that area. At the very beginning, the US appreciated the Italian initiative since as an Atlantic actor it could strengthen the western dialogue with the Middle East. However, the Italian economic policy, the ENI's autonomous strategy, and the power it could exert in Middle East and North Africa did not fit with the US petroleum politics in the Fifties. The exponent who lead the Italian energetic politics apparatus until 1962 was Enrico Mattei, the director of ENI (Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi) which was founded with the 136 Institutive Law on 10th February 1953²⁵. The history of ENI has been analysed by many

²⁴ On 31st July 1947, Italy ratified the Peace Treaty signed on 10th Februray 1947. However, its foreign policy was conditioned until 1954 due to open issue as the colonial heritage (until 1950) and the Trieste question (solved in 1954). Among the books treating the previous topics see De Leonardis M. (1988). *La diplomazia atlantica Anglo-Americana e la soluzione del problema di Trieste (1952-1954)*. Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli; De Felice, A. (1998). *La socialdemocrazia e la scelta orientale dell'Italia (1947-1949): Saragat, il Psi e la politica internazionale da Palazzo Bernini al Patto Atlantico*, Boemi Editore, University of Michigan.

Giovagnoli A. and Pons S. (2003). *L'Italia Repubblicana nella crisi degli anni Settanta. Tra guerra fredda e distensione*. Rubettino, Soveria Mannelli.

²⁵ Lomartire C.M. (2004). *Mattei-Storia dell'italiano che sfidò i signori del petrolio*. Mondadori, Milano. p. 181.

scholars, however in order to better understand the meaning of this new entity in the capitalist sphere, it seems crucial to recap the main phases which led to the ENI establishment.

1.2.2 Moving into the post-war oil order: Enrico Mattei and the ENI establishment

In 1926, the Fascist regime founded the state-owned Company Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli (AGIP) to promote the Italian energy autonomy searching for oil in Northern Italy and in Italian colonies. However, researches did not provide the desired results and Italy continued to rely on carbon and oil imported from Germany, Britain and more in general from the West. World War II destroyed several pipelines, refineries and equipment. Soon after the allied invasion, oil Companies, and the provisional government as well, proposed AGIP to be liquidated. Moreover, American oil company refineries, oil fields, and administrative headquarters had been nationalized during the war against the Fascist regime; by the end of the war, the US wanted to return all Companies back to being privately owned, by assuring oil Companies a system of free competition in Italy. In March 1945 the Secretary of State, Edward R. Stettinus, sent a note to the Italian government to discuss the relationship with AGIP, the Italian government and the American oil companies. The note demanded that AGIP compensate American oil Companies for the damage faced during the war. The Italian government, chaired by Ivanoe Bonomi, accepted to return all American properties but refused to allow any kind of transfer involving AGIP²⁶. Not surprisingly, the future of AGIP and the Italian economic policy became the core of several discussions between the State Department and the Italian government. In April of the same year, CLNAI with the aim of overseeing AGIP operate in Northern Italy nominated Enrico Mattei as Extraordinary Commissioner. Enrico Mattei was motivated by considerable nationalist sentiment - heritage of his generation formed in the fascist period - which he wanted to apply in an economic model²⁷. Even if Mattei adhered to the Fascist Regime without being active in its institutions, he joined the resistance after the fall of the regime and worked with other future members of the Christian Democrats to prepare for the recovery of the country once the war was over. Mattei's economic policy view was deeply influenced by the Camaldoli Codex, which was written in July 1943 by many exponents of the forthcoming Christian Democrats. The Codex was the expression of the catholic left-wing values according to which the economy was supposed to be regulated by the State in order to

²⁶ Bini E. (2003). *La potente benzina italiana. Guerra fredda e consumi di massa tra Italia e Terzo mondo (1945-1973)*, Carocci Editore, Torino. p. 35.

²⁷ Perrone N. (1999). *Giallo Mattei- I discorsi del fondatore dell'Eni che sfidò gli USA, la NATO e le Sette Sorelle*, Margini, Roma. p. 12.

assure equity in earnings and remunerations distributions and Companies should pursue a social mission toward people²⁸. Enrico Mattei firmly believed in nationalized industry and strongly opposed the liquidation of AGIP when it was discussed in 1945. However, he dealt with several obstacles: on the one hand, many Italian politicians considered AGIP a Fascist institute and the expression of autarchic policies, and, on the other hand AGIP was a potential danger to Anglo-American oil Companies which feared an AGIP oil monopoly on an area they were interested in (Po Valley). Mattei worked very closely with the left-wing members of the Christian Democrats gaining the support of Giovanni Gronchi, one of the main exponents of the party, who strongly opposed any talk of liquidation suggesting the reconstruction of AGIP. After a natural gas deposit was discovered in Caviaga, Mattei was able to convince the then Prime Minister Ferruccio Parri to relaunch AGIP and to prevent the national Company going into liquidation²⁹. Mattei showed a high activism in tackling Anglo-American oil Companies and private Companies who feared the monopoly AGIP was establishing on the national territory and the risk to lose a free competition market to work on. Obviously, Mattei's ideological apparatus did not fit well with the liberal values promoted by both the US and the Italian liberals who strongly campaigned for the liquidation of AGIP especially when AGIP faced several economic troubles in the following years³⁰. After the end of the war, Mattei needed economic support to regenerate AGIP and to demonstrate the vital function it could play in the post-war Italian recovery. The opportunity came in 1947 when something interesting seemed to evolve in the international context. In July 1947 Mattei increased his political role and operated all together with Alcide De Gasperi to enter in the Atlantic framework getting American aid. They both work on the same political line, attacking communist forces and describing the USSR as a menace by showing the Italian willingness to embrace American values. According to Mattei, AGIP needed American money and the Marshall Plan was the target³¹. It could not be a hazard to assume that Mattei was acting according to specific needs he had to satisfy. Even if he contributed to destroy the USSR image in 1947, he signed an agreement with the USSR in 1959 generating an American reaction, which will be explored further in the following paragraphs. During the entire period he worked for AGIP and subsequently for ENI, Mattei sought to take advantage from the international context in order to assure ENI dominance over the oil market,

²⁸ Guarnieri, D. (2007). Enrico Mattei. Il comandante partigiano, l'uomo politico, il manager di Stato. BFS, Pisa. p. 34.

²⁹ Lomartire C.M. (2004). Mattei-Storia dell'italiano che sfidò i signori del petrolio, Mondadori, Milano. p. 119.

³⁰ On AGIP history and evolution: Pozzi, D. (2009). Dai gatti selvaggi al cane a sei zampe Tecnologia, conoscenza e organizzazione nell'Agip e nell'Eni di Enrico Mattei, Marsilio Editori, Venezia; Sapelli, G. (1993). Nascita e trasformazione d'impresa. Storia dell'AGIP Petroli. Il Mulino, Bologna.

³¹ On the Marshall Plan: Hogan, M. (1987). The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952. CUP, Cambridge; Campus, M. (2008). L' Italia, gli Stati Uniti, e il piano Marshall. Laterza, Rome.

contributing to the Italian recovery. Indeed, not without obstacles, Mattei gained economic support from the Marshall Plan to rebuild AGIP and to enlarge its explorative activities, avoiding the dreaded liquidation. Certainly, Mattei worked successfully but it was impossible to avoid clashes with the US due to the different ideologies they looked at. For instance, an article by the New York Times highlighted the negative consequences of US-Italian economic relations if the Italian government decided to establish a monopoly upon the oil deposits just discovered in the Po Valley in 1949. At the end of the Forties, once the problem of liquidation had been overcome, the major aspect to solve was the Mining Law Italy applied. A law introduced in 1927 ruled the natural resources exploration. According to this law the Italian subsoil and its resources had to be attributed to the State and each concession to foreign entities had to be assessed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade. This law prevented private oil Companies to freely act exploring the Italian soil and was against free competition. Not to damage American interests, the ECA (Economic Cooperation Administration) exponents conditioned the economic aid to law reform, opening debate lasting until 1952 when the ECA entered into a more moderate position. In 1952, the cold war was more militarized due to the Korean War, ECA members started to think that a considerable increase in the hydrocarbon production was functional to the communist force containment in the Mediterranean Area, even if such a strategy could economically be at the expense of private oil companies. ECA approved financing many Italian Companies to let them purchase several American oil installations³². Thanks to ECA economic support, AGIP was improving its influence and after a considerable oil deposit was found in Cortemaggiore in 1950, the Finance Minister Vanoni in July 1951 sustained that Parliament should create a national entity (what would have been called ENI) designed as a public holding including all the Italian national oil Companies, namely AGIP, ANIC, SNAM, RARIOM, ENM³³. Vanoni's proposal took several months before being approved due to the vigorous opposition by senator Luigi Sturzo who criticized any State intervention in the economy³⁴. The proposal was approved in July 1952 by Parliament and in August 1953 by the Senate. ENI evolved as a public holding which included the main national Italian hydrocarbon Companies recognizing them as private societies. It meant that the law did not introduce a public monopoly since the private oil Companies could purchase shares of the

³² Bini E. (2003). *La potente benzina italiana. Guerra fredda e consumi di massa tra Italia e Terzo mondo (1945-1973)*, Carocci Editore, Torino. 35-49.

³³ Pozzi D. (2009). *Dai gatti selvaggi al cane a sei zampe: tecnologia, conoscenza e organizzazione nell' Agip e nell' ENI di Enrico Mattei*. Marsilio, Venice. p. 297.

³⁴ On Ezio Vanoni's proposal see Vigna, G. (1997). *Ezio Vanoni: il riformista che chiedeva una rivoluzione morale*. Centro Ambrosiano, Milano.

ENI subsidiaries. Then, the government supervised ENI just in part and according to the law ENI was assured the monopoly on hydrocarbons research and extraction in the Po Valley.

1.2.3 Collecting enemies

Many discussions occurred about ENI's creation and in May 1953 the American Embassy in Rome sent a memorandum to the State Department criticizing the ENI institutive law which jeopardized the American oil Companies interests in Italy, especially in Sicily where many companies operated. According to the memorandum, Mattei was the main enemy of the free market and he could gain the total control of the Italian oil activity³⁵. Enrico Mattei's domestic strategy was not so different from the one applied by the US in Italy: whereas the US wanted to assure Italian economic development and recovery in order to avoid any possible communist rising in the country, Enrico Mattei worked to give ENI any instrument to increase its power to make the country stronger economically and help it escape from the dependence of American petroleum which could influence ENI affairs. It would be a mistake to believe that once ENI got its exclusive on the Po Valley, international Companies and privates gave up to the fight³⁶. They wanted a more favourable Mineral Law and a revision of all rights. Indeed, Mr. Holman, the director of Standard Oil of New Jersey claimed that the Po Valley was such a large region, which could not be exploited by just one society, such as ENI. American Companies were also supported by the new American Ambassador in Italy, Claire Boothe Luce who was the wife of the founder of influential newspapers "Time", "Life" and "Fortune"³⁷. Mrs. Luce represented profound US economic interests and together with the liberalism of Luigi Sturzo became the fiercest of enemies with Enrico Mattei. Mattei carried on gaining enemies, which contributed to hamper the operation of ENI both domestically and abroad in the cold war years. Throughout ENI, Italy intended to be the bridge between the Mediterranean area on the one hand and the US and EU on the other, especially after its entry into the North Atlantic Treaty. Enrico Mattei wanted to give Middle Eastern and North African countries a voice in the petroleum order promoting collaboration with them to increase their earnings, boosting Arab nationalism feelings, which helped the decolonization process at the expense of the imperialist powers. Mattei's strategy sought to establish Italian energy independence and challenged the Seven

³⁵ Bini E. (2003). *La potente benzina italiana. Guerra fredda e consumi di massa tra Italia e Terzo mondo (1945-1973)*, Carocci Editore, Torino. p. 50.

³⁶ Magini M. (1976). *L' Italia e il petrolio tra storia e cronologia*. Gruppo Mondadori, Vicenza. p. 122.

³⁷ About Claire Boothe Luce profile: Sheed, W. (1984). *Clare Boothe Luce*, Berkley Books, University of Wisconsin; Hatch, A. (1956). *Ambassador Extraordinary Clare Boothe Luce*. Holt, University of California; Morris, S.J. (2014). *Price of Fame The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce*, Random House LLC, New York.

Sisters abroad³⁸. In 1953 Mattei had a powerful instrument to make Italy less dependent on the multinational oil cartel and sought to enter into a tug of war between oil producer countries and oil companies, exploiting the western imperialism crisis in North Africa and the Middle East.

³⁸Mattei's oil policy in the Mediterranean, the Seven Sisters and the US in Brogi, A. (1996). *L'Italia e l'egemonia americana nel Mediterraneo*. La Nuova Italia, Florence; Bruni, L. and Colitti, M. (1967). *La politica petrolifera italiana*. Giuffrè, Rome. Perrone, N. (1995). *Obiettivo Mattei. Petrolio, Stati Uniti e politica dell'ENI*. Gamberetti, Rome; Galli, G. (1976). *La sfida perduta. Biografia politica di Enrico Mattei*. Bonpiani, Milan.

1.3 DECOLONIZATION AND THE SCRAMBLE FOR OIL: STARTING ITALIAN DIALOGUE WITH THE MIDDLE EAST

1.3.1 The revolutionary Mohammed Mossadeq in Iran

Before entering in what will be named the *Mattei Strategy* or the *Mattei Pattern*, it seems appropriate to explain the reasons why Italy needed a special relationship with oil producer countries. In Italy, a carbon shortage and a favourable geographic position in the Mediterranean speeded the replacement of carbon to oil during the Fifties. From 1950 to 1957 the domestic oil demand increased by 84% as a result of mechanical engineering industry expansion. Italy was gradually obliged to import huge quantities of oil from the Middle East especially in the post-war period when the economic and industrial recovery process really depended on oil availability. Gradually, every choice in energy politics had to be assessed as to not to damage relations with the oil producing countries. Mattei's plans to build a Mediterranean dialogue were intertwined with the desire for independence and economic development that the Arabs and their leaders wanted to pursue in North Africa and the Middle East. Mattei analysed all political dynamics occurring in those areas and enabled ENI to engage and find agreements with Arab interlocutors. Aware of the profound influence both Americans and British exerted over Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya and Saudi Arabia as well, he knew that any kind of agreement with Anglo-American Companies would have left ENI in a marginalized position. The incentive to alter the post-war petroleum order came in the same years, when both Mossadeq in Iran and Nasser in Egypt decided to pave the way for a nationalization process, which did not leave space for western imperialism³⁹. Moreover, the political instability in Syria, the Iraqi coup, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Suez Crisis during the Fifties, nourished the anti-western sentiment at the expense of the oil multinational imperium, which needed political order to ensure that concessions were respected. Iran had provided oil vital to Allied needs in wartime and when the US waged the war it sent troops to assist the Anglo-Soviet settlement. On the one hand, the US influenced the Iranian government in financial administration, security and military organization, and on the other hand Britain maintained the oil monopoly through the Anglo Iranian Oil Company (previously APOC). Britain was both the tax collector of profits and the majority shareholder of AIOC, gaining more profits than the Iranian government itself⁴⁰. Reza Pahlavi, Iranian Shah, requested that the Anglo Iranian Oil Company pay more

³⁹ Yeomans, M. (2004). *Oil. Anatomy of an industry*. The New Press, New York. p. 20-21.

⁴⁰ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. p. 275-277.

royalties for oil exploitation in order to modernize the country and face the economic crisis Iran had to cope with during the Forties. While the AIOC rejected the Shah's request, the new Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, the leader of National Front who took power on 28th April 1951, and in open opposition with Reza Pahlavi, decreed the AIOC nationalization in 1951, establishing the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) to handle nationally the oil resources⁴¹. The decree could be considered the first strongest disagreement by an Arab politician against a member of the Seven Sisters. After the British government encouraged the oil Companies to boycott Iranian oil, in September 1951 the Iranian government gained control of the Abadan refinery and kicked out the British technicians. The UK, supported by the CIA, intervened to overthrow Mossadeq with Operation Ajax, allowing Reza Pahlavi to retake control of the country. The US was not interested in defending British colonialist affairs, but rather assuring the containment strategy against the USSR in vulnerable areas. American intervention in Iran supporting Britain produced the desirable effect in 1954, of aiding the restoration of Shah Reza. Indeed, a new international consortium was created to extract and trade Iranian oil allowing five American Companies to own the 40% of the Iranian wells⁴². Several Companies were called to participate in the new consortium but ENI was not, or, at least, this is what Enrico Mattei wanted to let the public think⁴³. Showing to be excluded from that area was functional to oppose the Anglo-American multinationals, which broke with tradition and moved the role of exploiting the Mediterranean. Italy broke the oil equilibrium. Moreover, at the end of the crisis, the Iranian people perceived to have been humiliated by the West and an ever-increasing feeling against them spread. Even if Mosaddeq period lasted just few years, it opened the door to a nationalist Arab flux, gave rise to more awareness of being the oil well owners, and emphasized the importance to rule their exploitation. Indeed, the Iranian case made Mattei realize the Anglo-American approach, which was not oriented to leave space to any other concurrent in the petroleum order and produced a considerable impact on the political context in Egypt during the same years.

⁴¹ Several books treat Mohammed Mossadeq biography. The following two recap the Iranian history accurately. Beltrame S. (2009). *Mossadeq. L'iran, il petrolio, gli Stati Uniti e le radici della rivoluzione Islamica*, Rubettino, Soveria Mannelli; Kinzer S. (2003). *All the Shah's Men: An American coup and the roots of Middle East Terror*. Wiley & sons, Hoboken (N.Y.); Milani, A. (2008). *Eminent Persians The Men and Women Who Made Modern Iran 1941-1979*, Syracuse University Press and Persian World Press, New York.

⁴² Di Nolfo E. (2008). *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 948.

⁴³ Maugeri L. (1994) *L' arma del petrolio. Questione petrolifera globale, Guerra fredda e politica italiana nella vicenda di Enrico Mattei*. Loggia dè Lanzi. Firenze. p. 86-90.

The Companies involved in the new consortium as well as Americans: Anglo-Iranian (40%), Royal Dutch Shell (14), Compagnie Française del Petroles (6%).

1.3.2 The age of Nasser and the Arab nationalism

Egypt had been controlled by the British puppet government lead by King Faruq until 1952, when a considerable opposition both from the military and society arose. Three days after the coup, Faruq was replaced by a new leadership guided by the Colonel Gamal Abd al-Nasser who conducted a twofold campaign: he got rid of all the contenders for power and worked for gaining popular support, enacting reforms and introducing a new Constitution. The monarchy was abolished and Egypt was proclaimed a republic in 1953, reshaping foreign relations especially with Britain. Indeed, the main negotiations centred on Britain's future role in Egypt. The two governments signed a treaty in 1954 providing for the evacuation of all the British troops from the Suez Canal base within twenty months⁴⁴. However, Britain kept the right to reassume the Suez Canal base control in case of an attack by any external power. Nasser, who embodied the pan-Arab doctrine⁴⁵, upheld the independence of Egypt from any foreign entity and promoted a new legislation regarding the exploitation of oil resources, which ensured more protection for Egyptian economic interests. In order to increase consensus, the new leader fostered the modernization of the country encouraging the spread of Arab Nationalism. Nasser was convinced that Western powers, in order to maintain any form of imperialism, wanted the Middle East fragmented and deeply weakened to better exploit it without risking any unified and coordinated reaction. Essentially, the US interests in the Middle East were different from the British ones: while Britain considered that region as an area under its political-military influence, the US wanted to protect the economic investments by American oil Companies in the region and to maintain good relationships with oil producer countries. During the biennium 1951-1952 the British position in Egypt, Iran, and Iraq as well⁴⁶, was deeply weakened and the US benefited from it by showing a different approach. John Foster Dulles, the American Secretary of the State, after a long trip to the Middle Eastern capitals, suggested the establishment of the Baghdad Pact to which several Middle Eastern countries and Britain took part. The pact, which was boycotted by Nasser, was the base for a defensive alliance capable of closing each way to any Soviet expansion and ensuring a proliferative area to the American oil Companies operating there.

⁴⁴ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. p. 293

⁴⁵ The concept of Pan-Arabism relates to building a new Arab order freed from the imperial past and oriented toward a bright Arab future. The new order was based on the political and cultural unity of all the Arab countries which should work all together for the rebirth of a powerful Arab entity. See Corrao M.F. (2017). *Islam, religion and politics*. Luiss University Press, Rome. p. 96-102.

⁴⁶ In 1952 Faisal II, the Iraqi leader, renegotiated the concession agreement with the Iraq Petroleum Company assuring the State more royalties at the expense of the Anglo-American shares of the company. The same period was characterized by several demonstrations inspired by the Nasserian flux expanding in Middle East. See Vassiliou, M. S. (2018). *Historical dictionary of the Petroleum Industry*. Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham. p. 245.

1.3.3 Mattei deals with Egypt

Enrico Mattei, condemning the abuse and the imperialistic attitudes by Western oil Companies, embraced the Arab cause and supported the Arab countries economic growth. Taking on such a position, Mattei showed how Italy, which had lost its colonies after World War II, could be a promoter of the decolonization process by encouraging the pursuit of oil nationalism and, consequently, the independence of oil producer countries⁴⁷. ENI politics in Middle East and North Africa worked by looking at the problems and necessities of oil producers to create a special relationship with them, differentiating from the Seven Sisters self-serving attitude. Both Mattei and Nasser shared the same ideas about how oil Companies should operate in the Middle East criticizing the huge limit they impose to oil producer countries development. The very beginning of the Fifties can be considered the first step toward the Mediterranean Détente path which took a fairly energetic profile in its first decade to gradually evolve into more political dialogue in the following years. Surely, the Suez Crisis signed a watershed in the history of ENI in the Middle East and allowed Italy to gain a favoured channel of communication with Egypt. The experience in Egypt and the Iran crisis are meaningful because they developed in Mattei's mind the basis to build the Mattei Formula, which was applied in 1957 in Iran breaking the oil order equilibrium. However, relations between Egypt and Italy started in 1954 when Mattei and the Under-Secretary of Industry and Trade, Mahmoud Younes met in Rome in order to establish an energy strategy cooperation. The meeting was extremely productive according to Mattei, who emphasized the growing mutual trust and respect between him and Younes⁴⁸. The meeting was followed by an Italian explorative mission in Egypt aiming at studying the Egyptian soil and modernizing the refineries on the territory. However, the poor results achieved obliged Mattei to purchase participation shares of already active Companies in that area. In March 1955 AGIP bought 20% of the International Egyptian Oil Company (IEOC), a society formed by international capital operating in Western Sinai. Moreover, SNAM collaborating with Dalmine were charged to build a new pipeline linking Suez with Cairo, which was completed in the spring of 1955⁴⁹. The ENI group presence in the Middle East was considerably increasing and in autumn 1955 the Egyptian government appointed the Italian group to install a new refinery on the outskirts of the capital, aiming to supply the domestic demand. To answer those requests, a new Italian-Egyptian society based in Rome was established taking the name of Petromisr set

⁴⁷ E. Bini, *A transatlantic shock: Italy's energy policies between the Mediterranean and the EEC, 1967-1974*. p. 153-158.

⁴⁸ Archivio Storico dell'Eni (hereafter ASE). Letter from Mattei to Younes on 26th January 1955. B. 69, Dossier 112.

⁴⁹ Tonini, A. (2003). *Il sogno proibito. Mattei, il petrolio arabo e le sette sorelle*, Edizioni Polistampa, Florence. p. 28-34.

to distribute the oil products the city needed. The Egyptian government, acting as the owner of both the Suez refinery and the new pipeline linking Suez with Cairo, became a special interlocutor of the Petromisr, gaining several benefits from the agreement. In July 1956, the Suez-Cairo pipeline was unveiled and in the official speech in Cairo both Mattei and Nasser showed an interest to carry out a partnership of sustained cooperation over the years⁵⁰. It is meaningful to highlight the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, which was announced the day after Mattei came back to Rome. The period following the Suez crisis and the then evolving relations between Italy and the Middle East are worthy of a single paragraph. Before discussing that intricate topic, the Italian government's relations with ENI operates in the Middle East until 1956, deserve to be looked at. Several governments alternated in the period of 1953-1956 but all kept their collaboration fruitful with ENI. Some months before the Trieste resolution, several political magazines expressed a common wish to overcome the foreign policy paralysis, finding a place not only in the western context, but especially in the Middle East and North Africa.

1.3.4 Mattei's political consensus in Italy and the introduction of the 75-25 Formula

The Italian willingness to exert a new international role, found its promoter in Enrico Mattei's political dynamism supported by the main members of the left-wing Christian Democrats. Once the De Gasperi period ended in 1953, the Christian Democrats experienced serious instabilities due to a considerable fragmentation inside the party. After political struggles and confrontations, the left wing of the Christian Democrats won the match applying the Ezio Vanoni scheme, according to which the State had to play a role in the economy to encourage economic development, avoiding inequalities. The economic view proposed by Vanoni perfectly fitted with Mattei's domestic strategy. However, Mattei could not settle just the application of his domestic policy so decided to support Amintore Fanfani as secretary of the party in 1954. Fanfani wanted the ENI to be the main instrument of Italian economic policy. Both Mattei and Fanfani harboured a desire to enhance state industry in Italy and agreed on the pursuit of a Mediterranean dialogue making Italy a more autonomous and international actor. Indeed, Mattei applied a strategy, which showed Italy as a country performing the same emancipation the Middle East and North Africa wanted to achieve from the Anglo-Americans. Already in the first half of the Fifties, Italy and several Arab countries seemed to share a similar status, which made them closer in pursuit of a less marginalized role internationally. To a

⁵⁰ASE. Memorandum to Mattei. B. 34, Dossier 13.

certain extent, ENI international action in the Middle East paved the way for the Neo-Atlantic orientation, which was developed taking its name only in 1957⁵¹. Although the new foreign approach clearly emerged in 1957, once the Trieste question was over, Mattei undertook a Mediterranean process in which ENI and Arab leaders were the principle actors. In order to politically bolster his Mediterranean initiatives, which Luigi Einaudi estimated an end in 1955, Mattei supported the election of Luigi Gronchi who had always been a member of the Christian Democrats left wing and was very committed to Mattei's undertaking. Gronchi, Fanfani and Mattei were considered the Neo-Atlantism advocates, which took its first shape in 1954-1955. Neo-Atlantism meant increasing the international and autonomous role of Italy, whilst maintaining loyalty to the Atlantic spectrum. Neo-Atlantism intended to engage in a dialogue with North African and the Middle Eastern countries to encourage economic and commercial relations. According to the US, Neo-Atlantic new orientation assumed ambiguous traits: it was intertwined with the left-wing overture and the economic vision based on the importance of the State in the economy which pursued an important economic-energy dialogue with the Middle East. However, Neo-Atlantism was the attempt to realise a twin strategy - both Mediterranean and Atlantic - now possible to be achieved thanks to the Italian economic recovery sped up by ENI's investments both in Italy and abroad. Mattei was able to get a considerable public consensus and had the instruments to influence the political scenario: indeed, thanks to his financial power controlled and economically supported the left-wing Christian Democrats to carve out his energy projects in the Middle East. The autonomous choices by ENI in the Middle East had also been supported by the creation of the Permanent Petroleum Bureau, an office established at the beginning of 1956 thanks to the General Secretary of the Arab league. The new entity was instituted to coordinate the oil policy of countries, which adhered to the Arab League, and to heal the relations between them and the foreign companies. Even if the office did not have the same advanced features of OPEC⁵², it soon worked to revise the entire contract, which tied the oil producer countries with the Majors. The Qatari sovereign, Abdullah Darwish, who was the Petroleum Bureau financial officer responsible, asked Britain to discuss the proposal for 75%-25% agreements instead of 50%-50% agreements⁵³. The request was the result of an ongoing and previous dialogue between ENI and the Iranian government aiming at the implementation of the so-called Mattei Formula. The dialogue took place in the beginning

⁵¹ Brogi, A. (1996). *L'Italia e l'egemonia Americana nel mediterraneo*. Scandicci, La nuova Italia, Florence. p. 264-270; Onelli, F. (2013). *All'Alba del Neo-atlantismo La politica egiziana dell'Italia (1951-1956)*. Franco Angeli, Milan.

⁵² OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) founded on 14th September 1960 by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.

⁵³ Giovagnoli A. and Tosi L. (2010). *Amintore Fanfani e la politica estera italiana*, Marsilio, Venice. p. 288-289.

of 1956 and was followed by an ENI mission in Iran. During the meeting ENI signed with NIOC (National Iranian Oil Company) a preliminary agreement according to which ENI gained three research concessions in Iran and a new collaboration system was defined. On 13th October 1956, Mattei wrote to the Shah

*« c'est un très grand honneur et un privilège exceptionnel pour moi de confirmer l'accord... pour la recherche, le développement et la production de pétrole in Iran... l'accord conclu a été basé entièrement sur l'intérêt mutuel de l'Iran e de l'Italie. »*⁵⁴

Mattei intended to build a relation based on a mutual collaboration between the two countries. The 50-50 pattern was intended to be overcome and, on the 3rd August 1957, the first agreement between ENI and NIOC was signed, breaking the old post-war petroleum order and introduced the 75%-25% formula. In July of the same year, Giuseppe Pella, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs coined the term of Neo-Atlantism which was deeply connected with the dynamic energetic policy Italy was engaging in the Middle East, especially after the Suez Crisis.

⁵⁴ ENI digital archive. Letter from Mattei to the Shah.

https://www.eni.com/enipedia/it_IT/storia/archivio-storico/i-fondi-dellarchivio-storico-di-eni.page

1.4 THE SUEZ CRISIS AS A WATERSHED: RESHAPING THE MEDITERRANEAN CONTEXT

1.4.1 Challenging Western Imperialism in the Middle East: the nationalization of the Suez Canal

October 1956 paved the way for a new and more autonomous course of the Italian foreign policy in the Middle East and North Africa. Two crises occurred in October 1956, altering the then Cold War balance. While the Suez Crisis extended the Cold War to the Mediterranean area, the Hungarian Crisis witnessed the consolidation of the spheres of influence in Europe after that Americans did not mobilize to help Hungarians against the USSR invasion. The Cold War was moving to the outskirts of the world, involving countries which gained independence recently. Suez crisis effects deserve to be addressed in order to analyze their impact on Italy's foreign policy. The Suez Canal was an evident symbol of the Nineteenth century colonialism in the Nasser's new Egypt⁵⁵. Most of the canal company's earnings, deriving from tolls, were going to European shareholders, and Britain still maintained a military base in the Canal zone according to the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian treaty. However, Nasser's nationalism encouraged the British withdrawal by using terrorist raids and murders. In 1954, Anthony Eden, the then British Foreign Secretary, negotiated for an agreement whereby the last British troops had to withdraw the canal zone within twenty-four months, while still maintaining British civilian contractors permanently there. The agreement was signed on 27th July 1954. The US welcomed the Anglo-Egyptian pact. Indeed, Eisenhower and Dulles supposed that the British troops' withdrawal from Suez would improve the western relations with Egypt, laying the groundwork for the creation of a Middle Eastern defending regional system under the American supervision⁵⁶. That system was functional to contain any Soviet menace and turned into the before mentioned Baghdad Pact. Britain decided to join the pact and aroused the Egyptian reaction to be excluded from it. Nasser perceived the Baghdad Pact as an Atlantic instrument to control the Middle East and it enhanced his suspicion towards Britain. In light of this, the Eisenhower administration decided to adopt a "wariness strategy" in the Middle East. Apparently, the goals of the Eisenhower administration were the same as the Truman administration: maintaining the western access to the regions of oil reserves, denying them to the Soviets⁵⁷. However, the

⁵⁵ Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 463-464 and Little D. (2007). *American Orientalism: United States and the Middle East since 1945*. The University of North Carolina Press. p. 226-230.

⁵⁶ Compare paragraph 1.3.

⁵⁷ According to Eisenhower and Dulles, the prior administration was sided with Israel explicitly, increasing the Arab's sense of grievance against the Western world by giving USSR the opportunity to bolster their political

Eisenhower doctrine developed a new shape of intervention in the Mediterranean area, where economic growth had to be encouraged and the European colonialism definitively stopped. Moreover, the American strategy wanted to keep all the newborn independent States aligned to the Atlantic sphere, especially after that Nikita Khrushchev announced the USSR intention to support all the countries which took part in the Bandung Conference in 1955⁵⁸. Egypt emerged vigorously among the countries taking part in the conference, and fostered a neutralist movement which refused to bind to one or another block. American and British alarm about Nasser soared in the autumn 1955. Indeed, after the US rejected to sell weapons to Egypt, Nasser turned to Czechoslovakia which meant buying Soviet arms⁵⁹. The Cold War seemed to encroach the Middle East. In order to prevent Egypt approaching to USSR, the US decided to finance the Aswan Dam project, which Nasser was promoting to modernize the Egyptian agriculture. The negotiation was complex and long, and failed in the mid 1956 when Dulles declared the impossibility to finance the project. The USSR was not able to support the Aswan Dam project economically as well, and finally on 26th July 1956 Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal companies. Egypt controlled the navigation across the Canal and all the incomes coming from the rates would have been used to build the Aswan Dam⁶⁰. The crisis exploded three months later. The Canal companies were owned by British and French shareholders and the relation among Britain and France on the one hand, and Egypt on the other hand deteriorated soon after the nationalization. France, Britain, and Israel waged the war on 29th October against Egypt and after few days the crisis was over⁶¹. The real winner of the conflict was Nasser who enjoyed the US and the USSR indirect intervention to stop the crisis, by obliging both France and Britain to withdraw. The crisis showed the clash between imperialism and the Arabs' desire to exert sovereignty over their territory, triggering a rift in the Atlantic sphere.

influence in Middle East. See Yaqub, S. (2006). *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill (NC). p. 29-30.

⁵⁸ The Bandung Conference took place in April 1955. Several independent Afro-Asian countries were admitted in the General Assembly and it became an important channel to claim their rights and to fight colonialism. This path pressed for the promotion of a meeting collecting Afro-Asian countries to enforce neutralism against the two blocks, proposing an alternative. The Conference altered the international equilibrium and Nasser, emerging in the Conference as a leader, worried the US projects.

⁵⁹ Nasser made the Egyptian rearmament a prerogative against Israel. Americans choice not to sell weapons can be explained with the decision to be impartial in the Arab-Israeli clashes not to damage relation with one of them.

⁶⁰ Di Nolfo E. (2008). *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 890-894.

⁶¹ On the Suez Crisis: Shaw, T. (1996). *Eden, Suez and the Mass Media: Propaganda and persuasion during the Suez Crisis*, Tauris Academic Studies I.B.Tauris Publishers, New York; Gorst, A. and Johnman, L. (1997). *The Suez Crisis*, Routledge Sources in History, Oxon; Kurland, G. (1973). *The Suez Crisis, 1956*. SamHar Press; Kunz, D.B. (1991). *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*, The University of North Carolina Press.; Varble, D. (2009). *The Suez Crisis*, The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc, New York.

1.4.2 Assessing the Suez Crisis' effects

After the crisis, both French and British presence in the Middle East declined and their image was dramatically affected both nationally and internationally. The US criticized the Anglo-French military initiative and acted to avoid that the USSR benefited from the Atlantic weakness and the colonialist measures that France and Britain adopted in the Middle East. Dulles acted as a mediator between parts and highlighted a different and more pacific American position with respect to the Anglo-French one. In January 1957, Eisenhower announced the “Eisenhower doctrine” according to which the US would protect the Middle Eastern countries from any menace with economic and military support, preserving their sovereignty and territorial integrity⁶². The doctrine was functional to stand out from the western traditional colonialist trait and to extend the containment strategy to the Middle East. Some of the reasons why the US aimed at being partner of the Middle Eastern countries are primarily the need to contain Soviet raising and control any extremist shape of the Arab nationalism in the area. Moreover, the US wanted to handle the energy resources unhindered in the Middle East. The crisis allowed Italy to definitely filter through a contended area where the US wanted to curb the French and British imperialism on the one hand, and to contain the Soviet menace on the other hand. Italy could benefit from the American strategy in the Middle East and took advantage from the vacuum left by French and British, engaging in a proliferative relation with non-aligned countries. The US game plan was suited to that altered Cold War context and aimed at assuring Anglo-American Companies their activities in Middle East, keeping oil sales in Europe and showing America as the savior country capable of defending Middle East from the giant USSR. The Suez Crisis was a meaningful occasion to test the Italian attitude towards Arab countries⁶³. The Italian government reaction to the Canal companies' nationalization was cautious and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Martino, declared Italy interested in the free navigation of the canal not to damage the entire Italian productive system which depended on imports crossing the Canal. The Italian wariness was not intended to jeopardize the relations with the Arab world and aimed at waiting and seeing the American reaction before taking a stand. However, the Italian political position to the crisis was confused due to the divergent opinions into the government to deal with the nationalization. Mattei kept an intensive dialogue

⁶² The following books analyze the Eisenhower Doctrine accurately: Takeyh, R. (2000). *The Origins of the Eisenhower Doctrine. The Us, Britain and Nasser's Egypt 1953-1957*, Palgrave Macmillan, Berkley; Yaqub, S. (2004). *Containing Arab Nationalism. The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East*, The University of North Carolina Press.

⁶³ On this matter see Solia, M.V. (2016). *Mattei. Obiettivo Egitto L'ENI-II Cairo-Le Sette Sorelle*, Armando Editore, Roma; Votaw, D. (1964). *The Six-Legged Dog Mattei and ENI: A Study in Power*. Publications of the Institute of Business and Economic Research University of California, University of California Press, Berkley; Bazzoli, L and Renzi, R. (1984). *Il miracolo Mattei*. Rizzoli, Roma.

with Nasser during the months after the nationalization and visited Cairo once again in September, providing for new pilots and staffs to be engaged in the naval transit. The American and Italian wariness did not appease Mattei willingness to carry out his dialogue with Egypt and his purposes seemed clear once the crisis began. In the last days of October, the war exploded, the Israeli troops occupied the Sinai Peninsula, and the maritime traffic was blocked. In the light of the western military attack against Egypt, the Italian government reacted by criticizing the ongoing war, which caused the Canal closure⁶⁴. The Italian government blamed France, Britain, and Israel for having used force and highlighted the substantial harm caused by the maritime traffic interruption. Italian economy was primarily affected by the less oil imports and many Italian ports could not collect profits of the goods coming from or going to the Canal. The war impacted on ENI activities in that area: indeed, the Israeli troops occupied zones where the IEOC (International Egyptian Oil Company) wells were located. In November, Mattei showed the Italian government all the damages ENI underwent in the Sinai Peninsula and demanded Israel to give all the plundered oil instruments back and to compensate for the economic damages suffered⁶⁵. Mattei expressed his indignation by defending the Italian interests and condemning the imperialistic choices by France, Britain, and Israel. The Suez crisis allowed Italy to strengthen its anti-colonialist image at the expense of France and Britain and Italy became an even more valid and sincere interlocutor for the Arab world. The Italian government emphasized its anti-imperialism, embracing the Eisenhower doctrine and trying to find a place and more autonomous initiatives in the Atlantic alliance. In the last years of the Fifties, Italy seemed the suitable country for mediation between the Atlantic sphere and the Arab world. Americans, not without suspicion, supported the Italian dialogue with the Middle East and let the Italian government pursue its strategy⁶⁶. In 1957, Giuseppe Pella formulated the so-called Pella Plan according to which part of the Western European countries' debt, that was owed by the US, should be transformed into a special fund used to economically support plans for development in the Middle East⁶⁷. Pella plan can be considered a neo-Atlantist instrument that the US refused to support. The Pella Plan wanted to boost the economic dimension of the Eisenhower doctrine giving a concrete aid to Middle East, filling the vacuum left by French and British after the Suez Crisis. However, the Eisenhower administration did

⁶⁴ Tonini, A. (2003). *Il sogno proibito. Mattei, il petrolio arabo e le sette sorelle*, Edizioni Polistampa, Florence. p. 77.

⁶⁵ ASE. Letter from Mattei to the Prime Minister on 13th November 1956. B. 71, dossier 129.

⁶⁶ The Western world was suspicious about the intensive relationship between an industrial country which was under the capitalist sphere, and underdeveloped countries not entirely aligned with the Western world.

⁶⁷ Giovagnoli A. and Pons S. (2003). *L'Italia Repubblicana nella crisi degli anni Settanta. Tra guerra fredda e distensione*. Rubettino, Soveria Mannelli. p. 355-356 and E. Bini, *A transatlantic shock: Italy's energy policies between the Mediterranean and the EEC, 1967-1974*. p. 147.

not want to enhance a political interchange between Europe and Middle East through American money, taking the risk to be excluded from it. The Italian strategy in the Middle East and North Africa differed from the Eisenhower doctrine in that Italy wanted to support Arab countries economically and break away from all political-military initiatives leaded by the US in the Middle East, as the Baghdad Pact⁶⁸. Italy wanted to carry on a commercial-energetic dialogue with the Middle East, without keeping constant control on the area, unlike the US was doing. Converging the Mediterranean attitude with the prerogatives of the Atlantic alliance represented a considerable issue for the Italian neo-Atlantists. Indeed, the US endorsed the Italian approach to the Middle East and North Africa soon after the Suez Crisis but distrusted Enrico Mattei's autonomous strategy and the political endorsement by Fanfani and Gronchi in the second half of the Fifties.

⁶⁸ Calandri E. (1995). Unsuccessful Efforts to Stabilize the Mediterranean: the Western Powers and the Mediterranean Pact, 1948-1958, in Varsori A. Europe 1945-1990s. The End of an Era? Macmillan, London. p. 280.

1.5 1957: MATTEI FORMULA AND THE ENI'S AUTONOMOUS POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

1.5.1 Engaging in an energy dialogue with the Middle East

1957 was a turning point for ENI's plans in the Middle East. 1956 Suez Crisis put the Western oil Companies on the defensive and made ENI capable of challenging the oil cartel order. Within a few years, Mattei filled the vacuum left by the Anglo-French retreat in the Middle East. In 1957, Mattei began talking to Iran and to the Shah, introducing the so called "*Mattei Formula*" which was applied in several agreements between ENI and the governments of oil producing countries. After the Iranian Crisis in 1954, the Iranian government signed an unfavorable contract with the International Consortium. The contract allowed all the Western oil Companies to exploit the richest oil zones of the country and established a fifty-fifty formula for the sharing out of the profits. However, nationalization, Mossadegh's legacy, gave the Shah the privilege to own all the Iranian oil resources and Mattei took advantage from that context. Before the revolutionary Mattei Formula, the fifty-fifty formula regulated the oil concessions order according to which the oil producer country kept just the half of the profits from the oil sales and could not exert any power on the Companies which operated on the soil of the oil producing country. Mattei broke into this system. His formula was revolutionary for two main reasons. Primarily, it crushed the fifty-fifty formula allowing the oil producing countries to gain the 75% of the profits coming from the oil sales. Second, it provided for the establishment of a mixed society made up of the foreign oil company and the granting authority, which was actively involved in oil exploration, production, and in exploiting activities⁶⁹. The oil producer country worked and collaborated alongside the Italian oil Company and it was then allowed to acquire a technological know-how functional to carry out more autonomous researches and production activities on its territory. Mattei formula give the oil producer country the opportunity to break free from the Western oil Companies' technological monopoly and to have a voice in controlling oil production. The Seven Sisters felt jeopardized by the new formula which could welcome nationalist claims and Arab hunger for independence. According to the Seven Sisters, once the oil producer countries gained a voice in defining the quantity of oil to extract and to sell on the international market, they could affect the oil order established by the

⁶⁹ ASE. Interview to Piero Bernardini by Lucia Nardi and Sandro Giuliani. Rome, 4th November 2009. Piero Bernardini was the lawyer of the Agip Mineraria during the Mattei Formula years. The formula was applied in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, North Africa, Nigeria, Tanzania, Madagascar, Congo Brazzaville.

cartel⁷⁰. On 14th March 1957, AGIP and the Iranian government signed an agreement for the establishment of the Société Irano-Italienne des Petroles (Sirip), following the principles expressed in the Mattei formula. The agreement aroused a vigorous reaction on the part of the international oil Companies, the US, and Britain. Americans and British protested both to the Iranian government and to Italy, alerting that subverting the fifty-fifty formula rule would have harmed the political stability of the Middle East. Mattei did not take care of the Anglo-American warnings and moved forward with his plans. However, the partnership between ENI and the Iranian government did not work out successfully because of the Iranian geology: no considerable amounts of oil were found in the areas granted by the arrangement. Nevertheless, the entry in Iran meant shattering the fifty-fifty principle, namely the founding rule of the Western oil cartel. The Italo-Iranian agreement established a partnership between a foreign Company and an oil producing country for the first time and it was followed by other contracts with Egypt and Iraq. ENI strengthened its position in Egypt and became partner with the Egyptian government through a new joint-venture, the Compagnie Orientale des Pétroles d’Egypt, which was created in February 1957. The first contact between ENI and Iraq happened after that a bloody coup occurred in July 1958. From the end of World War II to 1958, Iraq remained firmly under the control of the Hashimite monarchy and its agents⁷¹. King Faisal II and Nuri as-Sa’id, the Iraq’s foreign policy director, were murdered and the leader of the coup, Karim Qasim, became the new Iraqi president. Qasim condemned the pro-British orientation of the overthrown monarchy, and withdrew from the Baghdad Pact in March 1959⁷². In addition, Qasim decided to forge close relations with the Soviet Union and entered into agreements which provided for Soviet military and economic support. Qasim had no political interests in talking with Soviets, he just wished to avoid isolation after the breaking of the Baghdad Pact. On the same year, Qasim demanded vast revisions of the concession of the Iraq Petroleum Company in order to gain a fairer distribution of the earnings⁷³. The negotiation began in August 1958 and lasted more than a year. Immediately, Qasim reassured the IPC leaders that Iraq intended to respect the agreements signed with the Companies which operated in the country and pointed out that nationalization of the Iraqi oil industry had never been envisaged. However, Qasim began having contacts with exponents of ENI in September 1958 in the attempt to replace the IPC technology for extracting and refining oil. The British government and the IPC leaders

⁷⁰ Maugeri, L. (1994). L’ arma del petrolio. Questione petrolifera globale, guerra fredda e politica italiana nella vicenda di Enrico Mattei. Loggia dè Lanzi, Florence. p. 142-145.

⁷¹ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. p. 310.

⁷² Nuri al-Sa’id directed the Iraqi foreign policy and his pro-Western, pro-British orientation was symbolized by Iraq’s signing of the Baghdad Pact in 1955. The Baghdad Pact ensured military cooperation among Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan and Britain under the US supervision. After 1958, Iraq seemed to drop out of the Atlantic orbit.

⁷³ Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 491.

pressed Iraq and Italy for stopping such relations. Although the British government showed its displeasure with the Iraqi-ENI contacts since the beginning, the Italian government pursued a free and open attitude towards Iraq which was witnessed by an exchange of visits during 1959. A soft dialogue continued until 1961 when the relation between Italy and Iraq experienced a turning-point. The Kuwaiti crisis in June 1961 eroded the already complicated relations between Britain and Iraq, pushing Qasim to attempt a nationalization of the oil industry. Furthermore, Mattei saw in Qasim an interesting alternative after ENI's vain attempts in finding oil in Egypt. Mattei took advantage of the Iraqi isolation in the international context and filled the vacuum left by Britain. Qasim asked ENI for replacing the IPC technicians. On that occasion, Mattei was forced to give up to the British and the Italian government pressures to stop satisfying Qasim requests. Although the Italian government chose to act warily due to the international concern for the crisis, Mattei acted alone carrying out his autonomous strategy which pursued until October 1962.

1.5.2 North Africa turning to ENI

During the same years, ENI signed arrangements with Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, and several Sub-Saharan countries⁷⁴. In North Africa, ENI could benefit from the French-American competition for controlling energetic resources. Tunisia and Morocco became independent in 1956, and while the US gave economic support to maintain them into the Atlantic sphere, France was trying to exert her historical influence. To escape from any shape of subordination, Morocco and Tunisia turned to Italy, especially to ENI, to improve their economies. In 1957, the Moroccan King, Mohammed V, visited Rome and asked for Italian government support. On that occasion, the King met with Mattei to discuss a future economic collaboration between the two countries. In 1958, ENI subscribed an agreement which established the Société anonyme Marocaine et Italienne des pétroles (SAMIP), a mixed Company tasked with seeking for hydrocarbons in the region. A year later, ENI launched the Société anonyme marocaine-italienne de raffinage (SAMIR), charged with building a refinery in Mohammédia, and the AGIP Casablanca, which aimed at developing service stations throughout the country. The refinery provided oil to Moroccan market by allowing the country to lower imports of French gasoline. Upon the agreements between ENI and Morocco, the French government and press reacted harshly but Mattei continued to undertake his plans autonomously. Indeed, Italy

⁷⁴ E. Bini, *A transatlantic shock: Italy's energy policies between the Mediterranean and the EEC, 1967-1974*, p.149. and Bini E. (2003). *La potente benzina italiana. Guerra fredda e consumi di massa tra Italia e Terzo mondo (1945-1973)*, Carocci Editore, Torino. p. 180-188.

improved the Moroccan industry and agriculture providing for economic and technical aid and encouraged a long-term relationship between the two countries. Mattei extended his policies to Tunisia and proposed ENI as a valid alternative against Western oil companies. In 1959, the Tunisian government wished to build a pipeline which should be constructed by the Société tunisienne de raffinage which was made up of Esso, Shell, Mobioil, and Purfina. However, Mattei offered more convenient conditions for building the pipeline: he suggested to create a mixed society with the aim of extracting hydrocarbons in Tunisia and to install a new refinery and service stations. In 1963, ENI and the Tunisian government unveiled the Birserta refinery which was located in an ex French military base. The refinery gained a symbolic meaning: it witnessed the end of the colonialist period and the economic attempt to rise again. As it happened in Morocco, Tunisia took advantage of the ENI support for industrializing the country and making it less dependent of western imports. In the same years, Libya started prioritizing its dealings with state-owned Companies and was attracted by the equal partnerships and the financial co-participation promoted by the Mattei formula. In 1958, Mattei established the CORI (*Compagnia Ricerca Idrocarburi*) and the Libyan Petroleum Commission granted ENI a concession in the Cyrenaic desert in November 1959⁷⁵. Mattei offered Libya a fifty-fifty division of profits and 25% Libyan ownership of assets⁷⁶. During those years, Italy became the largest source for imports of Libya and Italy imported huge quantities of its energy needs from Libya. During the second half of the fifties, ENI attempted to obtain concessions also in Algeria, where local people endeavored to achieve independence from France. Once the oil was discovered in Algeria in 1956, Mattei provided for the necessary money and weapons to the revolutionaries in exchange for future oil agreements and concessions. However, exploring and extracting activities remained under French control and France kept the privilege of granting concessions until the independence of the country, when ENI could finally enter the country easily. Although several of the ENI's projects took place during the sixties, the relations between Italy and the Middle East were plain to all yet in the fifties. Mattei created a transactional system which was intended to produce long-term effects in the post-war oil order and in the Italian foreign policy. In the wake of the Mattei Formula, the oil producing countries perceived Italy as a country campaigning for their economic development and political independence. ENI was the instrument that Italy used to give oil producing countries a voice in the oil order, challenging the Seven Sisters. Not by chance, the Organization of Petroleum

⁷⁵ ENI digital archive, Letter to the Partner CORI in Libya.

https://www.eni.com/docs/it_IT/eni-com/azienda/la-nostra-storia/libia_cori.pdf.

⁷⁶ Van Genugten, S. (2016). *Libya in western foreign policies, 1911 to 2011*. Palgrave MacMillan, London. p. 72-73.

Exporting Countries was founded in 1960 by calling for a system of regulation in oil production to counter the monopoly of the oil cartel.

1.6 OPEC IRRUPTION IN THE PETROLEUM ERA

1.6.1 A new actor in the post-war oil order

At the end of the Fifties, Soviet Union adopted an aggressive marketing by selling oil in the West. Western Europe was the target market for the Middle Eastern oil and the Companies feared significant losses early on due to the Soviet petroleum campaign. For the oil Companies, the one way to address the Soviet challenge was the competitive price cuts. In early 1959, British Petroleum made the first cut by implying slashing in the national revenues of oil producers. The exporters reacted immediately and rallied in the Arab Oil Congress, planned to open in Cairo in April 1959. The Summit involved most of the countries which were part of the Middle Eastern region. The non-exporters – Egypt and Lebanon for instance - aimed at devising homogeneous and shared oil politics among the countries of the region and the Arab exporters were expected to economically support the countries which allowed Arab oil to reach European markets. According to Nasser, such system would grant stability in the Middle East and would bolster pan-Arabism across the region. However, Iraq boycotted the conference especially because Baghdad was not disposed to subordinate itself to Nasser, and after the coup, Iraq was entirely at the odds with Egypt. Indeed, Iraq had already proposed to the Arab League a plan in January 1959. According to that plan, a consortium consisting only of oil exporting countries should be created to counter the power of the Majors. The Arab Oil Congress did not provide the desired results and the role of the Nasserian Egypt in the oil system began to decline. A year later, the surplus of oil kept on rising and Western Companies decided to re-cut prices by the 7% to counter the Soviet threat. Indeed, on 9th August 1960, Jersey Standard announced cuts up to fourteen cents a barrel in the prices of the Middle Eastern crudes⁷⁷. The other Companies followed suit and acted unilaterally without informing the exporters. Lower crude prices would have decreased the revenues of oil producing countries implying huge losses. Within hours of Standard Oil's announcement of the cut, the exporters reacted furiously. Representatives from five of the main producing countries, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Venezuela, founded the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on 14th September 1960. The Saudi Abdullah Tariki and the Venezuelan Juan Pablo Perez Alfonso promoted the meeting in Baghdad on 10th September 1960⁷⁸. The Organization of oil exporting countries wanted to

⁷⁷ The oil companies' measures against the overproduction of oil in 1960 are well explained in Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London, Tonini, A. (2003). *Il sogno proibito. Mattei, il petrolio arabo e le sette sorelle*, Edizioni Polistampa, Florence, and Colitti, M. (2008). *ENI: Cronache dall'interno di un'azienda*. Milan, EGEA.

⁷⁸ Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonzo was the Venezuelan Minister of the Mines and Hydrocarbons between the Fifties and the Sixties. In 1959, the Eisenhower Administration decided to apply quotas on foreign oil to protect the

defend and restore the pre-cut price of oil and pressed oil Companies to involve them in any pricing matters affecting oil producer' earnings⁷⁹. The reason behind the constitution of the organization was the desire on the part of the member States to affirm control on their natural resources. Already in the Fifties, the oil exporting countries realized that oil was of increasing importance for the western industry and began claiming revision of the then agreements between the Middle Eastern governments and the Western oil Companies. However, the exporters knew that the nationalization of the oil industry could not be carried out due to the lack of proper instruments for refining and producing oil. Indeed, Mosaddeq nationalization in Iran showed the incapability of the Arab countries of handling refinery process of oil successfully. In 1957, Mattei provided for revolutionary agreements which became vehicle for Arab economic and political emancipation, making the owners of oil actively engaged in the petroleum market. Mattei contributed to the exporters' consciousness about their power and helped them to free from the oil Companies. To a certain extent, OPEC dissolved the constraints of post-war neocolonialism that found Western Powers still manipulating the Arab affairs⁸⁰. The member States aimed at defining a shared and unitary sale price of the oil, keeping tight control on the production. Although OPEC symbolized an insurgence against the oil order, it would achieve only two main goals in its early years. Primarily, oil Companies were more cautious in taking decisions unilaterally without involving the exporters. Second, they did not cut the posted price again. In its first decade, OPEC could not considerably change the postwar oil order because many of the oil reserves belonged to the Companies by contract. Moreover, the access to oil market depended on the Companies and they could not crack relationships with them. Western governments did not consider OPEC a potential threat to the oil order. In a secret report on the Middle East Oil in November 1960, CIA assigned few lines to the new organization. OPEC experienced a rapid development later and exerted its power during the Seventies, using the oil as a weapon against the Western world.

domestic producers. The US covered the 40% of the Venezuelan total exports of oil. Venezuela was hardly hit by such decision and Pérez Alfonzo opted for engaging in talks with the Middle Eastern oil producing countries. Abdullah Tariki was the Minister of Petroleum and Mineral resources in Saudi Arabia in the first years of the Sixties. He was one of the main critics of Aramco affairs pointing out that Aramco should involve more the Saudi government in exploring, producing, and selling oil. The sudden cut in the price of oil in 1959 made him share the same project of Pérez Alfonzo.

⁷⁹ Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 504-505.

⁸⁰ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. p. 407.

1.6.2 ENI looking at the OPEC

As a cartel made up of oil exporting countries, OPEC aroused Enrico Mattei's interest in engaging in a profitable collaboration. Soon after the creation of OPEC, Mattei thought that a new organization of oil consuming countries should be created to negotiate with OPEC for granting western interests. According to Mattei, national governments had to coordinate their oil politics in a new western organism, speaking the same language to the oil exporting countries. Mattei's proposal hampered the power of the Majors and fell on deaf ears by the western countries. Indeed, private oil Companies would have been damaged by following the instruction of the national governments, losing their leeway. Mattei considered private oil Companies a serious menace for the evolving oil order and supported governmental intervention to appease the chaos of the free competition. ENI mainly reflected the position of the Italian government which strengthened its pro-Arab image. Not by chance, Francisco Parra, the Secretary of the OPEC, demanded ENI a deepening on the structure of the international petroleum market, computing profits of the Western oil Companies in the Middle East. Once again, ENI was perceived as a very reliable interlocutor for the exporters and the request witnessed the mutual trust between oil exporting countries and Italy. The research showed the monopolistic structure of the oil industry and the considerable barrier to entry, which allowed oil Companies to gain higher profits. Furthermore, the research justified exporters for asking a higher oil rent in the light of the huge profits made by the oil Companies. ENI and OPEC were engaging in a dialogue which made Italy closer to the Middle East. The increasing relation between ENI and OPEC was witnessed by a dialogue between Mattei, a Saudi member, and the Secretary of the OPEC at the beginning of the Sixties. Mattei encouraged the other interlocutors to alter the oil order and recommended not to play into the hands of the oil companies. Mattei knew the exporters' desire to boost prices of oil, however, he suggested to contain any impulsive decision which would affect prices. Mattei highlighted that the oil market of the Companies was not bordered to the Middle East and North Africa and if the exporters decided to increase prices, the oil produced elsewhere would become more competitive, triggering losses for the exporters⁸¹. The Saudi member was attracted to Mattei's speech and envisaged future dialogues with ENI at the end of the meeting. Italy, through ENI, showed to be a country interested in the evolution of the OPEC and differentiated from the most of the western countries which entirely underestimated the power of the newborn organization. Mattei died in October 1962 and did not have enough time to deepen the relation with the oil exporting

⁸¹ The dialogue is well reported in the book by Marcello Colitti. See Colitti, M. (2008). *ENI: Cronache dall'interno di un'azienda*. Milan, EGEA.

countries. Although OPEC did not follow Mattei's advices and dramatically increased the price of the oil in the years later, Mattei left a considerable political legacy to Italy, so as to keep a long-term dialogue with the Middle Eastern and North African countries.

1.7 BOOSTING THE US ALARM: ITALY IN THE COLD WAR

1.7.1 Neo-Atlantism on the stage: Fanfani's foreign policy

By acting autonomously, Mattei had made a great number of enemies during his career, however he could often rely on the political support of the neo-Atlantist exponents. One could argue that 1957 signed the launch of the autonomous Italian-Middle Eastern energy dialogue and the true affirmation of the Neo-Atlantic dimension⁸². Besides establishing mixed Companies and breaking the fifty-fifty formula, in 1957 ENI instructed hundreds of students through the Scuola di Studi Superiori di Idrocarburi (Graduate School for the Study of Hydrocarbons) which was attended by many students coming from abroad. The school, located in Milan, aimed at creating an international elite capable of working in the oil producing countries keeping a link between Italy and the Middle East. The school was an instrument to strengthen Italy's relations with oil producing countries and gave them potential ruling classes able to handle the future oil business. Furthermore, Amintore Fanfani was elected Prime Minister in July 1958 and the Anglo-American misgivings towards Italy considerably increased. Fanfani endorsed the socialist party overture and embraced the Italian active policy in the Middle East⁸³. A more dynamic Italian foreign policy and the economic and social transformation of the country were the core of his priorities⁸⁴. Moreover, Fanfani knew that opening to the Mediterranean meant sharing a political position with Socialists, by assuring stability to the domestic political framework. The Mediterranean context was the object of many speeches by Fanfani, who looked carefully at the Middle Eastern and North African political evolution especially after the Suez Crisis. Fanfani became Prime Minister in the same period of the Iraqi coup and adopted a pro-Arab attitude in dealing with the crisis, which involved Western powers. On 14th July 1958, King Feisal and the Iraqi Prime Minister were murdered and replaced by the general Qasim who was suspected to be a communist sympathizer. The US and Britain decided to intervene for re-establishing order, avoiding a communist raising in the area. Fanfani allowed the Italian air bases to be used by American military planes which departed to Lebanon to attack Iraq. However, Fanfani stressed the huge risk of intervening militarily and offered his own collaboration for solving the crisis peacefully. During the Iraqi crisis, Fanfani suggested Western Powers to adopt wariness as to not appearing enemies of the Arabs. When Fanfani visited the US on 28th July, he granted the Italian loyalty to the Atlantic

⁸² Comparing with paragraph 1.3.

⁸³ Gentiloni Silveri, U. (1998). *L' Italia e la nuova frontiera. Stati Uniti e centro-sinistra, 1958-1965*. Il Mulino, Bologna. p. 85-102.

⁸⁴ Martelli, E. (2008). *L'altro atlantismo. Fanfani e la politica estera in Italiana (1958-1963)*, Guerini e Associati, Milano. p. 21-28.

dimension but remarked the willingness to keep a dialogue with the Arab world, especially with Nasser. According to Fanfani, Western Powers should replace the USSR in supporting Egypt economically, providing for a program based on financial cooperation. However, Eisenhower and Dulles considered the competition with the USSR meaningless for gaining Nasser's loyalty. Fanfani pursued his pro-Arab attitude but he also showed the willingness to play an active role into the Atlantic Alliance. In December 1957, the US asked the allies to install medium-range nuclear missiles on their soil and Italy adhered to the proposal. In the meeting with Eisenhower, Fanfani reiterated the Italian availability to the project, working for a confidence-building with the American administration. Fanfani's mandate lasted no more than six months due to divisions into the party, and two other short-governments followed suit. In mid-1960, Fanfani was re-elected Prime Minister without changing his foreign policy considerably. In the mid-1961, Fanfani met with the new Kennedy Administration for the first time. On that occasion, Fanfani suggested to approach warily to the ongoing Berlin Crisis, prompting dialogues and mediation with the USSR. During the crisis, he visited Moscow trying to behave as a mediator between the two powers. Fanfani's political attitude often generated division into the party and he led the government in a context of instability until 1963. He opened to the socialists in February 1962, antagonizing several members of the party. Moreover, during the Cuba Crisis in October 1962, Fanfani suggested the US for keeping a dialogue with the USSR resorting to the UN mediation as the socialist members argued. Fanfani's approach was supported by the Secretary of party, Aldo Moro, and they were both accused of neutralism and equidistance by some other members of the party. Clashes into the party were hitherto evident and after an electoral failure Fanfani resigned in July 1963.

1.7.2 ENI's autonomous policies clashing with the US

ENI's autonomous policies were not debated in the mid-1961 meeting, but it was clear that Fanfani's foreign policy entirely fitted with the activities of the ENI in the Middle East and North Africa. Eisenhower and Dulles did not fear ENI's economic power, but they worried about the political impact that the new Mattei Formula could produce in the Cold War context. The Iranian agreement could encourage other oil-exporting countries to carry on autonomous oil policies against the Western cartel. ENI was an instrument which boosted Arab nationalism and Mattei's actions were expression of a neutralist behavior capable of challenging the western policies in the Middle East and North Africa⁸⁵. Indeed, when the Iranian agreement was signed,

⁸⁵ Nuti, L. (1999). Gli Stati Uniti e l'apertura a sinistra. Importanza e limiti della presenza americana in Italia. Rome-Bari, Laterza. p. 140-148.

the US asked the Italian government to better supervise ENI's actions in the Middle East to stop ENI challenging the fifty-fifty formula. Mattei was aware of the ongoing American suspicion towards the Italian policy in the Middle East and affirmed that ENI policies aimed at assuring a relationship with oil producing countries in order to contain the USSR expansion in the Mediterranean. In 1958 Italy opened for a commercial dialogue with China. Mattei played a lively role in the negotiation: he visited China on the same year and several treaties were signed some months later. The US embassy in Rome feared ENI's contact with a communist country and interviewed some collaborators of Mattei to get information about future Italian investments in countries belonging to the other block. Clemente Brigante Colonna, ENI advisor for foreign operations, explained that ENI policies fitted with the American ones: the agreements with China could reduce the Chinese technical dependence from USSR, and ENI could turn into an instrument of western penetration where other Atlantic members were not politically accepted⁸⁶. Moreover, Mattei explained that China was interested in opening to the Western world due to its technical backwardness and for limiting the Soviet dependence. However, ENI started challenging the US oil policies by signing an agreement with Soviet Union to import oil from the USSR in exchange for technical assistance. ENI would have sent rubber and steel to the USSR and would have contributed to build a pipeline from the Urals to East Germany, while Italy would have received crude oil for five years⁸⁷. Mattei bought Soviet crude oil because it was cheaper and more affordable for the Italian economy. Moreover, Mattei was sending an implicit message to all the oil Western Companies to charge a lower oil price on the international market⁸⁸. The agreement was signed in November 1959 but announced in January 1960. The US reacted promptly. CIA and the State Department thought that Mattei's ambitions could pose Italy into a position of subservience to the Iron Curtain Block and Italy could turn into the instrument for Soviet penetration in Europe. Fanfani, who was re-elected leader of the executive after short governments in 1960, supported ENI activities in the USSR. The Italo-Soviet deal was renewed in 1961 for other four years, providing USSR with oil tankers and the equipment in exchange for cheaper oil imports. ENI was improving the Soviet Seven Year Plan and was allowing USSR to build oil pipelines for transporting its own oil in the European satellites. ENI's treaties with the USSR convinced the new Kennedy

⁸⁶ Bini E. (2003). *La potente benzina italiana. Guerra fredda e consumi di massa tra Italia e Terzo mondo (1945-1973)*, Carocci Editore, Torino. p. 177-178.

⁸⁷ Bini E. (2003). *La potente benzina italiana. Guerra fredda e consumi di massa tra Italia e Terzo mondo (1945-1973)*, Carocci Editore, Torino. p. 178-179. Giovagnoli, A and Tosi, L. (2010). *Amintore Fanfani e la politica estera italiana*, Marsilio, Venezia. p. 295-299. Martelli, E. (2008) *L'altro atlantismo. Fanfani e la politica estera in Italiana (1958-1963)*, Guerini e Associati, Milano. p. 64-68. E. Bini, *A transatlantic shock: Italy's energy policies between the Mediterranean and the EEC, 1967-1974*. p. 149.

⁸⁸ Bagnato, B. (2003). *Prove di Ostpolitik. Politica ed economia nella strategia verso l'Unione Sovietica, 1958-1963*, Olschki, Florence. p. 113.

administration to find a compromise with Mattei. The US feared that the USSR could become a member of the OPEC that meant influencing the Middle Eastern and North African governments at the expense of the Western oil Companies. In 1961, William Averell Harriman, Kennedy's foreign policy advisor, met with Mattei and pleaded him to stop buying Soviet oil. Mattei answered vigorously, by denouncing American Companies' discrimination against independent Companies and criticized American oil market in the Middle East. In 1962, the US alarm continued to mount. In February 1962, the first center-left government chaired by Fanfani was established, paving the way for a deeper dialogue between the US and ENI. Mattei supported the center-left coalition and exerted a considerable power on the Italian political dynamics. Kennedy Administration had to come to terms with Mattei so as not to worsen relation with a country which was opening to the left. Indeed, the State Department urged Standard Oil representatives to meet with Mattei. Standard Oil should sign an agreement with ENI, providing Italy for crude oil to satisfy the energy needs of the country. In the mid-1962, Mattei was improving relations with the US and the Seven Sisters, arranging agreements Italy could benefit from. Mattei could not carry out such agreements personally because of his death in the autumn of the same year. Mattei's decision to engage a dialogue with the greatest enemy, the Seven Sisters, is part of his strategy: at that time, ENI was encountering several financial problems, and negotiations with Americans could imply economic benefits. Once again, Mattei acted to satisfy ENI's needs, overcoming the Cold War constraints as he did throughout his entire career.

1.7.3 Mattei's legacy

On 27th October 1962, Mattei died in a plane crash. His death is still a mystery. It is said that Western Intelligence had sabotaged his jet because of his oil agreements with Soviet Union and the significant support to the Italian centre-left⁸⁹. Some said that the French Secret Army Organization had sabotaged the plane because of Mattei's disdain and criticism of the French role in Algeria and the support for the Algerian rebels, which was aimed at positioning AGIP for Algerian independence⁹⁰. Some said it was an accident: his plane crashed because of a terrible thunderstorm. Certainly, Mattei gave Italy a voice in the post-war oil order, by playing an active and autonomous role in the Middle East and North Africa, not caring about the Cold War constraints. He collected several enemies, death threats, and hate letters during his career. Nevertheless, Mattei neither denied nor abandoned any of his projects and ideas. He had been considered by several scholars the responsible for the sustained post-war economic boom

⁸⁹ Livigni, B. (2003). *Il caso Mattei – Un giallo italiano*. Editori Riuniti, Roma. p. 122.

⁹⁰ Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 512.

known as “the Italian Miracle” and not by chance, the period of recession began in the mid-Sixties. Furthermore, the septimate of Giovanni Gronchi ended in 1962. It could not be a hazard assuming that an era of significant foreign policy dynamism arrested on that year. Indeed, ENI brought the Italian interest in the Middle East and North Africa going from battle to battle challenging not only the established oil Companies, but also the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Without Mattei, ENI’s politics became less autonomous both domestically and internationally and more subordinated to the Majors. ENI’s new Presidents appeased the aggressive strategy adopted in the Fifties by reducing ENI’s extracting activities in oil producing countries and becoming an importer of the American Companies’ crude oil. Mattei engaged in a dialogue with the Seven Sisters to partially import crude oil in 1962 but Italy became almost entirely dependent on the oil of the Western Companies in the years later. In 1963, ENI signed an agreement with the Standard Oil allowing the latter to provide ENI with 12.5 million tons of crude oil in exchange for equipment. On that same year, Gulf Oil granted ENI another 12.5 million tons of crude oil. In 1965, ENI negotiated with Esso to import 3 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year from Libya. Although ENI renewed its agreement with the USSR in 1963, Italy became more vulnerable to the policies carried out by the Seven Sisters, alienating some of the oil producers with whom ENI negotiated in the past. For instance, the agreement with the Standard Oil affected the ENI’s presence in Algeria. In the first half of the Sixties, ENI gained concessions in the desert and offered the Algerian government to become co-owner with AGIP of a mixed company in charge of exploring and extracting oil and natural gas. However, the agreement failed when the Algerian firm Sonatrach sent a letter to ENI, stating that it could not accept its offer. To a certain extent, the ENI’s choice to deal with the Seven Sisters made the Arab countries suspicious towards the Italian entrepreneur initiative abroad. After Mattei’s death, ENI experienced a significant realignment to the American politics and mitigated its Mediterranean vocation. Even if the energy dialogue was getting worse, in 1962 new political exponents would keep a political dialogue between Italy and the Middle East. Indeed, after Fanfani’s resignation in July and six months of political instability, Aldo Moro became Prime Minister in December 1963. Moro, together with Fanfani, had favoured the overture to the ISP and had showed a neo-Atlantist orientation when he was Secretary of the party. In 1961, Moro stressed the relevance of the decolonization in Africa and the impact it could produce on the international arena. His interest in the international issues increased in the second half of the Sixties, especially after the Greek Crisis and the Six Day

War⁹¹. In the wake of Mattei's dynamism and Fanfani's Mediterranean vocation, the Italian involvement in the Middle Eastern and North African area will be the core of Moro's foreign policy during the years to follow.

⁹¹ F. Imperato, R. Milano, L. Monzali (2018). *Fra diplomazia e petrolio. Aldo Moro e la politica italiana in Medio Oriente (1963-1978)*, Cacucci, Bari. p. 23-24.

SECOND CHAPTER

ITALY SHAPING DÉTENTE IN THE MANGLED MEDITERRANEAN FRAMEWORK

During the second half of the Sixties, the entire world experienced a period of socio-political transition which altered the then alliance systems. The bipolar system, no longer capable of dealing with new phenomena, suffered a crisis and a new phase of the Cold War took shape. Among the new phenomena, the Six Day War internationalized the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and made the Mediterranean a crucial issue for the Western Sphere. The conflict has deep roots, which deserve to be analyzed to assess how Italy and other Powers behaved to play a role in the Mediterranean crises. Soon after the Six Day War, Italy attempted to renew its Mediterranean vocation and fostered an approach of equidistance between Israel and the Arab countries, by acting as a mediator. They were the early stages to build a deeper Mediterranean dialogue, which turned into a more detailed project under Moro's foreign policy which took shape in the early Seventies, when he attempted to extend the process of Détente to the Mediterranean. Aldo Moro tried to connect the period of transition taking place in the Middle East with the process of Détente, by pursuing an autonomous Mediterranean course that challenged the bipolar system⁹². Italy adopted bilateral contacts with Middle Eastern and North African countries and carved out an acting space that made the US look suspiciously at the Mediterranean area. Besides building a Mediterranean dialogue, Moro worked alongside with ENI to strengthen its economic and energy relation with the Arab world. In Moro's view the Mediterranean issues had to be addressed especially into the EEC dimension and the EEC should pursue a common policy to dialogue with Arab countries by tackling topics relating to security, economy, and peace⁹³. Several factors limited Italy's ambitions, and Moro's attempt to pacify the Mediterranean dimension collapsed with the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War in October 1973.

⁹² Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p. 179-180.

⁹³ F. Imperato, R. Milano, L. Monzali (2018). Fra diplomazia e petrolio. Aldo Moro e la politica italiana in Medio Oriente (1963-1978), Cacucci, Bari. p. 82-83.

2.1 ENCOUNTERING THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

2.1.1 The feeble peace settlement: the Middle East after the end of the Ottoman Empire

The roots and the evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict lay in the controversial agreements signed during the World War I when the Ottoman Empire experienced its last war effort. An introduction to the context in which those agreements took place makes it easier to understand the actions that resulted from them. By August 1914 the Continent was involved in World War I and in October the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers, bombing several Russian ports on the Black Sea⁹⁴. The entry of the Ottoman Empire into the war aroused concerns in Britain fearing they might lose an area of main interest; they sought to persuade Muslims to ally with the Entente. Britain found in Sharif Husayn ibn Ali, the Amir of the Mecca, the crucial interlocutor to engage negotiations. The Amir of the Mecca held an autonomous position responsible for maintaining the sanctity of the two holy cities and represented a crucial reference point for the Muslim community. In stated opposition with the CUP government (Committee of Union and Progress), Husayn sent a letter to the British high commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, to plan on how to join the Entente⁹⁵. The so-called Husayn-McMahon correspondence (July 1915 - March 1916) was taking place. The correspondence refers to a secret exchange of letters which made Britain support an independent Arab State in return for an Arab revolt against the Ottoman government. Britain sought to protect its own interest in the region and followed up on Husayn's initiative. Husayn, stating his willingness to represent all of the Arabs, demanded the British recognition of an independent Arab State including the Arabian Peninsula, the provinces of Greater Syria (including Lebanon and Palestine), and the provinces of Iraq⁹⁶. However, McMahon could not include the Syrian coast under the Husayn's control because it was claimed by France. It was a thorny issue and both Husayn and McMahon intended to postpone the matter until after the end of the war. Meanwhile, Britain affirmed that it was prepared to recognize the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the frontiers proposed by Husayn. But Husayn was claiming for a larger Arab State than the Allies wanted to recognize and McMahon words were so vague that contradictory interpretation could arise over whether Palestine was included in the future Arab

⁹⁴ On the evolution of the World War I see Di Nolfo, E. (2008). *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Editori Laterza, Bari.

⁹⁵ The CUP government tried to convince Husayn to commit his tribal levies to the Ottoman war effort. However, Husayn wished to act by satisfying his priorities by assuring Arabs a State after the end of the war. See Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

⁹⁶ On this matter see Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. and Monroe, E. (1981). *Britain's moment in the Middle East, 1914-1971*. London.

State or not⁹⁷. The Arab revolt against the Ottoman government began on the 10th June 1916 and the forthcoming fall of the Ottoman Empire pushed the Powers of the Entente to set a division of the Middle Eastern area into zone of influences. Indeed, on 23rd November Sir Mark Sykes of Britain and Francois George Picot of France met to discuss a post-war settlement that would divide control of the former Ottoman Empire. Picot ignored the British promise to Husayn, assuming that it would be impossible for Arabs to govern themselves alone⁹⁸. After several meetings and discussions Sykes accepted that Lebanon and the rest of Syria came under French rule and on 16th May 1916 the secret Sykes-Picot agreement was signed. According to the Agreement, France was to exert control along the Syrian coast from southern Lebanon into Anatolia and an exclusive control over the Syrian interior whereas Britain gained the zone which included southern Mesopotamia and the area from Gaza to Kirkuk. The first controversial aspect emerged into the content of the Sykes-Picot Agreement that was incompatible with the promises made by McMahon to Sharif Husayn. Indeed, the Arab state promised to Husayn was laying in the British and French zone of influence and according to the agreement Palestine was to be placed under international administration also involving Russia. The Agreement was to come into effect if the Arab revolt occurred, after the Russian consensus. Even if both the conditions occurred, the content of the Agreement never came entirely into effect. Russia withdrew after its Revolution, France did not build the confederacy of the Arab States in the interior of Syria, and in 1919 Britain obtained the Mosul vilayet from France. The future of Palestine remained uncertain until 1920 when it became a British mandate. After the end of the war, the formulation of a settlement for the Middle East urged several meetings which culminated with the San Remo Conference in April 1920⁹⁹. The San Remo Conference apportioned the Arab provinces to French and British mandates. Britain got the mandate for Iraq and Palestine and France for Syria. The long-term shape of the Middle East was determined by the agreements signed in the first decades of the Nineteenth century and the peace settlement impacted permanently on stability of the Arab world.

⁹⁷ Fieldhouse D. K. (2006). *Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914-1958*. Oxford University Press Inc. NY. p. 53-58 and Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. p. 152-153.

⁹⁸ Fieldhouse D. K. (2006). *Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914-1958*. Oxford University Press Inc. NY. p. 50.

⁹⁹ See Chapter 1, p. 6.

2.1.2 Establishing a Jewish National Home in Palestine

In 1897, the Hungarian journalist and lawyer Theodor Herzl chaired the first Zionist Congress in Basel. He gave life to the Zionist movement with the aim of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine to build a powerful Jewish national identity. Herzl wrote *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*) which provided the ideological basis for political Zionism. According to Herzl, Jews were not merely a religious group but a true nation lacking a political state and waiting to be born¹⁰⁰. Herzl's political movement and the Jewish desire to return to the promised land were also nourished by the impressive anti-Zionism wave which exploded in France and Russia at the beginning of the Twentieth century¹⁰¹. Although Theodor Herzl died in 1904, the political and international movement grew up successfully during the following years and the spread of the World War I outlined a geo-political scenario which laid the groundwork for settling a Jewish homeland. After the controversial Husayn-McMahon correspondence and the incompatible Sikes-Picot Agreement, Britain opened the door to the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Palestine was a crucial place in Jewish religious culture due to the belief that the birth of the state of Israel was the realization of God's promise to the Jews that they were selected to accomplish their destiny in Zion. In 1917, the Anglo-French troops moved towards Jerusalem while the Ottoman Empire was falling. In that context, the Jewish pressure to gain a land in Palestine increased considerably and the British cabinet looked at Zionism as a relevant matter. The Zionist spokesman in London, Chaim Weizmann, cultivated ties with British politicians who began to realize that the support for Zionism could help British imperial projects. Indeed, the British endorsement of a Jewish establishment in Palestine would call for and justify a British presence in the region. Several elements contributed to provide for a more tangible British effort on behalf of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine was laid down by a declaration approving sympathy for Jewish aspirations. On the 2nd November 1917, the British Foreign Minister, Arthur Balfour wrote to Lord Rothschild who was a prominent exponent of the Jewish finance and community. This was the Balfour Declaration which marked an epoch and produced long-lasting effects in the Middle Eastern area. By the Balfour Declaration the British Government pledged "*to use their best endeavours to establish in Palestine a national home for the Jewish people and nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish*

¹⁰⁰ On Herzl school of thought see Shlaim A. (2014). *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*. Norton & Co Inc.

¹⁰¹ In the period between 1894 and 1906, the Affair Dreyfus occurred in France. The French Jewish Army Official suffered an unfair trial for high treason. In Russia, the pogrom, reprisals against Jews caused several victims, especially in Odessa (1905).

communities in Palestine”¹⁰². Britain expected Arabs and Jewish would share the land in harmony. During the British occupation of Palestine, from 1917 to 1920, Britain tried to combine Zionism and Arabism aspirations by encouraging dialogues between Weizmann and Faysal of Syria¹⁰³. In 1919, Weizmann declared that the Jewish community would improve the economic condition of Arabs living in Palestine. However, Faysal had to recognize the Balfour declaration and approve the Jewish immigration in Palestine but he did not agree on the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. In 1920, the San Remo Conference allowed Britain to gain the mandate for Palestine by sending a civilian administration which replaced the military government. Three years later, the League of Nations incorporated the Balfour declaration in the British mandate and recognized Hebrew as an official language in Palestine¹⁰⁴. During the Twenties, Britain was attempting to ease the settlement of a Jewish national home on the one hand and tried to assure the rights of the Arabs living in Palestine on the other. This was the inherent incompatibility emerging in the British attempt. Zionists had interpreted the expression *national home* as the creation of a Jewish state expecting the British collaboration to build it, while in the Balfour declaration Britain committed to defend the rights of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine. In the light of the Sykes Picot agreement and the promises from Britain to Jews, Arabs felt betrayed and reluctant to share the territory with Jews. A peaceful coexistence seemed impossible after the end of the war. Indeed, in May 1921, clashes between Arabs and Jews occurred in Jaffa causing several deaths. The riots encouraged the British government to clarify its future plans in Palestine by removing the ambiguities of the Balfour declaration. On the 3rd June 1922, the British government issued the “Churchill” White Paper¹⁰⁵. The White Paper re-defined the meaning of Jewish national home, specifying that it did not refer to an eventual independent Jewish State but to a cultural and spiritual centre for the Jewish people¹⁰⁶. The White Paper reduced the area of the Mandate by excluding the area east of the Jordan River, which was given to the Emir Abdullah and established the principle of "economic absorptive capacity" as a factor for defining the immigration quota of Jews to Palestine¹⁰⁷. The

¹⁰² Mentioned in Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p 256 and in Laqueur W. and Barry Rubin. (2001). *The Israel-Arab Reader: A documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*. New York. p. 16.

¹⁰³ Amir Faysal Ibn Ali was the King of Syria from 1918 to 1920 and experienced the rise and fall of the Syrian Kingdom. He was exiled after the defeat of his Syrian forces by French troops in 1920 and then selected by Britain to become the first king of Iraq in 1921. Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

¹⁰⁴ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 231

¹⁰⁵ Makovsky, M. (2007). *Churchill’s promised land. Zionism and Statecraft*. E&F Scala by Binghamton, US. p. 119-124.

¹⁰⁶ Howard G. (2008). *The legal foundation and borders of Israel under International Law*. Mazo Publishers. Jerusalem. p. 436-438.

¹⁰⁷ See <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-british-white-papers>.

White Paper did not clarify the British position and after its publication in July several disputes occurred as to what was intended by the Mandate of Palestine. Ultimately, Britain should achieve the establishment of a self-government capable of turning the mandate into independence in a context which was religiously and politically fragmented. The British civilian High Commissioner in Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, who was Jewish and an ardent Zionist, promoted the creation of an integrated political community involving both Arabs and Jews to get a unitary state. The Arab leaders refused any proposal from Samuel because by accepting Jews living in Palestine meant recognizing the Balfour Declaration¹⁰⁸. Since then, Arab and Jewish communities grew up separately with their own political apparatus and institutions by increasing a reciprocal hostility.

2.1.3 The Aliyah and the Arabs of Palestine

The term of Aliyah refers to the Jewish immigration into the land of Palestine. The several waves of Aliyah began in 1882 when Tsar Alexander III of Russia introduced the Anti-Semitic law, triggering mass emigration of Jews from the Russian Empire. The first and the second Aliyahs (1882-1903, 1904-1914) occurred before the World War I and involved Jews who escaped from pogroms in Russia and found shelter in south western Syria¹⁰⁹. The third Aliyah was composed of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the fourth involved immigrants primarily from Poland as a result of the ever-increasing antisemitism wave between 1924 and 1926. The influx of immigrants culminated in the fifth Aliyah, namely when the rise of the Nazi Party obliged Jews from Germany and Central Europe to move away. During the Thirties, several countries as the US, Canada and Britain imposed restrictive immigration quotas obliging even the non-Zionist refugees to seek refuge in Palestine. From 1933, about 170,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine adding to the 50,000 immigrants from the fourth Aliyah. The fourth and the fifth Aliyah differed from the others in that the immigrant groups contained many middle classes families, educated professionals, businesspeople disposed to invest capital in the new land. Until 1948, the so-called Aliyah Bet took place. It was the illegal immigration of Jews who violated the restrictive immigration quotas established in the British White Paper published in 1939¹¹⁰. The influx of Jews in Palestine never stopped in the first half of the

¹⁰⁸ Makovsky, M. (2007). Churchill's promised land. Zionism and Statecraft. E&F Scala by Binghamton, US. p. 126-130 and Cleveland, William L. (2004). A History of the Modern Middle East. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 233-234.

¹⁰⁹ Kaplan, E. Penslar D.J. (2011). The Origins of Israel, 1882–1948: A Documentary History. University of Wisconsin Press. p. 17.

¹¹⁰ The 1939 British White Paper established a new geo-political framework in Palestine. Compare with paragraph. 2.1.4.

Nineteenth century and had soon to come to terms with the local people opposing Jewish immigration. Indeed, immigration and land acquisition represented the core of the mutual tensions in Palestine. Not surprisingly, the arable land was a matter of contention in a region of limited space where two ethnic groups shared the territory. Above all, on the one hand Zionists wanted to establish a Jewish population in Palestine so as to justify the existence of a national home and on the other they needed to obtain the cultivable land to build up and develop their economic system. However, Zionists goals did not fit with the Arab purposes in Palestine. Arabs of Palestine felt threatened by Jewish projects and tried to negotiate with Britain for the reduction of Jewish immigration and when they failed there were armed riots. Between the Twenties and the Thirties, a huge transfer of land from Arab to Jews occurred, jeopardizing Palestinian rural people. The Jewish National Fund, born in 1901 at the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel, was the organization, which bargained land purchases in Palestine leasing it to Jews and supporting economically, impoverished immigrants¹¹¹. The first largest purchase of land occurred in 1920 when the JNF bought 50,000 acres in the fertile Jezreel Valley from the Sursock family of Beirut. In the years later, several Palestinian notable families sold cultivable lands to the JNF or to other Zionist organizations due to the attractive prices they were willing to pay¹¹². As a result, the Palestinian peasantry suffered with every such transaction of land, which in turn produced increasing Arab unemployment. In addition, according to British law, the most of the Arab population did not possess the land meanwhile the local attitudes made Arabs the owners of the plants cultivated over those territories. Ultimately, according to the British law many of the territories cultivated by Arabs did not have an official owner and could be purchased by Jewish immigrants. Peasant farmers also had to comply with the British taxation policy, which obliged them to borrow funds from the large landholders. The increasing debts by the small landowners pushed them to sell their property mainly to Zionist organizations. During the British Mandate in Palestine, local people experienced marginalization and impoverishment. They did not have a representative political elite and they could not rely on Britain, which did not seem to care about their expulsion from the land. Violence was predicted to erupt in Palestine in the interwar years.

2.1.4 The ever- increasing hostility in the interwar years

Communal tension between Arabs and Jews culminated in the so-called Western Wall or Wailing Wall Massacre in August 1929. On that year, a dispute concerning the Jewish rights of

¹¹¹ Bridger, D. Wold, S. (1976). *The new Jewish Encyclopedia*. Berhman House. West Orange (NJ). p. 242.

¹¹² Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 241.

access to the Wailing Wall occurred and escalated into violence. Both Arabs and Jews considered the Wailing Wall a holy site, which was placed only under the Muslim jurisdiction at the time of the Mandate. Even if Jews had the right to visit the Wall, they could not set up equipment like chairs, benches or screens to separate men and women during prayer. Jews did not respect such rules and in September 1928 the British police removed a room divider and forced Jewish worshipers who had put it there to move¹¹³. Jews protested vigorously claiming it was their right while Arabs campaigned more aggressively against Zionism aspirations. The disputes, which lasted for almost a year, culminated in a brutal clash occurring in August 1929 when Arabs attacked Jews in the districts of Hebron and Safad. When the British forces re-established control 133 Jews and 116 Arabs had already died¹¹⁴. London intervened putting in place a new Commission chaired by Sir Walter Shaw. The commission, that investigated the reasons behind the violence erupting in August, produced the Shaw Report which summarized that the roots of the rioting not only laid in religious matters but also in the Arabs' fears that progressive Jewish immigration could generate a Jewish Palestine¹¹⁵. The landless class of Arabs determined by the land transfer increased the discontent and called for revolt against Jews. In the light of this, the commission recommended that the British government needed to better control the Jewish immigration and define an approach to Arabs. Rather than meeting with the content of the report, the British government sanctioned another Commission of inquiry which took the name of the Hope-Simpson Commission. It produced a policy statement, which included the Passfield White Paper issued on 20th October. The White Paper aimed to improve the Arab conditions in Palestine. Indeed, Lord Passfield, the author of the Paper, recommended reforms, social and economic measures, restriction on Jewish immigration and a deeper control over sales and purchases of land¹¹⁶. However, Zionists would not accept such conditions: Jewish immigration restriction and less land would negatively impact on the project of a Jewish National Home. Weizmann and other Jewish politicians pressed the government to revoke the statement. Jewish communities exerted a powerful influence on the British government and they managed to make the government repudiate the statement in 1931¹¹⁷. The British government ignored the most of the Paper recommendations, increasing the Arab frustration, which turned into bloody violence in 1936. Until that year, Jewish immigration had dramatically increased and a spontaneous popular reaction erupted against Britain, Zionism,

¹¹³ Ross, S. (2004). *Causes and Consequences of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Evans Brothers, London. p. 17-30.

¹¹⁴ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 243.

¹¹⁵ Urofsky, M.I. (1995). *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust*. University of Nebraska Press, US. p. 379-382.

¹¹⁶ Chatterji, N. C. (1973). *Muddle of the Middle East*. Abhinav Publications, New Delhi. p. 376-377.

¹¹⁷ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 246.

and the tainted Arab leadership. On 15th April 1936, an armed Arab band killed a Jew and the following evening, Haganah, an extremist Jewish armed group, killed two Arab farmers. On 19th April, Arabs declared a general strike, which continued over the summer alongside attacks on Jews and Jewish property. The Great Arab Revolt was taking place. The British army restored order by crushing the rebellion and in October, about 1000 Arabs and 80 Jews died. However, British military action was not sufficient to appease the violence and the religious fanaticism exploding in Palestine. The British empire called for more drastic rules by appointing a Royal Commission chaired by Lord Peel. On the 7th July 1937, the Commission issued its report, which was divided into three parts. Before proposing its Plan of Partition of the Palestine, the report summarized the contradictory geopolitical groundwork of Palestine until 1936 as follows:

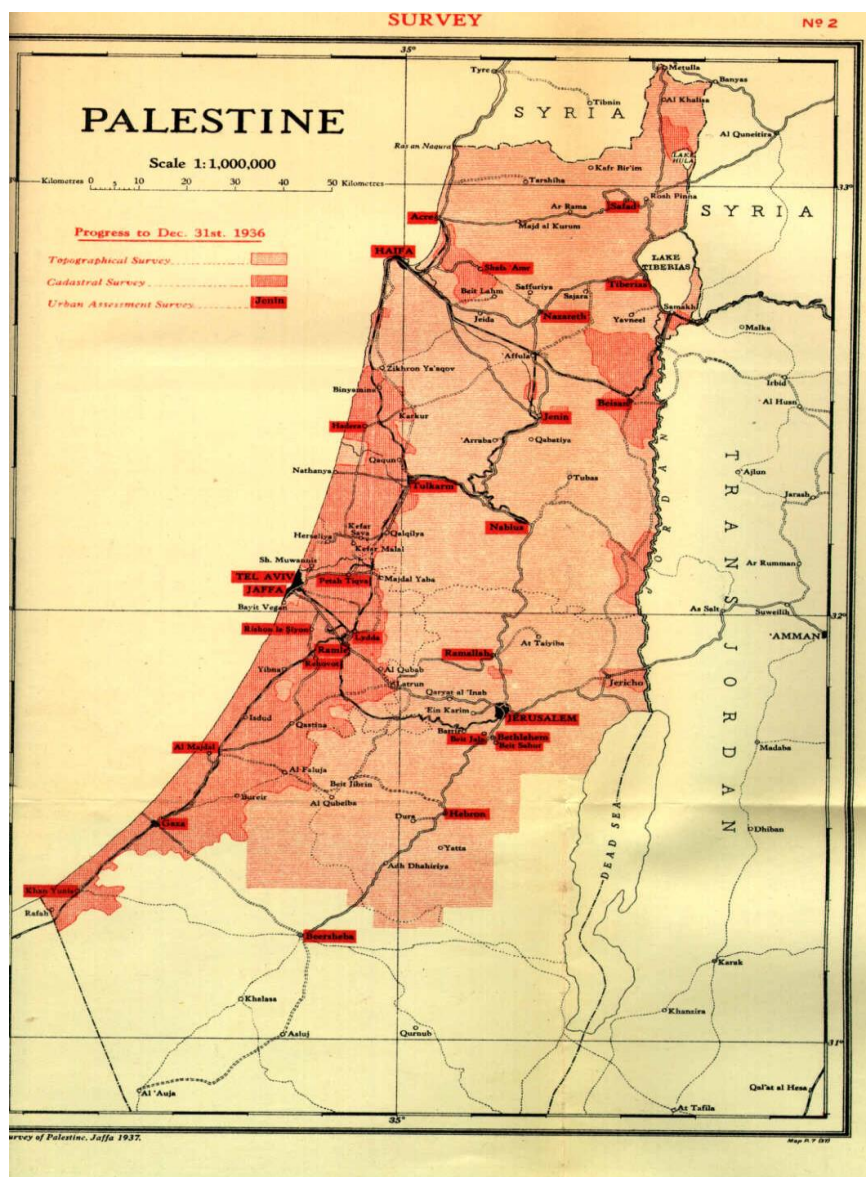
“In order to obtain Arab support in the War, the British Government promised the Sherif of Mecca in 1915 that, in the event of an Allied victory, the greater part of the Arab provinces of the Turkish Empire would become independent. The Arabs understood that Palestine would be included in the sphere of independence. In order to obtain the support of World Jewry, the British Government in 1917 issued the Balfour Declaration. The Jews understood that, if the experiment of establishing a Jewish National Home succeeded and a sufficient number of Jews went to Palestine, the National Home might develop in course of time into a Jewish State [...] At the end of the War, the Mandate System was accepted by the Allied and Associated Powers as the vehicle for the execution of the policy of the Balfour Declaration, and, after a period of delay, the Mandate for Palestine was approved by the League of Nations and the United States. The Mandate itself is mainly concerned with specific obligations of equal weight--positive obligations as to the establishment of the National Home, negative obligations as to safeguarding the rights of the Arabs. The Mandate also involves the general obligation, implicit in every Mandate, to fulfil the primary purpose of the Mandate System as expressed in the first paragraph of Article 22 of the Covenant.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸The Peel Report can be found on the following website.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20101231091409/http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/08e38a718201458b052565700072b358?OpenDocument>

According to the report, the Mandate had exasperated the antagonism between Arabs and Jews and it was no longer possible to expect that they would set aside political and religious aspirations. Indeed, concerning the then situation, the report highlighted that:

“The gulf between the races is thus already wide and will continue to widen if the present Mandate is maintained. [...] The evidence submitted by the Arab and Jewish leaders respectively was directly conflicting and gave no hope of compromise.”

In the second part, the report assessed potential improvements of the operation of the Mandate concerning administration, public security, fiscal and financial questions, health, education, local government, and especially land and immigration, pointing out that restrictions on Jewish immigration will not solve the Palestine problem because the National Home seemed already too big to the Arabs and, whatever its size, it hindered their goal of national independence. Even in the third part, the report stressed that the conflict was irrepressible within the small country and Jewish and Arab aspirations were incompatible. In the light of this, the report stated that the Mandate for Palestine should terminate and Palestine should be portioned into two separate, sovereign and independent States. The Arab State was to consist of Trans-Jordan united with the part of Palestine which lies to the coast and south of a frontier; the other a Jewish State consisting of that part of Palestine which lies to the north and west of that frontier. The following map was attached to the documents of the report and aimed to geographically explain Palestine at the time of 1936 and clarify the meaning of the partition.



In the same month the British government published a White Paper accepting the findings of the Commission. However, both Arabs and Jews rejected the partition and soon after the announcement of the Peel Commission's proposals the Arab violence mounted again¹¹⁹. Effectively, the report did not alleviate the contradiction of the Mandate: while it recommended the Jewish settlement and did not suggest to put Jewish immigration to an end in Palestine, it also supported safeguards for granting and protecting the rights and position of Arab communities. Arabs felt threatened by the Jewish immigration and could not accept the partition, which violated the rights of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine. In July 1937, the Arab discontent turned into violence with rebel bands made up of peasants who attacked railroads, bridges and British police stations, killing and injuring many Jews and destroying their properties. The summer of 1937 was considered one of the peaks of violence of the Great Revolt

¹¹⁹ Chatterji, N. C. (1973). Muddle of the Middle East. Abhinav Publications, New Delhi. p. 381.

and the British did not manage to re-establish order until March 1939. A year before, the British government appointed the so-called Woodhead commission to define the division of the country, galvanizing the Arab resistance which was also encouraged by the Arab neighbors and by the Axis powers. The commission realized that any partition was impracticable and the British government published the report in November 1938, accepting its findings. However, the Arab revolt did not stop. Britain answered back by adopting collective punishments and using brutality against the Arab anti-British and Anti-Zionism revolt. The revolt caused more than 3000 Arabs, 2000 Jews and 600 British victims and alongside with the imminent war in Europe pushed Britain to reevaluate its Palestine policy¹²⁰. For its part, Britain needed to keep good relations with Arab countries in order to assure Middle Eastern oil and airfield in time of war. To renew its policy by finding a compromise among parts, Britain convened an Anglo-Arab-Jewish conference in London in February 1939. However, the conference failed and no solution was provided. After this attempt, Britain issued the third White Paper on March 1939 whose content would define a new geopolitical framework in Palestine. The so-called MacDonald White Paper declared that it was not part of the British policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State, Jewish immigration was to be limited to 15,000 a year over the next five years and ceased at that point. However, Jewish community furiously condemned the Paper and the Permanent Mandate Commission also rejected it because of incompatibility with the text of the Mandate. Soon after, the British government sent the matter to the Council of League which actually ceased to exist as the World War II broke out. Even if part of the Arab world had rejected the content of the White Paper, several Palestinian Arabs regarded it as a victory. However, no new order had been established after several efforts and the geopolitical framework of Palestine remained an open question until the end of the Thirties.

2.1.5 Building the State of Israel: wartime and its aftermath

As the World War II erupted, several Jewish communities felt jeopardized in Central Europe. Jews of Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland soon became victims of the mass killing ordered by the Nazi regime, which extended its massacre to all countries Germany invaded. Jews were inflicted a serious political defeat after the publication of the 1939 White Paper and experienced the horror of the Holocaust in Hitler's death camps. When such bloodshed became known, the support of a settlement of Jews in Palestine arose in the West. Britain tried to stop Jewish illegal immigration into Palestine, increasing the Jewish anti-British action; the

¹²⁰ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 245.

powerful American Jewish lobbies bolstered the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. Several American Jews rallied in the US Zionists meeting in 1942 publishing the Biltmore Program, which championed open immigration to Palestine¹²¹. However, they did not obtain political support from the then US President F.D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt wished to safeguard the American oil interests in Saudi Arabia by keeping a special relationship with the Arab world. Three years later, a different course was proposed by Truman's administration, which endorsed the Biltmore Program and suggested Britain allow 100,000 Jews to reach Palestine immediately¹²². Britain took its time by establishing a mixed committee made up of both American and British public exponents. In April 1946, the committee accepted the Jewish immigration quota of 100,000 and endorsed the creation of a binational state with power-sharing structures for Arabs and Jews. However, increasing Jewish immigration in Palestine meant adding division of British troops there and Bevin, the then British Foreign Minister, refused the Committee's proposals. In July, Jews reacted harshly by blowing up the British headquarters at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem¹²³. Britain, no longer capable of handling Palestine, decided to call for a UN intervention in April 1947. The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was established and provided for a report urging for the creation of two different and independent States, designating Jerusalem as an internationalized district¹²⁴. Jews endorsed the Report. For the first time an international organization such as the UN recognized the right to create a Jewish state in Palestine, the Arabs however rejected it. Britain refused to implement the UN Partition Plan and in September 1947 announced its withdrawal by the 15th May 1948. The General Assembly approved the Report with resolution 181 on 29th November 1947 and Arab countries reacted by affirming to lead an armed resistance against any creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. During the period between the announcement and the final British withdrawal, Palestine experienced brutal turmoil. The intercommunal war was taking place. The Jewish forces conquered the assigned territory which was actually inhabited by Arabs who were no longer capable of defending their land. By spring 1948, Jews kept control of several Arab centers forcing local inhabitants to flee to Lebanon, Syria and Transjordan. The last British High Commissioner left Haifa on 14th March 1948 and Palestine was left to its own devices. Britain failed its Mandate by not creating political institutions in Palestine and leaving Arabs and Jews to compete and fight for supremacy. Soon after the last

¹²¹ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 247.

¹²² Hitchcock, W. I. (2003). *The Struggle for Europe. The turbulent history of a divided continent, 1945 to the present*. Anchor Books Edition, New York. p. 60.

¹²³ Hitchcock, W. I. (2003). *The Struggle for Europe. The turbulent history of a divided continent, 1945 to the present*. Anchor Books Edition, New York. p. 62.

¹²⁴ Morris B. (2008). 1948: A history of the first Arab Israeli war. *Composing room of Michigan, US*. p. 40-42 and Di Nolfo E. (2008). *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 942-946.

High Commissioner's departure, Ben Gurion proclaimed the independence of the State of Israel¹²⁵. Up until the proclamation, Arabs and Jews competed in skirmishes adopting guerrilla strategies since they had not yet organized a proper military apparatus. However, the following clashes would show a more brutal face of the war in which true armies fought to get a territory as large as possible in Palestine.

2.1.6 The first Arab Israeli War

A severe regional war took place soon after the state of Israel was proclaimed independent. Troops of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Iraq invaded Israel on 15th May 1948. The war continued into early 1949, when Israel inflicted a severe defeat to the Arab forces¹²⁶. Arab participants were poorly equipped and hadn't prepared enough to cope with the very well commanded Israeli forces led by Ben-Gurion¹²⁷. Arab States expected Israel to be a weak and defenseless newborn state but their expectation did not correspond to reality. In addition, Arab armies did not operate cohesively during the battlefield and even if they fought against the same enemy, they lacked a sense of national belonging. After a first round of fighting, the UN proclaimed an Armistice which entered into force on 11th June 1948. By the time of the Armistice, the Arabs just took East Jerusalem while Israel kept the western part. The UN sent Folke Bernadotte in Palestine, a mediator who sought for compromises among parts by proposing a division of the territory respecting the previous UN's decisions. Folke Bernadotte was killed by a Jew in September while clashes between Jews and Arabs carried on. His vice Ralph Bunche replaced Bernadotte immediately and provided for a provisional solution in January 1949 when the Israeli's incursions were aimed at occupying the Sinai Peninsula. The Egyptian army was obliged to withdraw from the Negev (the Southern zone of Israel) and accepted the cease-fire because of the evident Jewish military superiority. Bunche managed to make each of the belligerent Arab States stipulate armistices with Israel, which would turn into peace treaties. The Armistice stipulated in February 1949 between Israel and Egypt obliged Israel to leave Sinai. In the following armistices Jordan was recognized the Arab Palestine, namely the West Bank, where more than 700,000 Arabs found a shelter. Many others moved to

¹²⁵ Ben Gurion was a Zionist supporter and the Executive Head of the World Zionist Organization in 1946. He became the head of the Jewish Agency in 1935, and later he was president of the Jewish Agency Executive. Ben Gurion can be considered the leader of the Jewish community in Palestine.

¹²⁶ The first Arab-Israeli War took the name of al-Nakba, namely "the catastrophe" for the Arabs due the territorial losses they suffered.

¹²⁷ Naor M. (2013). Social Mobilization in the Arab/Israeli war on 1948: On the Israeli Home Front. Routledge, US. p. 13-14.

In May 1948, the Jewish armed militarized groups (Haganah, Palmach, Etzel) merged in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). It meant that Israel had established a regular army.

the Gaza Strip which was placed under the Egyptian Administration¹²⁸. However, those armistices just defined the cease-fire borders which were not accepted as final by Arabs who hampered any process of stabilization and considered the armistices just a pause in an endless war¹²⁹. Arabs viewed Israel as the result of the British imperialism and a western infiltration in the Middle Eastern area, essentially Israel was an entity to destroy. Hostilities were intended to mount especially after the spring of 1948 when the Haganah adopted a violent campaign to secure the Jewish settlement located outside the UN-decreed borders. The campaign was known as the “Plan D” which implied a mass expulsion of Arabs living in the territories assigned to the Jewish state as also the part allocated to the Arab state¹³⁰. Many homeless Arabs became refugees who suffered forced displacement and moved to the nearest States trying to survive tough conditions. The hosting States were no longer capable of providing them with proper shelter and services, and frequently, refugees were perceived as an economic burden and a source of social division in already unstable countries¹³¹. Although the Arab world opposed and refused to accept any peace treaty which recognized the presence of Jews in Palestine, it was no longer capable of representing with a unified Arab voice the Palestinian Arabs’ instances on the international arena. That divisiveness of the Arab world was one of the main strengths of Israel which also enjoyed the British departure and a vigorous leadership able to protect the newborn state by creating a strong military system. The Arab mass exodus and the Arab defeat arose a thirst of vengeance and a confined civil war was intended to turn into the so called Arab-Israeli war which would have altered the then international geopolitical framework.

The following map shows the 1949 armistice line which endured until 1967¹³².

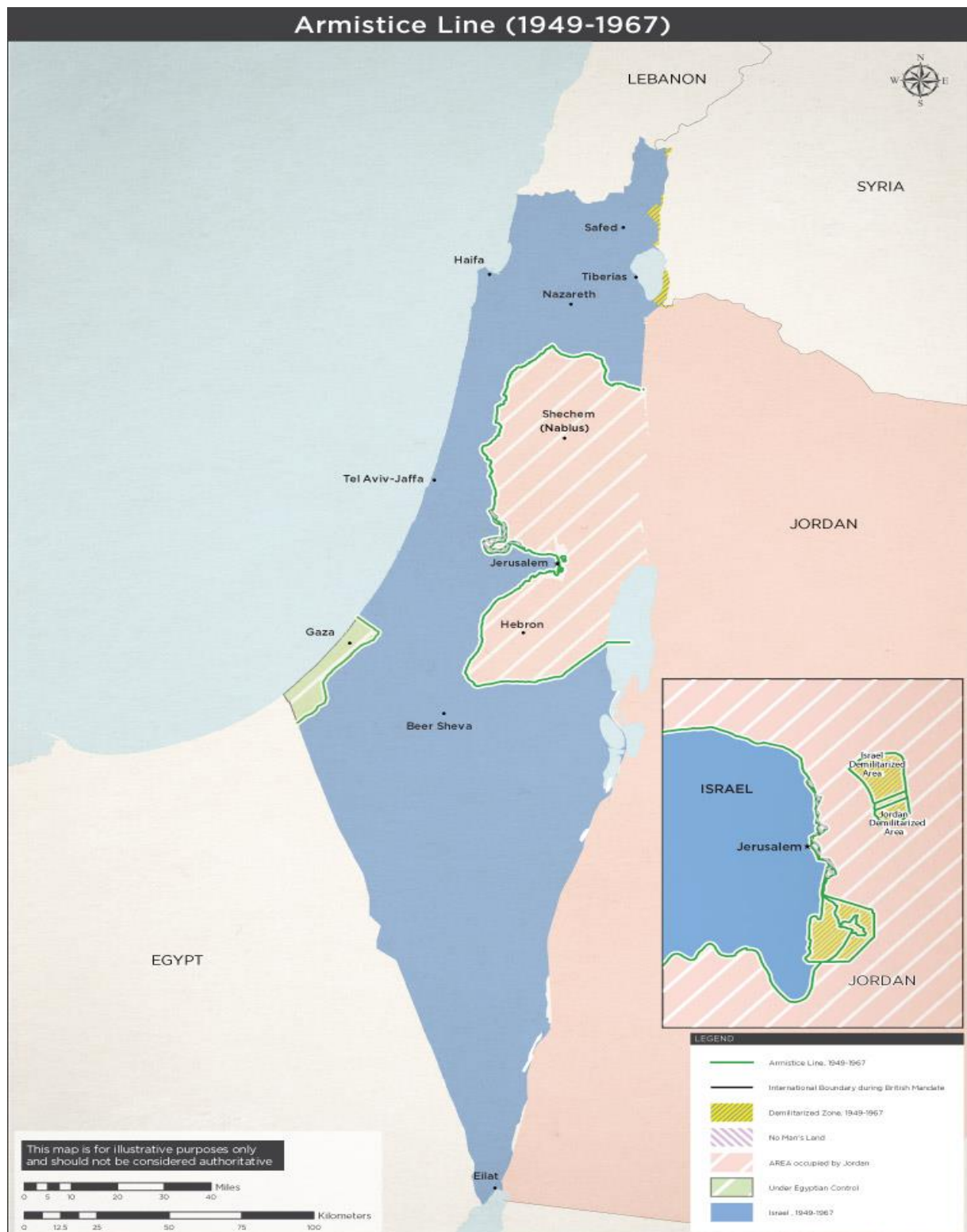
¹²⁸ The 1949 Armistice Lines between Israel and its Arab neighbors came to be known as The Green Line. Armistice Lines (1949-1967) on the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. About Israel. See <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/maps/pages/1949-1967%20armistice%20lines.aspx>.

¹²⁹ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 252-254.

¹³⁰ Morris B. (1987). *The birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*. Cambridge. p. 63; Pappé, I. (2006). *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951*. I.B. Tauris & Co, London. p. 90.

¹³¹ See Ovendale, R. (2004). *The Origins of the Arab Israeli War*. Longman, London; Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

¹³² The map is available on <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/maps/pages/1949-1967%20armistice%20lines.aspx>



2.1.7 The Arab-Israeli conflict in the Cold War

During the Cold War, States, which had obtained independence, became good candidates to be influenced. Not surprisingly, the creation of a new State in the Middle East arose the interest of several Powers, which sought to curry favor with Israel adopting political and economic instruments. Above all, when Israel was proclaimed independent, the US and Soviet Union

recognized it immediately and fifty-five States recognized Israel within its first year of existence. The vigorous Jewish lobby in the US encouraged and sustained the establishment of the State of Israel in Palestine and exerted considerable pressure on the leading administrations in order to improve the rights of Jews living elsewhere. However, the marriage between Israel and the US remained checkered until 1958. Both Truman and Eisenhower aimed at preserving a proliferative dialogue with the Arab world and many times condemned Israel for having extended its territory at the expense of the local people. In July 1953, Eisenhower declared the American intention to mitigate the Arab anti-American trends by specifying that Israel would not have been treated favorably with respect to other States¹³³. On the other hand, the Soviet Union had adopted a pro-Zionist attitude since 1941 in order to assure Jewish support in the war effort. In addition, Stalin thought the future Jewish state as a socialist entity and endorsed the Jewish cause in 1944 in the hope that a pro-Soviet state might have speeded up the fall of the British colonial empire in the Middle East. However, the rising of Nasser in Egypt in the first half of the Fifties paved the way for a new course of relations between Israel on the one hand and the East and West on the other hand. At that time, Britain, France, and Israel shared a common enemy and agreed on a joint attack against Egypt on 24th October 1956 in Sevres¹³⁴. After Israel had invaded the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip on 29th October, the UN condemned the attack by threatening Israel with sanctions. The US announced a potential breakdown of the relations if Israel had not withdrawn its troops from Sinai and Gaza. Only after several negotiations, which allowed Israel to get favorable concessions, Ben Gurion ordered his troops to leave the invaded territories. In 1957, relations between the US and Israel were freezing and they only improved a year later in order to contain the increasing power of Nasser's Pan-Arabism¹³⁵. Although the US tried to contain Nasser's successful campaign, it continued to economically support Egypt until the spring of 1967 in an attempt to include it in the Western Sphere. The Soviet Union was doing the same providing Egypt with armaments and financing the construction of the Aswan Dam. Both the US and Soviet Union were taking advantage of the power vacuum that Britain and France left behind in the Middle East. Essentially, after the Suez Crisis, the two Superpowers became the main actors in the region and offered their economic and military support to newborn nationalist leaders for promoting

¹³³ Little D. (2007). *American Orientalism: United States and the Middle East since 1945*. The University of North Carolina Press, US. p. 159.

¹³⁴ The attack refers to the Suez Crisis, which exploded few months after the nationalization of the companies of the Suez Canal. Britain held considerable shares of the companies and all together with France feared the Nasserism nationalism. France had its interests in waging a war against Egypt because of the substantial economic and military support it was giving to the Algerian rioters. Egypt was a nuisance as well as for Israel, which had to counter the Egyptian incursion on the borders.

¹³⁵ Valdevit G. (2003). *Stati Uniti e Medio Oriente dal 1945 a oggi*. Carocci, Roma. p. 50-59.

their respective models and form of modernization¹³⁶. In the mid Fifties, the Soviet Union abandoned the early hopes to include Israel in the Eastern area and its attitude took a turn for the worse especially from 1952 when Stalin favored the Prague trial and the Doctors plot at the beginning of 1953¹³⁷. While the US was adopting carefully balanced strategies so as not to deteriorate relations with Arabs and Israel, the Soviet Union turned in explicit favor of Nasser who was the fiercest defender and supporter of the Palestinian Arabs against Israel. To some extent, the Soviet Union realized that Israel did not need Soviet aid and that supporting Israel was incompatible with a pro-Nasserian approach. However, even the US gave up to place Egypt in the Western Sphere during the Sixties. The Kennedy and Johnson Administrations began to accept the then geo-political division of the Middle East and North Africa which showed several Arab States preferring Soviet aid by embracing the socialist doctrine¹³⁸. Indeed, the US focused on those Arab oil-exporting countries, which enjoyed considerable benefits being tied to the Western World. The position and the perception of the US in the Arab World was complicated by the American involvement in the Vietnam War and exacerbated by the pro-Israeli attitude promoted by Johnson. Israel, on its part, endeavored to preserve its neutral status in the increasing Cold War context, but its ties with the Jewish American communities and its political structure made it closer to West than to the East¹³⁹. A stronger tie to the US emerged in 1966, when it provided Israel with fifty bombers and two-hundred tanks for fending off Arab aggressions on the borders. To a certain extent, two sides seemed fairly defined in the Middle East at the end of the Sixties and the Arab-Israeli conflict was assuming a more international profile. Nasserism promised liberation of Palestine from Zionist occupiers and the memories of the Israeli victory in 1948 and the Israeli invasion of Egypt in 1956 nourished a deeper political consciousness within the Arab States. Indeed, frequent clashes occurred along the Jordanian-Israeli border during the Sixties, fomented by embryonic Palestinian resistance organizations which took shape in the late Fifties. In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization was established under the Egyptian influence and later guided by the Al Fatah group, led by Yasser Arafat¹⁴⁰. The PLO action made Israel live in constant insecurity. They were galvanized by the

¹³⁶ Leffler, M.P. and Westad, O. A. (2012). *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. p.238-257.

¹³⁷ In the last years of his life, Stalin found in Jews potential enemies of his regime and turned brutally against them especially on those two occasions.

¹³⁸ On this matter see Valdevit G. (2003). *Stati Uniti e Medio Oriente dal 1945 a oggi*. Carocci, Roma; Little D. (2007). *American Orientalism: United States and the Middle East since 1945*. The University of North Carolina Press, US; Quandt, W. B. (1993). *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab Israeli Conflict since 1967*. Brookings Institute, Washington D.C.

¹³⁹ Ben Sasson, H.H. (1976). *A history of the Jewish people*. Harvard University Press, Massachusetts. p. 1079.

¹⁴⁰ Rubin, B. (1994). *Revolution until victory? The politics and victory of the PLO*. Harvard University Press, Massachusetts. p. 4-9; Quigley, J. (2013). *The Six-Day War and Israeli Self-Defense*. Cambridge University Press, NY. p. 6-10.

need to achieve a military victory over Israel and free the area of Zionists. At the end of the Sixties, the Arab coalition felt confident in redeeming losses, now that it could rely on Soviet economic and military aid. The cold war seeped into the Arab-Israeli conflict and the following Six Day war in 1967 would impact the equilibrium in the Middle East and North Africa reshaping relations with the Western countries.

2.2 DIPLOMACY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN: ITALY AND THE SIX DAY WAR

2.2.1 The Six Day War

In the late May 1967, Soviet and Syrian intelligence informed Nasser about an imminent Israeli military operation against Syria for stopping the gun-fires in the Golan Heights and the Syrian sponsorship of Palestinian activities¹⁴¹. The report was taken to be true and Nasser sent Egyptian troops in the Sinai Peninsula. Nasser took the opportunity to boost his Pan-Arab leadership in the then fragmented Middle East, where monarchies and socialist States were likely to clash militarily¹⁴². Nasser's military gesture demonstrated the Egyptian willingness to flank all Arab countries against a common enemy and it worked successfully. Several pro-Nasser and anti-Israeli demonstrations occurred in many Arab cities and gave Nasser the incentive to act preventively¹⁴³. He was intent on strengthening his prestige, which had declined in the Arab world during the early Sixties. Nasser did not expect the US or Soviet Union would intervene to appease the crisis and raised the stakes. He demanded the withdrawal of the UN forces, who had been on duty since the end of the Suez Crisis, from the border between Egypt and Israel to the UN Secretary-General U-Thant. On 22nd May 1967, when U-Thant went to Cairo in order to mediate the crisis, Nasser re-occupied the UN position at Sharm al-Shaykh and announced a blockade on Israeli ships passing across the Straits of Tiran¹⁴⁴. The UN forces, even those located in Sharm al-Shaykh, granted ships crossing the Straits of Tiran that was the only Israeli access to the sea. Nasser felt confident in handling tensions in the region, by attempting to solve the crisis with political and military pressures or by waging a war that he supposed to win. He miscalculated. Israel viewed Nasser as preparing the final crash and feared Arab leaders' solidarity which increased after the Straits of Tiran blockade. The war was likely to explode at any moment¹⁴⁵. On 30th May, King Huseyn of Jordan signed a mutual defense pact with Egypt and the Iraqi government joined the alliance a few days later¹⁴⁶. The Israeli government of the Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, decided for a preventive war and on 5th June, the Israeli air force attacked Egypt, under the pressure of Moshe Dayan, the then Minister of

¹⁴¹ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 320-321; Quigley, J. (2013). *The Six-Day War and Israeli Self-Defense*. Cambridge University Press, NY. p. 3-14.

¹⁴² Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 320-321.

¹⁴³ Ibidem.

¹⁴⁴ Di Nolfo E. (2008). *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 1094-1095.

¹⁴⁵ The war has been deepened in the following books. Gawrych, G.W. (2000). *The Albatross of Decisive Victory: War and Policy between Egypt and Israel in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars*. Greenwood Press, Westport; Hammel, E. (1992). *Six Days in June: How Israel won the 1967 Arab-Israeli War*. Scribner's, New York.

¹⁴⁶ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 321.

Defense, who could not tolerate the shipping blockade and the increasing Arab solidarity against Israel. Israeli forces defeated the entire Egyptian army in Sinai and the Jordan and Syrian troops which entered the conflict a day later¹⁴⁷. On 9th June, Egypt and Israel signed a first ceasefire and on 11th June another one was agreed on the Golan Heights. After the war, the Israeli territory doubled. Israel conquered the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, Cis Jordan, the Golan Heights, and the Eastern Jerusalem¹⁴⁸. 1967 marked the end of the socialist and secular pan-Arab period and the early Islamic revival in the Middle East. Nasser era was shattered by a political and military miscalculation. However, it was not only a matter of miscalculation. Nasser acted so as to defending its territory because of the incorrect and fake Soviet information of the Israeli forces massed on the border. Nasser moved forward militarily in order to prevent any attack, being convinced to manage the crisis. He in turn generated a preventive reaction on the part of Israel. After the June War, Israel emerged as a super-power to the Arab world, which witnessed the inexorable decline of Nasser. In 1967, the Arab military regimes that had come to power in the Fifties proved to be corrupt, dysfunctional, not militarily equipped, and inept as they predecessors who had been deposed a decade before. Instead, Israeli intelligence and military apparatus implemented strategies successfully and defeated the Arab coalition on several fronts within few days. The military superiority gave Israel the arrogance to make the rules of the game and slowed any urgency for compromise and negotiations in the light of its decisive victory.

2.2.2 After a new geography: the overall June War effects

Before assessing the June war aftermath in the Cold War balances, here it is fundamental considering the new Middle Eastern geo-political framework which was settled after the war. Egypt, Jordan, and Syria surrendered large part of their territory to Israel and the defeat was dramatic in both material and psychological terms. Egypt was deprived of the revenues from the Sinai oil fields and the Suez Canal, which remained closed to shipping until 1975¹⁴⁹. While Jordan lost the West Bank and the touristic sites of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, Syria lost the Golan Heights. The new geography implied a new demography. Indeed, settlements of Palestinian population fell under the Israeli control which found itself administering an Arab population of 1.5 million people¹⁵⁰. Many Arabs fled the occupied zones and exacerbated the

¹⁴⁷ Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 536-537.

¹⁴⁸ Di Nolfo E. (2008). *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 1095-1102; Hammel, E. (1992). *Six Days in June: How Israel won the 1967 Arab-Israeli War*. Scribner's, New York. p. 137-163.

¹⁴⁹ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 323.

¹⁵⁰ Ibidem, p. 323-324.

complex Arab refugee situation. The Palestinian issue turned into an international matter whose solution was hampered by the stubbornness of the parties, unwilling to negotiate for a compromise. In addition, the Arab world experienced a period of political transition after the defeat. The Soviet Union expanded its military and political mission in Egypt by sending additional contingents and investing in building infrastructures and industries. The USSR had been blamed by Arabs for the lack of military support to Egypt during the June War and Brezhnev feared to lose a vital base in the Middle East¹⁵¹. After 1967, Egypt had become even more dependent on the Soviet Union, which exerted its power brutally not caring about the exigences of the local people and workers. Soviet Union looked like the previous imperialist actors and worsened the relation between itself and Egyptians. Concurrently, Nasser managed to keep alive his authority by using purges, arrests, and suicides and after his death in 1970, he was replaced by Anwar al-Sadat who would pave the way for a new foreign policy course. After having lost the territory of the West Bank, Jordan was then threatened by a wave of Palestinian refugees who fled the occupied zones. Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Kuwait, those monarchies that Nasser had criticized in the recent past, helped Egypt and Huseyn of Jordan to survive. However, Jordan had to face the Palestinian refugee militancy galvanized by the PLO propaganda, which took shape especially in the refugee camps¹⁵². The refugee camps were the base for developing guerrilla warfare that the Fedayeen adopted against Israel by following instructions of the PLO leaders. Jordan paid the piper of the guerrilla actions, which were countered by Israel in the Jordan territory. The PLO acted autonomously in the Jordan territory and it was also supported by Syrians. The increasing Palestinian guerrilla activity in Jordan met with the Israeli retaliation, which involved the Jordan territory. In 1970, Huseyn reacted by eliminating thousands of Palestinians militants (Black September) and reduced the influence of the PLO in the area. However, PLO succeed in settling in Lebanon where it found the autonomy not allowed in Jordan. Even the Syrian regime suffered all sorts of instability after the defeat and resisted until 1970, when the regime was overthrown and Hafiz al-Assad began his long rule in Damascus¹⁵³. In the late Sixties, a radical transformation was taking place in the Middle East and the rest of the world could not be a mere spectator¹⁵⁴. The USSR image was

¹⁵¹ . Ro'i, Y. and Morozov, B. (2008). *The Soviet Union and the June 1967 Six Day War*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington D.C. p. 198-220.

¹⁵² Hay, J. (2013). *Perspectives on Modern World History. The Arab-Israeli Six-Day War*. Green Haven Press, Detroit. p. 143; Rubin, B. (1994). *Revolution until victory? The politics and victory of the PLO*. Harvard University Press, Massachusetts. p. 22-27.

¹⁵³ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 323-327

¹⁵⁴ Around the same theme see Abu-Lughod, I. (1970). *The Arab-Israeli confrontation of June 1967: An Arab Perspective*. Northwestern University Press, Evanston; Rabinovitch, I. and Shaked, H. (2017). *From June to October: The Middle East Between 1967 and 1973*. Routledge, NY; Belin, Y. (1992). *Israel: A concise political history*. St. Martin's Press, NY; Ovendale, R. (2004). *The Origins of the Arab Israeli War*. Longman, London. p. 230-256.

considerably damaged by the dramatic Egyptian defeat in the June War, since it showed the limited power and influence that the Soviet Union was able to exert in the Middle East and North Africa. In light of this, the USSR increased its presence in Egypt by forging a pro-Palestinian policy also to justify its mission in the Mediterranean. The USSR tried to hide the power crisis in the Middle East for not losing confidence in those developing countries which intended to embrace socialism. On the contrary, 1967 made the US closer to Israel. The US understood that Israel had become a regional power and the dominant entity in the Middle East, which implied making the US-Arab dialogue compatible with the US-Israeli alliance¹⁵⁵. However, the influence of the Superpowers in dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict remained indirect and implicit during and after the June War. In 1967, both the Superpowers had to cope with internal and external issues that made them weaker, by calling for a period of relaxation. The Mediterranean area was not expected to turn into an area of competition, but an argument on which the Superpowers could discuss. Indeed, in the late June, the then Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin and the US President, Johnson, met in Glassboro to draw up a common line to deal with the conflict. Kosygin suggested the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from the occupied territories, by condemning the Israeli attack. Johnson implemented a policy of equidistance, by protecting the interests of Israel and looking for a compromise which fitted with Israel's priorities. The meeting did not produce the desired results and no solution was provided, however the need for a dialogue overcame the competition over contended territories. The Superpowers succeeded to produce univocal effects into the UN framework. Indeed, a framework for regional peace was put forth in the Resolution 242 adopted by the Security Council on 22nd November 1967. The resolution asserted "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" and the "withdrawal of Israeli forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict"; in addition, "termination of all claims or states of claims or states of belligerency and respect for the acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force"¹⁵⁶. The main limit of the Resolution was the formula "from territories" and not "from the territories" that means an indefinite number of territories and not all the occupied territories¹⁵⁷. The expression was ambiguous and subject to several possible interpretations. However, the French version asserted "des

¹⁵⁵ Valdevit G. (2003). *Stati Uniti e Medio Oriente dal 1945 a oggi*. Carocci, Roma. p. 61-67.

¹⁵⁶ Resolution 242 is available on the following web site:
<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7D35E1F729DF491C85256EE700686136>.

¹⁵⁷ Oren, M.B. (2002). *Six Days of War*. Oxford University Press, Oxford; Parker, R. B. (1997). *The Six Day War*. University of Florida Press, Jacksonville; Di Nolfo E. (2008). *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 1096-1099.

territoires” which referred to all the territories. The resolution also affirmed the need of achieving a “just settlement of the refugee problem”. Egypt, Jordan, and Israel endorsed the resolution, which was rejected by Syria and Palestinian organizations who considered it too ambiguous. The Resolution failed to provide consensual basis for a peace settlement. However, in line with the equidistance strategy that the US wished to pursue, the Secretary of State William Rogers persuaded Egypt, Jordan, and Israel to support a cease-fire plan, which included a ninety-day cease-fire provision that came into effect in 1970. However, the US did not manage to bring Egypt to sign a peace agreement with Israel neither to convince Israel to withdraw from occupied Egyptian territory. But at least the Roger Plan silenced the guns along the Suez Canal¹⁵⁸. In any case, the Resolution 242 represent a meaningful document for the Palestinians who saw Israel condemned and required to withdraw occupied territories¹⁵⁹. On the other hand, Israel could enjoy its right to peaceful and secure borders. To a certain extent, the resolution was the mirror of the US strategical effort in keeping a balance into the conflict not to damaging the position of one of the two parties dramatically. The Resolution and any kind of mediation did not redeem the resentment harbored by Palestinians toward Israel. 1967 gave impetus to the rise of Palestinian military and political organizations, which took action transnationally for their cause during the years later. The June War was a watershed into the Middle Eastern world in which the alliance systems were altered and new political actors emerged.

¹⁵⁸ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 325.

¹⁵⁹ Quandt, W. B. (1993). *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab Israeli Conflict since 1967*. Brookings Institute, Washington D.C.; O’Balance, E. (1972). *The Third Arab Israeli War*. Faber&Faber, London.

This map was attached to the Resolution 242 and showed the conquered territories¹⁶⁰.



2.2.3 The Palestinian refugee issue and the PLO

This brief section aims at analyzing the conditions that Palestinians refugees suffered after the birth of the state of Israel. The exodus of the Arab population between 1948-1967 had created a dramatic refugee problem. Refugees who fled the occupied territories, lived in camps, built as temporary shelters, located in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza Strip. The most of them

¹⁶⁰ The map is available on the following web site:
<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/cf02d057b04d356385256ddb006dc02f/b08a2e4d1fde5cec85256b98006e752f?OpenDocument>

were victims of the miseries of the camps and those who enjoyed employable skills found jobs in oil-producing countries and reestablished themselves elsewhere. Ultimately, most of the refugees were peasants who lost their properties and land. For them, life was tough in camps: coming from several zones, refugees had to share the same space with no privacy, laying on the UNRWA support, the United Nation Relief and Works Agency which should provide for food, clothing, and medical services. However, its support was marginal if compared with the material poverty and moral impoverishment that refugees experienced. Their life and future depended on the host countries approach to the refugee issue. Generally, the host countries had few cultivable lands and a considerable amount of unskilled labor, which did not allow refugees to be integrated in the agricultural field. Over the years, refugees became a problem if not an enemy for the host countries. The latter feared Israeli retaliation against Palestinians political activities and prohibited them from shaping political organization. Probably, the lack of integration in social and political systems of the host countries served to keep alive their identity as Palestinians and, after the birth of Israel, many Palestinians endorsed outside forces to come up with plans for repatriation. Even the famous PLO, that was founded in 1964 under the aegis of the Arab League, was an effort of the Arab States to reduce the Palestinian political and military activity for preventing it from operating independently¹⁶¹. The PLO was based in Cairo, where Nasser's security apparatus carefully controlled it. The organization was chaired by Ahmad Shuqayri, who was named by the Arab States. He came from the Palestinian notability, very far from the tragedies of the refugee camps¹⁶². To a certain extent, the June War made the PLO an independent resistance organization, which became active in Jordan and in the Gaza Strip. PLO was made up of several Palestinian groups, whose most successful was al-Fatah. Al-Fatah was leaded by Yasir Arafat who was elected chair of the PLO executive committee in 1969¹⁶³. Since the beginning, al-Fatah adopted an ideology based on the vitality of the Palestinian nationalism for building a common Palestinian identity, which should encourage any resistance movement. PLO rejected the UN Resolution 242 since it recognized Israel right to exist and it mentioned the Palestinians only as a refugee problem and not as people with the right to a national homeland. According to the Palestinian National Charter of the PLO, the new Palestine should include the entire area of mandate of Palestine and was to be a democratic state that gave equal status to all religions¹⁶⁴. Gradually, the PLO assumed the features of a

¹⁶¹ Rubin, B. (1994). *Revolution until victory? The politics and victory of the PLO*. Harvard University Press, Massachusetts. p. 5-13.

¹⁶² Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 341.

¹⁶³ Rubin, B. (1994). *Revolution until victory? The politics and victory of the PLO*. Harvard University Press, Massachusetts. p. 24-40.

¹⁶⁴ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview. p. 343.

government in exile and extended its activities transnationally. Increasing number of Palestinians escaped the refugee camps and joined the organizations to fight for liberating their land. Palestinians tried to establish an independent base for operations in the Arab States bordering Israel but they had to come to terms with the government's need to maintain domestic authority. The sharpest clash occurred in Jordan, where King Husayn suffered a direct challenge from the Palestinian guerrillas on his territory. The tragedy took the name of Black September. Since 1970, Palestinians military networks conducted raids against Israel by triggering Israeli reprisals on the Jordan territory. On 15th September 1970, King Husayn reacted brutally and ordered the Jordanian army to restore order. The Jordanian troops made no distinction between civilians and guerrillas, by bombing refugee camps and killing more than 3,000 Palestinians. It was one of the most severe and tragic failure of the PLO, which transferred its organization in Lebanon. Throughout the Seventies, Palestinian groups carried out several massacres and terroristic attacks into and outside Israel, which will be addressed in the following sections.

2.2.4 Italian diplomacy into the June War

The Mediterranean vocation was strengthened especially after 1967, when Italy was called to take a stand in the mangled Middle Eastern framework. At the beginning of the Sixties, the Italian dynamism decreased in the Middle East and North Africa, especially in the very first phase of the center-left government. Around that time, Aldo Moro, the then Italian Prime Minister, emphasized the role that Italy could play in the Mediterranean, but without drawing up a specific plan to carry out¹⁶⁵. By that time, the Italian government focused more on internal issues than on external matters. The then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Giuseppe Saragat, was a staunch supporter of the Atlantism and therefore unwilling to pursue an overture to the Arab countries as Fanfani did at the turn of the Fifties and the Sixties¹⁶⁶. A renewed interest in the Middle Eastern dynamics emerged in the middle of the Sixties, when Al-Fatah mounted several attacks against Israel¹⁶⁷. Moro feared instability and chaos in the Mediterranean area and all together with Fanfani, who went back as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1965, promoted a period of Italian activism into the Middle East¹⁶⁸. Indeed, in March 1967, Fanfani went to Lebanon,

¹⁶⁵ Caviglia, D. Cricco, M. (2006). *La diplomazia italiana e gli equilibri mediterranei. La politica mediorientale dell'Italia dalla guerra dei Sei Giorni al conflitto dello Yom Kippur (1967-1973)*. Rubettino Editore, Catanzaro. p. 16-18.

¹⁶⁶ Giovagnoli A. and Pons S. (2003). *L'Italia Repubblicana nella crisi degli anni Settanta. Tra guerra fredda e distensione*. Rubettino, Soveria Mannelli. p. 47-53.

¹⁶⁷ On this theme see Morris, B. (2001). *Vittime. Storie del conflitto Arabo-sionista 1881-2001*. Rizzoli, Milano.

¹⁶⁸ De Leonardis, M. (2003). *Il Mediterraneo nella politica estera italiana del secondo dopoguerra*. Il Mulino, Bologna. p. 180-190; Varsori, A. (1998). *L'Italia nelle relazioni internazionali dal 1943 al 1992*. Laterza, Bari. p. 164-166.

Jordan, and Iraq where he met with political leaders to share and compare views on the Arab-Israeli tensions; few months later the Six Day War exploded. Italy could benefit from the network of relations that Mattei promoted with several Middle Eastern countries to cope with the crisis; however that precious legacy was challenged by the divisiveness of the then coalition government. The government split into two opposing streams to tackle the crisis, and the inconsistency between the willingness of the public opinion and the Italian economic interests towards the Arab world emerged in the country. Fanfani suggested to promote a pro-Arab attitude in line with the previous approach that Italy pursued and showed sensitivity to the Palestinian refugee problem. On the contrary, Pietro Nenni, the then Vice-President and the leader of the ISP, proposed to endorse the public opinion willingness¹⁶⁹. Italian public opinion looked admiringly to Israel, which built its own fortune out of nothing, by escaping the Nazi tortures. Therefore, the ISP sided with Israel openly and the reluctant ICP aligned with Moscow that supported the Palestinian cause. Unlike the ISP and the ICP, Fanfani proposed a policy of equidistance to the Arab-Israeli conflict as to not hampering the Italian economic interests in the Middle East; but the majority of the DC challenged and rejected his approach. Fanfani, who was a promoter and a militant of the Neo-Atlantism stream, did not want to jeopardize the existing energy ties between Italy and the Middle East. Within few days, Fanfani refused to lead the Italian delegation to the UN and asked Moro to replace him. Moro and Fanfani travelled to New York in order to carry on a new course of the Mediterranean foreign policy, which was predicted to be aligned with the Western Powers¹⁷⁰. Certainly, Moro and Fanfani shared the same concerns about the Italian interests in the Mediterranean, but Moro deemed the pro-Israeli public opinion to be heard and he felt still bound to the American policy¹⁷¹. On 22nd June, Moro held his speech to the General Assembly, by remarking the need of the withdrawal of the Israeli troops and the establishment of a regional planning which had to be agreed by the parties¹⁷². However, when Johnson and Moro met in June, they promoted a different approach in dealing with the crisis: both agreed on the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from the occupied territories,

¹⁶⁹ Archivio Centrale dello Stato (hereafter ACS), Roma. Fondo Aldo Moro (hereafter FAM). Comunicazione dell'Onorevole Fanfani alla Commissione Esteri del Senato. 7 Giugno 1967. B. 17, d. 64.

¹⁷⁰ Caviglia, D. Cricco, M. (2006). *La diplomazia italiana e gli equilibri mediterranei. La politica mediorientale dell'Italia dalla guerra dei Sei Giorni al conflitto dello Yom Kippur (1967-1973)*. Rubettino Editore, Catanzaro. p. 22-23.

¹⁷¹ Italy imported around the 80% of oil from the Arab countries and was one of the main creditors towards UAR. ENI still exerted a considerable power on the Government policy and pressed the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs to held good relations with the Arab world by not damaging the Italian interests in the area. Several books deepen ENI's interests in the area. See Bucciante, G. (2005). *Enrico Mattei: assalto al potere petrolifero mondiale*. Giuffrè, Milano and Guderzo M., Napolitano, L. (2004). *Diplomazia delle risorse. Le materie prime e il sistema internazionale del novecento*. Polistampa, Firenze.

¹⁷² F. Imperato, R. Milano, L. Monzali (2018). *Fra diplomazia e petrolio. Aldo Moro e la politica italiana in Medio Oriente (1963-1978)*, Cacucci, Bari. p. 64-65.

but Moro suggested the need of a diplomatic intervention of the Superpowers, the only forces capable of leading to a compromise into the UN framework. On the contrary, Johnson envisaged a more detached approach, by which only the countries directly involved in the conflict had to devise a lasting solution. The US preferred to play a marginal role in the Middle East, now that it had to cope with several open fronts and military tensions in Vietnam. Even if a system for regional peace emerged into the UN framework, where several projects of resolution were presented, no one of them gained the required quorum. Moro, like most of the Italian establishment, recognized the right to exist of the State of Israel, but considered Israel too much intransigent and unwilling to take part in plans for a peace process. During the extraordinary meeting of the UN General Assembly, Moro asserted that any state had the right to political independence, territorial integrity, and to the protection from the threat and the use of force¹⁷³. However, he added that several open issues had to be addressed and solved in the Middle East in order to establish a peaceful framework¹⁷³. Moro referred to the problems of the Palestinian refugees, the freedom of crossing the shipping routes, and the administration and status of the holy places in Palestine. Moro called for those conditions which could pave the way for the mutual recognition of the existing States and the respect of the territorial integrity. The issue of the Palestinian refugees soon became one of the main concerns of the Italian government, which took the distances from Israel, determined to not leave the conquered territories¹⁷⁴. Italy tried to play a key role in the UN framework but its influence was limited and when the Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly did not produce the desired results, the issue was tackled by the Security Council, which approved the already mentioned Resolution 242 on 27th November 1967¹⁷⁵. The Italian government, not without reluctance, endorsed the ambiguous resolution. During the X Christian Democracy Congress, Moro stressed the limits of the UN which was maneuvered especially by those Powers capable of influencing the international scene. In the end of 1967, the relation between Italy and the Middle East were likely to depend on the US interests and the Italian focus on the Middle East risked to be mitigated. One can argue that the Italian policy of equidistance was not only implemented in the Middle East as a strategy to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict by keeping good relations with Arab countries, but it was also adopted in a larger context that involved the US. The Italian policy of equidistance was actually performed between the Middle East and the US, since Moro was capable of keeping the

¹⁷³ Tosi L. (2010). *Sulla scena del mondo. L' Italia all' Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite 1955-2009*. Editore Scientifica, Napoli. p. 128-131.

¹⁷⁴ F. Imperato, R. Milano, L. Monzali (2018). *Fra diplomazia e petrolio. Aldo Moro e la politica italiana in Medio Oriente (1963-1978)*, Cacucci, Bari. p. 17-18.

¹⁷⁵ Riccardi, L. (2006). *Diplomazia Italiana e PCI di fronte allo Stato Ebraico (1948-1973)*. Guerini e Associati, Milano. p. 245-250.

Mediterranean vocation alive, while assuring loyalty to the US international guidelines. By the beginning of the Seventies, Moro was able to challenge Cold War constraints without dramatically damaging the Italian position into the Western Sphere.

2.2.5 ENI without Mattei: Italy foreign policy in an energy perspective

The Six Day War impacted the international oil equilibrium, by damaging the Italian economy considerably. As it was explained in the previous chapter, after Mattei's death, Italy energy politics experienced a realignment to the petroleum companies' needs, and Italy became more dependent on the oil extracted by the Western cartel in the Middle East and North Africa. The closing of the Suez Canal and the Arab oil embargo slowed the oil supply to Italy and worsened the ongoing period of economic recession that the country was suffering. ENI, without Mattei, had no longer a pivotal political role and as the recession began, the government reduced public investments in the energy sector, not providing long-term program to protect the country against any changes in the international oil market¹⁷⁶. Since 1963, Standard Oil provided Italy with 80 million barrels of crude in exchange for technical equipment and aid, Gulf Oil assured ENI with 12.5 million tons of crude oil, and in 1965 ENI negotiated for the importation of 3 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year from Libya, through Esso and Mediterranean Standard Oil¹⁷⁷. Only in the late Sixties, ENI could pursue a more autonomous policy especially when the Italian government asked for providing the country with the energy resources it needed¹⁷⁸. ENI, which inherited Mattei's strategies and activity, increased its dynamism in Libya even after the nationalization of the oil resources of the country. ENI all together with the Italian government endeavored for establishing a new relationship with Ghaddafi, who took power in September 1969. The important mediation played by Moro allowed ENI to sign an agreement with the Libyan government in 1971. The agreement provided that a petrochemical plant would have been built in Benghazi and a refinery in Zavia, while ENI was to train Libyan technicians by supporting them in exploiting and extraction activities. ENI, in exchange, was allowed to explore Cyrenaica and was enabled to create a joint venture between AGIP and the Libyan General Petroleum Corporation, which was the owner of the extraction rights. Around that time, Italy enjoyed the American support in dealing with Libya. Indeed, the US eased the dialogue between Libya and Italy for several reasons. Primarily, the US saved and protected the Saudi

¹⁷⁶ On this matter Bini E. (2003). *La potente benzina italiana. Guerra fredda e consumi di massa tra Italia e Terzo mondo (1945-1973)*, Carocci Editore, Torino. Toniolo, G. (2013). *L' Italia e l'economia mondiale dall'Unità a oggi*. Marsilio, Venezia. Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). *Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War*. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK.

¹⁷⁷ E. Bini, *A transatlantic shock: Italy's energy policies between the Mediterranean and the EEC, 1967-1974*. p. 148-155.

¹⁷⁸ Ibidem.

market from ENI's interests, which were especially directed to Libya; in addition, Western Europe needed the Libyan oil that guaranteed economic stability, by assuring industrial system to work. After a period of relative stagnation, ENI renewed its relation even with Algeria which broke off relation with the US in the late Sixties. Especially after the Six Day War, Algeria signed treaties with independent Companies in order to break free from France dependence and diversify the energy sector, by gaining access to western technology. In 1967, Algeria asked ENI and Italy for technical and financial assistance to better integrate into the European oil market. However, ENI did not have the same instruments and ability collected during Mattei's era, and talking with Algeria required a longer deal. Between 1967 and 1968, Italy and Algeria created a joint venture made up of Sonatrach and Ente Minerario Sicilia which was charged with importing Algerian gas to Sicily. Certainly, Italy improved its relation with Algeria at the beginning of the Seventies when the latter adopted nationalization of Algerian oil. In a context in which France asked Europe and the US for a common effort to content the effect of the Algerian nationalization, Italy decided to move alone and autonomously. Again, Moro played a lead role in negotiations by visiting Algeria in June 1971, while ENI reached an agreement with Sonatrach by which a joint venture, in charge of building a pipeline that linked Algeria to Sicily through Tunisia, was established. Moro's mediation went together with the effort of ENI to establish lasting relationships with oil producing countries, looking for a more vigorous economic independence. Even this approach was part of a larger plan that Moro was trying to implement especially at the beginning of the Seventies.

2.2.6 Italy, the US, and the Mediterranean in the very late Sixties

In the last years of the Sixties, a period of political and social transition took shape internationally, by reaching even the remotest areas of the world. New leaders on the scene had to come to terms with a more energetic and determined public opinion, while addressing international issues which could not be eluded. The Johnson administration was experiencing the Vietnam War drama and in 1968 the only diplomatic goal achieved resulted from the USSR willingness to open for talks on the strategic arms limitation. Johnson did not intend to run again for the Presidential election and in January 1969 a new president was elected¹⁷⁹. Around the same years, new leaders took key institutional roles in the Italian government. Indeed, in the election of June 1968, Giovanni Leone led a new government which lasted six months. During that period, Italy maintained its focus on the Arab-Israeli conflict that continued to be addressed

¹⁷⁹ Bosco, V. (2009). *L' amministrazione Nixon e l'Italia. Tra distensione europea e crisi mediterranee (1968-1975)*. Emograph, Rome. p. 15-19.

in the UN framework. Even the new government called for the centrality of the UN in settling the regional tensions in the Middle East and remarked the cruciality of the role of the two Superpowers. Italy was likely to raise the distance from the US position which aimed at being marginally involved in the solution of the conflict¹⁸⁰. Italy urged a peace settlement in the Middle East in order to protect economic and energetic interests in the area and, especially, to get the re-opening of the Suez Canal for restoring trade routes. The Italian ambassador in Cairo met with the UAR Foreign Affairs undersecretary who asserted that the re-opening of the Suez Canal was conditioned by the Israeli withdrawal¹⁸¹. In addition, Italy feared both the increasing Arab extremism and the Soviet raising in the region, which undermined the pro-Western regimes in the area. Palestine continued to be a very unstable context and the UN effort for a compromise seemed vacuous. In November 1968, the responsible of the Office for the Middle East of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs, Bozzini, and the deputy director of the Politics Affairs, Capano, were sent in Egypt, Jordan, and Israel for a visit¹⁸². In Egypt they met with Fawzi, the personal Advisor of Nasser, and it soon became clear that Egypt was not willing to sign a peace treaty with Israel. Instead, Egypt advocated an arrangement in the UN framework under the superpowers' guarantee on its application. Jordan seemed more concerned with the increasing power of the Fedayeen who were promising a severe revenge to all Palestinians. While it was said to accept the reunification of Jerusalem, the Jordanian leaders asked for the application of the Resolution 181, 1947, that considered Jerusalem and Bethlehem a *corpus separatum*. Essentially, the Arab countries rejected any bilateral agreement with Israel and accepted the duties of the Resolution 242 only if Israel evacuated the occupied territories. On the other hand, Israel reiterated the reluctance to negotiate for Jerusalem and marked the importance of keeping the Gaza Strip and Sharm El Sheik under Israeli control. After those visits, Bozzini affirmed that the positions of the two parts were incompatible. Bozzini suggested the importance for an imposed agreement under the guarantee of external powers; his view did not fit with the US low profile strategy and the differences in approaching to the Middle East were evident between the US and Italy¹⁸³. Indeed, the US showed its doubts about the mission

¹⁸⁰ Nuti, L. (1999). Gli Stati Uniti e l'apertura a sinistra. Importanza e limiti della presenza americana in Italia. Laterza, Bari. p. 662-667.

¹⁸¹ Caviglia, D. Cricco, M. (2006). La diplomazia italiana e gli equilibri mediterranei. La politica mediorientale dell'Italia dalla guerra dei Sei Giorni al conflitto dello Yom Kippur (1967-1973). Rubettino Editore, Catanzaro. p. 27-31.

¹⁸² Caviglia, D. Cricco, M. (2006). La diplomazia italiana e gli equilibri mediterranei. La politica mediorientale dell'Italia dalla guerra dei Sei Giorni al conflitto dello Yom Kippur (1967-1973). Rubettino Editore, Catanzaro. p. 42-43.

¹⁸³ On the American foreign policy see Brands, H.W. (1995). The Wages of Globalism. Lyndon Johnson and the Limits of American power. Oxford University Press, Oxford; Guderzo, M. (2000). Interesse nazionale e responsabilità globale. Gli Stati Uniti, l'Alleanza atlantica e l'integrazione europea negli anni di Johnson. Aida, Florence.

of the two diplomats, and while a certain friction seemed to mount between the two countries, new leaders affected the political scene in Italy and in the US.

2.2.7 1969 Italy and the US foreign policy between continuity and discontinuity

In January 1969, Richard Nixon won the election and became the new president of the US. Nixon was the Vice-President in the double presidency of Eisenhower and had already been the republican candidate in the 1960 election against Kennedy. He thought himself as an outsider not belonging to the caste of intellectuals and he did not lay on the American political system. Nixon was very skeptical about the State Department, American institutions, and CIA; thus, he relied on alternative and back channel, which secretly handled the machinery of the institutions. He was a virulent anti-communist and a true supporter of the US intervention in the Vietnam War¹⁸⁴. Both of these last features mitigated once he became president. Under his presidency, the US paved the way for an unprecedented foreign policy which laid the background for developing a period of relaxation. In December 1968, a new government took shape in Italy. It was led by Rumor and Pietro Nenni as Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Middle East area continued to be a pivotal focus for the Italian foreign policy and Nenni soon showed his personal interest on the matter. Nenni and the Italian leadership thought that the only actor to exert a direct influence on Israel was the US, which could impose an arrangement for the stability of the country. On 9th January, Nenni intervened at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber, and remarked the Italian interest in the pacification of the Middle Eastern area with a special concern about the condition of the Palestinian people, who were suffering territorial eradication¹⁸⁵. Nenni condemned any shape of violence coming from each part in the area and considered the Arab pains as upcoming to the present. That sea change in Nenni's attitude mainly reflected the Italian need to hold a dialogue with the Middle East and a different way of the public opinion to give a reading to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Indeed, a pro-Arabism emerged in Italy at the end of the Sixties and it was explained by the Israeli mismanagement of the post-war phase that dramatically affected Palestinians lives. Italy was firmly convinced that an agreement between the US and USSR was the only way to influence the events in the Middle East and the new Italian leadership hoped for a more involved US administration to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Nixon administration promoted a foreign policy which abandoned

¹⁸⁴ Bosco, V. (2009). L' amministrazione Nixon e l'Italia. Tra distensione europea e crisi mediterranee (1968-1975). Emograph, Rome. p. 12-16.

¹⁸⁵ Caviglia, D. Cricco, M. (2006). La diplomazia italiana e gli equilibri mediterranei. La politica mediorientale dell'Italia dalla guerra dei Sei Giorni al conflitto dello Yom Kippur (1967-1973). Rubettino Editore, Catanzaro. p. 48-49.

the Johnson disengagement in the Middle East since it was convinced that if Israel gained guarantees on its security, it would leave the occupied territories. Nixon thought that the US could have a key role to play by serving as a guarantee to Israel and as a power leading the belligerents to negotiate. Italy welcomed the US overture, and in the first trip to Europe, Nixon met with Saragat and they focused on the Middle Eastern issues¹⁸⁶. Nixon affirmed to be interested in the Italian remarks and observation about the conflict but he also asserted that the US would not impose an external agreement unacceptable for Israel. It could not be a hazard supposing that the US was not ready or capable of forcing Israel to a compromise; the Jewish community and the Zionist lobby influenced political decision and bounded the government to its needs. Nenni understood that the US would not take part actively in the conflict and all that it could do was to play a more vigorous role in the UN framework. In 1969, the UAR intensified clashed on the Suez Canal zone to get a faster external intervention. Italy suggested the UN troops to control the two shores of the canal, but the project was rejected by several allies. In 1969, few but crucial aspects were evident: the Italian activism in the Middle East was clear, the Mediterranean vocation was renewed no matter the US administration, and the desire of an Italian role in the Middle East made the relation between Italy and the US experience a constant evolution. In August 1969, the then coalition government fell and a new one led again by Rumor was formed. However, element of discontinuity emerged in the substitution of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Moro replaced Nenni, and the replacement was interpreted as a changing in the Italian foreign policy in dealing with the Mediterranean area.

¹⁸⁶ Saragat and Nixon met for the first time on 28th February 1969. Ibidem, p. 53-54.

2.3 RIDING DÉTENTE: THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE ITALIAN DIPLOMACY IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES

2.3.1 The US foreign policy evolution to assess Détente

The US foreign policy experienced an evident evolution during the Cold War era and it seems helpful resuming it before assessing the period of International Détente. While Roosevelt favored cooperation with Soviet Union in order to create a world order based on four policies (Soviet Union, US, China, Britain), Truman adopted the doctrine of containment of Soviet Union. Since 1953, Eisenhower implemented the so-called roll back and New Look, by showing the US strength and adopting massive retaliation for any kind of aggression in any part of the world¹⁸⁷. Kennedy, who started his presidency in January 1961, promoted modernization and reduced the military spending in favor of social and welfare spending. He did not want to have an aggressive attitude towards Soviet Union, but he wanted to challenge it on another field by showing the superiority of the US in the social sphere, especially in the Third World where he wanted to convince the leaders to adopt the US model¹⁸⁸. Kennedy was really focused on modernization; however, his years witnessed great ambitions but many failures. Kennedy promoted the Alliance for Progress in the Third World and faced a tough opposition of Congress that was not persuaded that modernization was the path to challenge Soviet Union. Actually, Kennedy did not find allies in Latin America and suffered the Cuban decade. Kennedy managed also the Second Berlin Crisis and he was not able to stop the decision of Soviet Union of building a wall in Berlin. Kennedy showed a passive reaction. A wall was the Soviet solution to the stream of refugees from East to West Berlin, but at the same time it was an evident symptom of the USSR weakness. At the beginning of the Sixties, the USSR came into terms with the US also in the Cuban missiles' crisis, 14th – 28th October 1962). Soviet Union installed missiles in Cuba, considering it as a military ally. Italy, Greece and Turkey accepted the US missiles in their territories in order to face the Soviet menace in the previous years. Then, the same theory was adopted by Soviet Union, and Khrushchev believed that once the two parties were equal in terms of armament, they could initiate a negotiation. Kennedy decided to set up a blockage around the island that meant a victory for Khrushchev because the solution which was set up implied that also the US had to dismantle the missiles in Europe. The mutual assured

¹⁸⁷ Little D. (2007). *American Orientalism: United States and the Middle East since 1945*. The University of North Carolina Press, US. p. 224-238.

¹⁸⁸ Di Nolfo, E. (2008). *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 1020-1025; Little D. (2007). *American Orientalism: United States and the Middle East since 1945*. The University of North Carolina Press, US. p. 212-253.

destruction was a military doctrine which developed especially in the Kennedy era and it was based on the idea that the nuclear weapons would have caused the annihilation of both the defenders and the attackers. Kennedy first and Johnson later got involved in the Vietnam war. The country was divided between Communist forces in the North and Catholic forces in the South. In 1959, the North forces invaded the South in order to unify the country. In 1961, the US increased the presence in the country because it was perceived as a war into the Cold War framework. The US feared that if the Communist North won in Vietnam, there would be the entire domination of Soviet Union in the region. Vietnam war evolved as an escalation to the escalate until 1975. On 22nd November 1963 Kennedy was murdered and Lyndon B. Johnson, who was the then Vice-President, became the President and he focused on the Vietnamese scenario. Johnson increased the US military presence in Vietnam, where an escalation occurred by involving a huge military spending. This approach destroyed the US credibility at both the international and national level. Vietnam war became a war of national liberation against the capitalistic and hegemonic US. The US arrogance and violence in Vietnam sprung social protest because not only most of the military came from the local classes but the large part of country did not know the reason why to be in Vietnam. Lyndon B. Johnson decided not to run for a second mandate. The Sixties can be considered a decade in which the US had to face the decrease in international credibility and the internal problems regarding the social protests. To a certain extent, the Vietnam war caused part of the crisis of the US cultural and social model which was no longer able to be applied all over the world.

2.3.2 On the other shore: USSR and the International Détente building

Khrushchev gave life to the process of destalinization which took shape in the middle of the Fifties. He stressed the economic development more than military spending that was opposed by the more conservative leaders of the Party. Destalinization had the consequence of blocking the total control over the cultural sphere by the Communist Party, leading to a spread in art, music, film and many authors started to publish in Soviet Union which entailed that Western culture entered into the socialist bloc. Moreover, the Eastern countries started to look at Western Europe in order to adopt its economic model, due to the boom it was experiencing. This model became attractive, as the case of Czechoslovakia which started to refer to Western Europe as a close economic partner, opening the country to technological and industrial know-how. In 1964 Khrushchev was forced to resign after the Cuban missiles' crisis. Brezhnev, who replaced him, was characterized by more radical traits and conservative visions; he was concerned on the consequences of the opening of the satellite States to the West because economic deals could

entail political reform. Indeed, in Czechoslovakia, Dubcek, the leader of the Czech Communist Party, campaigned to establish a new regime, based on the socialism with a human face which led to Prague spring (April 1968), launching the party action program, a more democratic regime, and overture to the West. Brezhnev's fear was that this could have created a domino effect. Therefore, Brezhnev issued his doctrine according to which Moscow allowed limited sovereignty for the satellite States, which retained a government and parties but whether the security of Soviet Union had been challenged, it could intervene in the state and repress the protests. In 1968 the Soviet Union intervened in Prague in order to stop the liberalized path adopted by Czechoslovakia. However, this caused a damage in the image of Soviet Union on the same level of US. Indeed, Soviet Union showed to be weak because the only means in controlling the satellite States was the terror. Romania led by Ceausescu challenged the Soviet Union leadership, affirming that the satellite should acquire more power of maneuver. After the intervention in Czechoslovakia, there was the perception that Soviet Union could also intervene in Romania and Yugoslavia. In 1968, Albania left the Warsaw Pact and moved politically and diplomatically towards the Popular Republic of China. Both the Soviet Union and the US had great troubles internally and they sought for external solutions. The only solution to preserve their own sphere of influence was the dialogue between one another: the international détente. Many scholars consider the International Détente as the period between 1969 and 1979 which was based on a more stable and fruitful dialogue between superpowers. It was the period in the late 1960s in which the two Superpowers lost their credibility and decided to approach one another. That period can be considered the relaxation of the tensions between the two countries in the Cold War. The process started in 1969 with the SALT negotiations, the decreasing production of the armaments, and the reasons were the need to contain public expenditure in the military sector; the need to avoid a nuclear war; and the need to fix domestic problems. Certainly, Helsinki Conference in 1975 was the apex of this period. The end of this process was December 1979 when Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. International Détente witnessed the cooperation between the two countries and three persons: Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger and Leonid Brezhnev. Kissinger was the foreign advisor of Nixon and then the State Secretary of US. He believed in the equilibrium between the two States and cooperation and dialogue shall be the cornerstone of the new political style. Kissinger was a realist and he wanted to have contacts with Soviet Union, notwithstanding the fact that it was a Communist state. He was a German Jew emigrated to US and a political scientist and a historian. He was trying to propose the equilibrium of the Concert of Europe after the Wien Congress in the Seventies based on direct dialogue between Moscow and Washington. Brezhnev accepted the proposal of the negotiation for blocking the production of the armaments and also a new world order based on

spheres of influence. The dialogue developed rapidly, because the two had the same goals and interests. In May 1972 Nixon visited Moscow and the SALT treaty and the Antiballistic missiles treaty were signed. Basic Principles of Relations entailed the agreement on the end of military confrontation and the abortion of a nuclear war. In June 1973 Brezhnev went to US and they agreed on the prevention of the nuclear war. The Prevention of Nuclear War Agreement was created to reduce the danger of nuclear war between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The agreement was signed in Washington, D.C. during a relative period of détente. The United States and the USSR agreed to reduce the threat of a nuclear war and establish a policy to restrain hostility. The agreement regarded only the two superpowers, overcoming the national interests of the other countries and establishing a sort of condominiums. According to many scholars, the relaxation between the two Superpowers allowed for a Détente into the Détente which involved Western Europe and the Soviet Satellites. However, such Détente did not seem to take place into the Mediterranean context, that acquired even more centrality for the US and the USSR, leading to new conflicts between the two superpowers. Essentially, while shapes of distension were spreading even in Europe, bipolarism strengthened in the Mediterranean by challenging the process of Détente.

2.3.3 Why European détente

In the very end of the Sixties, Western Europe started a process of dialogue with the Soviet satellite States¹⁸⁹. Many leaders who took power in the previous decade had paved the way for an overture to the East. Primarily, Charles De Gaulle took power in 1958 within the framework of the Algerian crisis and established the Fifth Republic with presidential features. He wanted to make France not a subordinate actor but a prominent actor in the European and global affairs. His idea was that Europe shall be no longer divided by the Iron Curtain but it shall encompass both Eastern and Western Europe. Therefore, he established strong political and economic contacts with the Eastern countries. In 1966 he visited Brezhnev in Moscow. His aim was to promote the dialogue with the East through the economic and political cooperation. However, it was a larger political strategy to take the distance from the US. In Italy, Aldo Moro was one of the leading actors in the Italian opening to Eastern Europe. There were many economic interests in the Balkan area: FIAT invested in Yugoslavia, in Soviet Union, in Czechoslovakia.

¹⁸⁹ The following books address the European Détente accurately: Romano,A. (2009). *From Détente in Europe to European Détente*, P.I.E. Peter Lang, Brussels ; Davy,R. (2004). *European Détente: A Reappraisal*, Upfront Publishing Limited, London; Villaume,P. and Arne Westad,O. (2010). *Perforating the Iron Curtain European Détente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War 1965-85*, Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen.

Moro was also the man who stepped behind the issue of the borders with Yugoslavia in the area of Trieste. He wanted to show that the dialogue between different political systems was possible, and it was the same strategy he used to strengthen the dialogue with the Middle East. However, the undoubted promoter of the European Détente was Willy Brandt, who became Chancellor of the German Federal Republic in 1969¹⁹⁰. He elaborated the doctrine of the Ostpolitik. Since 1949, West Germany was protected by the Atlantic alliance and it participated in all efforts in the process of the European integration, being one of the founding members of the EEC. At that time, the question of reunification was put aside. Adenauer ignored the question and he was not interested in solving it, arguing that the evolution of west Germany might have allowed Germany to negotiate in a stronger position. Adenauer believed that West Germany was the real one whereas the East Germany was a puppet state under the control of Soviet Union, thus GDR was not recognized as a state. He adopted the Hallstein doctrine, which entailed that all countries recognizing the GDR shall interrupt all the relations with the FDR. In 1966 the great coalition led by Kiesinger challenged and changed the pro-Atlantic attitude. Brandt realized that in order to overcome the division with East Germany, he should talk to the East Germans. In September 1969 Brandt became Chancellor of a coalition of Social Democrats and Liberal Party. CDU was not part of government and Brandt was able to implement his new foreign policy of rapprochement with Eastern countries. The idea was divided in steps: first West Germany shall approach the Eastern countries, then the question of reunification could be taken into consideration. Brandt showed to his partners that Germany did not pursue the hegemony within Europe and through bilateral contacts he reassures his Western allies about the permanence in NATO. Brandt believed that the people of GDR were Germans, not citizens of another country. His long-term goal was the reunification which could be reached only once the situation was accepted, meaning that the FDR shall accept the existence of the GDR. He knew that the West Germany could have used the economy as power of attraction vis-à-vis the Eastern satellites. In August 1970, the Moscow Treaty between Western Germany and USSR took place, by which West Germany sought for normalizing relations and recognized the Oder-Neisse line. In December 1970, followed the Warsaw Treaty between West Germany and Poland in which West Germany recognized the Poland's borders. In August 1971, the Quadripartite Pact on Berlin assured unimpeded access to Berlin from the West and the engagement of USSR to improve the living conditions of the East German citizens. And finally, in December 1972 the Basic Treaty with East Germans implied the renunciation of the use of

¹⁹⁰ On Willy Brandt biography and foreign policy see Harpprecht, K. (1972). Willy Brandt: portrait and self-portrait. Abelard-Schuman, University of Michigan.

force and inviolability of the borders. Western Germany accepted the presence of two German sovereign States. There were also provisions on the human contacts between the two countries. The apex of the Détente will be reached in the Helsinki Conference in 1975, which is addressed in the following chapter. This introduction to the International and the European Détente was functional to understand in which context the Mediterranean Détente took place.

2.3.4 Extending Détente: Italy and the Mediterranean in the late Sixties

The Mediterranean vocation was the constant element of the Italian foreign policy during the Cold War. The Mediterranean vocation experienced ups and downs until the end of the Sixties due to the Atlantic constraints and the Italian need to carry on its national interests. Aldo Moro became the Minister of Foreign Affairs in August 1969, assuming the leading role in talking with the Middle East and North Africa, also to establish stronger relation between oil producers and western countries. Before entering in the meaning of the Mediterranean Détente, the reasons why Mediterranean Détente took place under Moro's foreign policy shall be analyzed. Once he was out of the political scene in June 1968, Moro started a political reflection to better understand the multiple events and phenomena happening in 1968. Moro thought that year as a watershed for the then international equilibria in the Cold War context: some events as demonstrations, increasing social issues, domestic and international terrorism, the Vietnam War effects, and the Prague Spring showed the collapsing US-USSR bipolar system, which was intended to bow to the complexity of the then international mechanisms. Moro tried to address and to rid the complexity of that period of transition. Primarily, Moro sought to overcome the constraints imposed by the Atlantic dimension, by opening to ICP that was even more autonomous from the Soviet protectorate. Second, Moro took advantage from the International Détente by arguing to extend the dialogue to the Mediterranean context where several changes were taking place¹⁹¹. The Six Day War, the coup in Libya (1969), the Black September, Nasser's death (1970), and the terroristic attacks against Israel implied new challenges in the Middle Eastern area with which a new dialogue should be promoted. Moro realized that the Palestinian question and the increasing terroristic attacks against Israel abroad became the glue element among the Italian parties: until the end of the Sixties the government had always been divided in taking position to the Arab-Israeli conflict, but the escalation of the tensions produced an Italian pro-Arab attitude which was endorsed by most of the parties. In a more unified political context, Moro would be encouraged to pursue his Mediterranean Détente. He

¹⁹¹ Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p.179-186.

aimed at achieving a domestic common approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict and to the question of the Palestinians rights, by developing a Mediterranean policy capable of involving the EEC members in a Mediterranean Détente building process. A shared Mediterranean policy would allow DC, PSI, and ICP to discuss on a common issue by carrying out form of cooperation for a concrete diplomatic intervention in the Middle East. In this attempt, Moro wanted to redefine the role of the EEC in the international arena which should pursue a common energy policy to dialogue with the producers. Moro's school of thought can be easily compared with the Ostpolitik promoted by Willy Brandt. Both of them worked for getting closer worlds among which walls had been raised; both of them challenged the bipolar system by acting more autonomously in their area of interests while keeping the western linkages secure; both of them proceeded with bilateral agreements by establishing a direct dialogue with their interlocutors. Moro's projects always came to terms with the US and the USSR reluctance to leave Italy's initiatives taking shape in the Mediterranean context, and not surprisingly the Mediterranean course met several obstacles in its building process.

2.3.5 Italy challenging the bipolar system in 1970: early stages for a lasting dialogue with the Middle East and North Africa

At the very beginning of the Seventies, some events urged Italy to increase its dynamism in the region. Moro paved the way for his Mediterranean diplomacy in 1970, when regional tensions in the Middle East flared up and the 1969 Libyan coup instilled doubts on the stability of North Africa. The Libyan coup threatened the Italian community leaving there and jeopardized the relationship with the western countries¹⁹². In addition, Italy feared a domino effect in the region where the new regime could be a potential menace for other north African countries, which enjoyed relative political stability. Events happening in Libya and the significant rearmament of Israel and the Arab countries led Italy to increase its diplomatic initiatives by seeking to address Mediterranean issues in the Atlantic context and later through bilateral meetings with the western countries. The Italian initiatives went unheeded, and the political divergence between Italy and the US on the Mediterranean was intended to mount. Moro emphasized the potential escalation in the Middle East and his activism mounted in the middle of 1970, by

¹⁹² In Libya, the monarchy led by Idris el-Senussi was overthrown by a group of young officers inspired by Pan-Arabism and Arab socialism. Muhammad Ghaddafi soon emerged as the leader of the country, by threatening Italian interests in the area. On this matter: Del Boca, A. (1994). *Gli italiani in Libia. Dal fascismo a Gheddafi*. Mondadori, Milano. p. 450-540, Varvelli, A. (2009). *L' Italia e l'ascesa di Gheddafi. La cacciata degli italiani, le armi e il petrolio (1969-1974)*, Baldini Castoldi Dalai, Milano.

meeting with Nasser and Abba Eban to test their willingness to negotiate for a compromise¹⁹³. In the late May, Moro visited Egypt and met with Nasser and the UAR Minister of Foreign Affairs Mahmoud Riad. The Middle East and the evolution of the Mediterranean context became soon the core of the meeting: both Italy and the UAR hoped the reopening of the Suez Canal while urging to restore the stability in Palestine through the application of the 242 UN Resolution¹⁹⁴. During the meeting, Moro invoked a fair solution for the Palestinian refugees and the need for the establishment of a lasting peace between Israel and the Arab countries based on the mutual recognition of sovereignty and territorial integrity¹⁹⁵. Although Moro stressed the Italian neutral and equidistant strategy in dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict, the historical link between Italy and the Arab countries clearly emerged in the dialogues and, once again, the Italian attitude in the Mediterranean distance itself from the US. Indeed, Moro continued to seem a sincere interlocutor for Egypt and even Nasser was convinced that the Arab-Israeli conflict should come to an end for achieving a lasting peace in the mangled area. Nasser called for the Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied territories and the resolution of the refugee issue in the UN framework. Nasser fostered an indirect negotiation with Israel, since a direct negotiation would also imply the recognition of the state of Israel. Under the UN umbrella, Egyptian interests would be better served and Israeli power more contained. In exchange, Nasser was said to guarantee free shipping navigation across the Suez Canal and Aqaba Gulf by respecting the security of the borders¹⁹⁶. Nasser was interested in reaching a compromise after the disastrous defeat suffered in 1967 and the increasing USSR military influence in Egypt. However, when Abba Eban visited Rome in the mid-June, he adopted an attitude of intransigence by stressing that there was an *abyss* between the Israeli and the Egyptian position¹⁹⁷. Above all, Israel would negotiate from a position of strength and not surprisingly, Abba Eban demanded a direct negotiation between Israel and Egypt. According to Abba Eban, the one way to achieve concrete results was a direct dialogue, through which the parties had to declare the end of the war to achieve open and secure borders¹⁹⁸. Abban Eban was skeptical about a ceasefire limited in time and demanded a final peace as to not engage into

¹⁹³ Abba Eban was the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs who went to Rome on 14th -16th June 1970 to meet with Aldo Moro.

¹⁹⁴ ACS, Roma. FAM. Visita al Cairo. Elementi di conversazione con Presidente Nasser. 21-24 Maggio 1970. B. 129, p. 80-82.

¹⁹⁵ ACS, Roma. FAM. Visita al Cairo. Elementi di conversazione con Presidente Nasser. 21-24 Maggio 1970. B. 129, p. 85.

¹⁹⁶ ACS, Roma. FAM. Visita in Italia del Ministro degli Affari Esteri di Israele Abba Eban. (15-17 Giugno 1970). Telegram n. 11721/C from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Italian Embassy in Algeri, Ankara, Amman, Belgrado, Beirut, Bonn, Cairo, Damasco, London, Moscow, Madrid, Rabat, Teheran, Tripoli, Tunisi, Tel Aviv, Parigi, Washington, NATO, Bruxelles, UN (NY) Italian Representatives. p. 3-4.

¹⁹⁷ Ibidem p. 5-6.

¹⁹⁸ Ibidem p. 7.

new conflicts; he asked for secure and recognized borders defined by the belligerents and not by third parties; finally, Abba Eban expected the full recognition of the State of Israel. After having emphasized the Israeli vital targets, he suggested an international conference to which all countries and international organizations had to take part for dealing with the refugee issue and drafting a converging resolution¹⁹⁹. Abba Eban added that the menace of Soviet Union in the Mediterranean was predicted to dramatically increase: indeed, Eban supposed that the USSR infiltration in the Middle East perfectly fitted with the Arab exigence to answered back the Israeli presence and thus Israel called for a direct or a partly indirect negotiation even to stop any raising of the Soviet influence. Eban feared the Sovietization of the Arab countries and the politicization of the Palestinian organizations, which could imply a perpetual deadlock in the negotiations between belligerents²⁰⁰. Unlike Egypt, Israel performed an intransigent attitude, which forced Moro to carry out a strategy of equidistance that partly differed from the one adopted with Nasser. Indeed, during the meeting with Eban, Moro re-asserted the Italian effort to mediate in the conflict by expecting a peaceful evolution of the negotiation. After those bilateral talks, Moro sent a telegram to the US by summarizing the content of the meetings and stressed the intransigent positions of the parties. Even if it was difficult to figure out any negotiation between them, Moro noted that there were some convergences between the two that deserved to be assessed: both Nasser and Abba Eban wished the renewal of the ceasefire and the restoration of the UN Jarring Mission²⁰¹. However, Israel was said to be prone to a ceasefire with no time limit alongside an indirect negotiation which should turn into a direct negotiation as to get to a lasting peace. On the contrary, Egypt promoted a time limited ceasefire that was also conditioned by an Israeli declaration to apply the Resolution 242 to let Palestinians regain their own legitimate rights. In the telegram, Moro admitted the higher risk of impasse, but he remarked the need and the occasion to elaborate an agreement among the belligerents now that some convergences emerged²⁰². Moro affirmed that the relaunch of the Jarring mission was fundamental and it should give the mission a wider decision-making power to play an active role into the pacification of the area. Essentially, Moro was asking the US to intervene for reopening the dialogue between the belligerents as soon as possible. Indeed, wasting time allowed the USSR to increase its influence into the area by raising the military support to Arab

¹⁹⁹ ACS, Roma. FAM. Visita in Italia del Ministro degli Affari Esteri di Israele Abba Eban. (15-17 Giugno 1970). Telegram n. 11729/C from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Moscow. 10-11.

²⁰⁰ ACS, Rome. FAM. Visita in Italia del Ministro degli Affari Esteri di Israele Abba Eban. (15-17 Giugno 1970). Telegram n. 11722/C from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Italian Embassy in Algeria, Ankara, Amman, Belgrado, Beirut, Bonn, Cairo, Damascus, London, Moscow, Madrid, Rabat, Teheran, Tripoli, Tunis, Tel Aviv, Parigi, Washington, Bruxelles, UN (NY) Italian Representatives. p. 18-20.

²⁰¹ ACS, Rome. FAM. Visita in Italia del Ministro degli Affari Esteri di Israele Abba Eban. (15-17 Giugno 1970). Telegram n. 11747/C from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Washington. p.15-16.

²⁰² Ibidem p. 17.

countries. Thus, Moro suggested the US to not to send weapons to Israel since, in that case, the USSR increasing military presence in the area would be highly predicted. A fair negotiation for a lasting peace was the instrument to avoid the progressive Sovietization of the Arab countries which would have damaged Italian interests in the Mediterranean. Israel was said to be the last bulwark against the Sovietization process in the Middle East and certainly, Italy and the US wanted the USSR out of the Mediterranean sphere; but Italy was increasingly suspicious about the American military endorsement to Israel²⁰³. Italy was playing on every negotiation table, holding the strategy of equidistance but not without showing a pro-Arab attitude in order to protect its area of interest. Undoubtedly, Aldo Moro acted as a mediator into the Mediterranean sphere in 1970, by attempting to create a climate of mutual trust to get at least a ceasefire in the area. Moro's effort encouraged the drafting of the American Second-Rogers Plan. The US appreciated the Italian telegram and shared the Moro's observation who invoked a test of courage starting from the reopening of the Jarring UN mission. The US launched a political initiative to begin discussions through Jarring mediation in order to implement the 242 Resolution. On 25th June, the Secretary of the State William Rogers, announced the so-called Rogers Plan, which was a project aiming at encouraging a three months ceasefire on the Egyptian front, the renewal of the Jarring UN mission to implement the resolution 242, which was to be accepted by Tel Aviv, Amman, and Cairo, and the Israeli commitment to approve the negotiation with Jordan and Egypt as soon as the suspension of hostilities became effective²⁰⁴. Italy was informed about the plan five days before the announcement, and since the beginning it looked at it suspiciously. Italy considered the Rogers Plan as a proper American plan, which in its inception was prone to favor Israeli interests. However, the plan was negotiated with Moscow as to not giving Israel a privileged status and in order to satisfy the USSR requirements²⁰⁵. The other UN permanent members and the involved Mediterranean countries had been left out of the plan drafting, the main reason why Italy was wary of the plan. Rogers plan was just an agreement between the US and the USSR on an area of interest in which they needed a compromise. Aldo Moro thought that the plan could produce some tangible results,

²⁰³ Aldo Moro supposed that the military American endorsement to Israel would boost the Cold War in the Mediterranean, by triggering the USSR presence that was predicted to soar. Many times, Moro will suggest to not to support parties militarily.

²⁰⁴ Morris, B. (2003). *Vittime. Storia del conflitto Arabo-Sionista 1881-2001*. Rizzoli, Milano. p. 440-455 and Riccardi, L. (2006). *Il problema Israele. Diplomazia italiana e PCI di fronte allo Stato Ebraico*. Guerini e Associati, Milano. p. 355-360.

²⁰⁵ ACS, Rome. FAM. Riunione di Capi Missione in Paesi Arabi e del Mediterraneo. Tunisi, 6 Settembre 1970. "Fase attuale della crisi in Medio Oriente ed Espansione dell'influenza sovietica in Mediterraneo". B. 130, p. 1-2.

however he feared the increasing potential Soviet menace in the Mediterranean²⁰⁶. Indeed, in the mid-1970, Soviet Union was more willing to open for a negotiation to stop regional tension in an area of great interest. The peace and the reopening of the Suez Canal could allow Soviet Union to settle into the Mediterranean vigorously by establishing a direct contact with the Indian Ocean²⁰⁷. To a certain extent, Italy feared the Rogers' plan consequences: certainly, the plan could produce a truce among parties, but even a consolidation of the Cold War in the Mediterranean. Italian position in dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict became even more complex and the equidistance strategy had to come to terms with the increasing Soviet penetration.

2.3.6 Italy between pro-Arabism and the Atlantic dimension

By the end of July, Egypt, Israel, and King Huseyn welcomed the Rogers Plan that give the greenlight to convene the Jarring Mission and kick off negotiations. Around the same time, the Middle East was experiencing brutal instability in Jordan, and Israel, by continuing to observe the ceasefire, suspended peace talks on 6th September asserting that Egypt was violating the truce across the Suez Canal. In 1970 and even after the Rogers Plan, skirmishes and bombing never arrested around Suez and Israel increased its demand for military support to the US. In July, Moscow had assured Egypt with military support, by prompting the US to follow suit with Israel. In the light of this, the Rogers Plan was predicted to not to produce the desired results and the Black September, on 17th September 1970, witnessed the entire failure of the plan²⁰⁸. On the same day, Nixon was announced to visit Italy by the end of the month. Dealing with Nixon on the Mediterranean issue would not be easy for Italy. Indeed, Italy was aiming at remaining the main US ally in the Mediterranean to cope with the Soviet menace, but it distrusted the pro-Israeli attitude promoted by the US and insisted on the UN intervention to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict²⁰⁹. In addition, on 22nd-23rd September, Moro had met with Mohammed Riad in Rome and not surprisingly, the Arab conflict, the Jordan crisis, and the

²⁰⁶ Caviglia, D. Cricco, M. (2006). *La diplomazia italiana e gli equilibri mediterranei. La politica mediorientale dell'Italia dalla guerra dei Sei Giorni al conflitto dello Yom Kippur (1967-1973)*. Rubettino Editore, Catanzaro. p. 2-4

²⁰⁷ ACS, Rome, FAM. Riunione di Capi Missione in Paesi Arabi e del Mediterraneo. Tunisi, 6 Settembre 1970. "Fase attuale della crisi in Medio Oriente ed Espansione dell'influenza sovietica in Mediterraneo". B. 130, p. 92-93. The USSR feared China competition in the area between the Middle East and the Indian Ocean and needed to secure that zone.

²⁰⁸ Compare with "The Palestinian refugee issue and the PLO" paragraph 2.2.3. On the Black September see Raab, D. (2007). *Terror in Black September*. Palgrave Macmillan, NY. And Ensalaco M. (2008). *Middle Eastern Terrorism. From Black September to September 11*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

²⁰⁹ ACS, Rome, FAM. Visita in Italia del Presidente degli Stati Uniti d' America Richard Nixon. Elementi di conversazione per le questioni politiche. B. 130, p. 49-52, 64-70.

Palestinian issue were discussed during the meeting.²¹⁰ Riad had referred that Egypt mistrusted the US and therefore it claimed the UN intervention rather than a plan just controlled by the US²¹¹. Egypt would respect the ceasefire but would not cease hostilities until the application of the Jarring mission. The Jordanian crisis worsened the instability in the area, and during the same days, Moro invoked any effort from Moscow and Washington to come to an agreement capable of stopping hostilities and relaunching the Jarring Mission in the area²¹². On 24th September, during the session the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Deputy Chamber, Moro focused on the Palestinian refugee issue by declaring that it was not only a humanitarian problem but also a political one, especially due to the increasing role that the PLO was playing in the Arab-Israeli conflict²¹³. On 27th September, Saragat met with Nixon, who highlighted that the Middle East was not simply a dispute between two countries but a problem which invested all the Mediterranean and thus involved Italy directly. Nixon asserted that in order to cope with the Mediterranean instability and to handle a lasting peace, Italy should be sane, strong, and independent²¹⁴. Nixon expected Italy to hold a strategy of equidistance as to not damaging the image of the Western Powers into the Mediterranean context. However, the Italian foreign policy was intended to be conditioned by some other events that were taking place in North Africa. For instance, the Libyan coup impacted on several Italian economic activities in Libya as the Italian companies, Italian banks, and agricultural concessions²¹⁵. Moreover, on 21st July 1970, Ghaddafi decided to expel the Italian community from Libya and seized Italians' properties. Since that moment, Italy was forced to held a more autonomous and constant dialogue with the Arab countries as to not trigger similar unfriendly measures. Moro was capable of handling the Libyan crisis by adopting wariness and assisting the Italian people expelled from the country. He reopened for a deep dialogue with the country through bilateral contact by meeting the Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs Buessir on 1st August 1970: keeping an autonomous dialogue with Libya was vital for Italy to protect its oil interests in the area. Moreover, on 28th September, Nasser died and left a political vacuum which jeopardize the

²¹⁰ ACS. Rome, FAM. Incontro del Ministro degli Affari Esteri On. Aldo Moro con il Ministo degli Affari Esteri della R.A.U. M. Riad. 21-22 Settembre 1970. B. 130.

²¹¹ ACS. Rome, FAM. Visita in Italia del Presidente degli Stati Uniti d' America Richard Nixon. Telegram from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Moscow and Washington (22 Settembre 1970). B. 130, p. 53-56.

²¹² ACS. Rome, FAM. Visita in Italia del Presidente degli Stati Uniti d' America Richard Nixon. Telegram from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Moscow and Washington (22 Settembre 1970). B. 130, p. 59.

²¹³ Caviglia, D. Cricco, M. (2006). La diplomazia italiana e gli equilibri mediterranei. La politica mediorientale dell'Italia dalla guerra dei Sei Giorni al conflitto dello Yom Kippur (1967-1973). Rubettino Editore, Catanzaro. p.88-89.

²¹⁴ Bosco, V. (2009). L' amministrazione Nixon e l'Italia. Tra distensione europea e crisi mediterranee (1968-1975). Emograph, Rome. p. 179.

²¹⁵ ACS. Rome, FAM. Colloquio dell'On. Ministro con l'ambasciatore di Libia. 22 Giugno 1970. Appunto per l'onorevole Ministro. B. 130, p. 5-6.

evolution of the regional conflict and the equilibrium in the Arab world. Moro thought that the forthcoming instability in the Middle East would increase the USSR infiltration in the area and the potential Egyptian political transition aroused several concerns in the Western Powers, who feared revolutionary exponents. Around the same time, the refugee issue and the Jordanian crisis were finding their apex, while the USSR presence increased in the Middle East to answered back to the US military support to Israel. Already in February and June 1970, Moro had stressed the importance of the non-armament in the Middle East and since the International Détente seemed not taking any root in the Mediterranean area, Moro went further by trying to extend Détente over that context. When Anwar-al Sadat replaced Nasser by keeping the main political guidelines, Italy welcomed this new course²¹⁶. Sadat reiterated the friendship with the USSR, which proposed a new project to address the Arab-Israeli conflict in October. The project did not differ considerably from the Rogers Plan but stressed the need to solve the refugee problem and suggested to define demilitarized zones on the borders, by introducing UN peace-keeping forces. The US criticized the initiative by adding that it was just an attempt to affirm the Soviet presence in the Mediterranean²¹⁷. Italy reacted by getting closer to the US in order to contain the Soviet expansion, however Moro pointed out that the Atlantic dimension would not question the Italian pro-Arab attitude that was treasured by historical bonds of friendship. Indeed, Moro carried on focusing on the Palestinian refugee issue by remarking that Palestinians with their own organization were political entities and they did not expect shape of external welfare but a political recognition. Recognizing Palestinians as a national entity meant betraying Israel and it was a too far step for the US, which could risk to lose an ally in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean arena became even more complex in the end of 1970: while the US was reticent to distance itself from the Israeli intransigence, Italy called for a more active UN intervention into the peace process that was actually rejected by Israel due to the considerable guarantees and protection that Palestinians could enjoy under the UN umbrella²¹⁸. Moro insisted on the US power to influence Israeli political attitude to negotiate for a compromise in the Middle East, and assumed an evident pro-Arab policy which could not entirely fit with the US purposes. The political divergences in dealing with the Mediterranean framework had never seriously jeopardized the relation between the US and Italy, but certainly a pro-Arab foreign policy finally matured in the Moro's era, by laying the groundwork for a

²¹⁶ On this theme see Garzia, I., Monzali, L., Imperato, F. (2013). Aldo Moro, l'Italia repubblicana e i popoli del Mediterraneo. Besa, Lecce.

²¹⁷ Caviglia, D. Cricco, M. (2006). La diplomazia italiana e gli equilibri mediterranei. La politica mediorientale dell'Italia dalla guerra dei Sei Giorni al conflitto dello Yom Kippur (1967-1973). Rubettino Editore, Catanzaro. p. 96-101.

²¹⁸ The Italian role into the UN dimension had been discussed in Tosi, L. (1998). L'Italia e le Organizzazioni Internazionali. Diplomazia multilaterale nel Novecento. CEDAM, Padova. p. 201-233.

deeper dialogue with several Arab countries. Moro's effort made Italy closer to the Middle East but without producing desired results. In 1970, the collaboration between the Superpowers struggled to take shape in the Middle East and the Mediterranean context remained an open issue.

2.3.7 Moro and the Mediterranean in the CSCE dimension

Certainly, Moro and the Italian government walked a tightrope: while they criticized Israeli intransigence and aimed at keeping a special relationship with the Arab world, they also contained any tension with the US, especially in the Mediterranean²¹⁹. But several times, the Italian Mediterranean vocation walked alone: in 1970, Moro sponsored multiple meetings with Arab leaders and political exponents. He visited Morocco, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Iran, Egypt, and received the UAR Economic Minister, Zaki, the UAR Minister of Foreign Affairs Riad, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abba Eban²²⁰. Bilateral contacts between Italy and the Arab world were part of the Mediterranean Détente process building, in which the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict had to be addressed involving all the Mediterranean countries. Indeed, the core of several conversation was the feeble equilibrium that Middle East and North Africa were still experiencing²²¹. Even in the meeting with the UN Secretary General on 31st August 1970, Moro raised the Mediterranean issue as it happened in the meeting with Gromyko²²². Italy, by maintaining a special relation-ship with the Middle East and North Africa, could work as a bridge between two worlds and could be a mediator among the Arab countries and Israel. Moro thought that in order to avoid the outbreak of regional conflicts and overcome the destabilizing effects of bipolarism, the Mediterranean issues should be part of a larger policy carried out by the EEC as a whole²²³. In Moro's view, the EEC members as a whole should adopt a common approach to the Mediterranean and, particularly to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moro aimed at

²¹⁹ E. Bini, *A transatlantic shock: Italy's energy policies between the Mediterranean and the EEC, 1967-1974*. p. 153-154.

²²⁰ ACS, Rome. FAM. Incontro del Ministro degli Affari Esteri Onorevole Aldo Moro con il Ministro degli Affari Esteri della R.A.U. M. Riad. Spunti di conversazione con il Ministro degli Affari Esteri della R.A.U. 21-22 Settembre 1970. B. 129, p.9-12; FAM. Visita in Iran dell'Onorevole Ministro. Incontro Onorevole Ministro con Scià. 16-18 Settembre 1970. B. 130, p. 13; FAM. Visita nell'Impero Etiopico del Ministro degli Affari Esteri Onorevole Aldo Moro. B. 130; FAM. Incontro del Ministro degli Affari Esteri Onorevole Aldo Moro con il Ministro dell'Economia R.A.U. Zaki. Appunto per l'onorevole Ministro. 20 Settembre 1970. B. 130, p.7-12.

²²¹ ACS, Rome. FAM. Sosta a Roma del Segretario Generale dell'ONU, U-Thant. Telegram 16893/C, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to NY, London, Moscow, Washington, Cairo, Amman, Tel Aviv, Saigon. Colloquio dell'Onorevole Ministro con U-Thant – Problemi del Vietnam e del Medio Oriente. 31 Agosto 1970. B. 130, p. 4-5.

²²² Ibidem, p. 2-8; Caviglia, D. Cricco, M. (2006). *La diplomazia italiana e gli equilibri mediterranei. La politica mediorientale dell'Italia dalla guerra dei Sei Giorni al conflitto dello Yom Kippur (1967-1973)*. Rubettino Editore, Catanzaro. p. 101.

²²³ E. Bini, *A transatlantic shock: Italy's energy policies between the Mediterranean and the EEC, 1967-1974*. p. 155-158.

establishing a more active international role for the EEC, which should talk to the Middle East with one voice by promoting energy policies which fitted with the Arab countries' interests. The organization of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) opened for a new space of intervention. During the Atlantic Council of Bonn on 30th-31st May 1972, Moro suggested that the CSCE could be a precedent to organize a similar meeting for the Mediterranean which would include all regional actors, the US and the USSR²²⁴. The meeting would have taken place once a lasting solution for the Arab-Israeli was provided²²⁵. The proposal aimed at encouraging political stability in the Mediterranean to allow regional countries to recover economically. By establishing a more vigorous international role of the EEC, Moro would stress the foreign policy differences between Europe and the US. The Mediterranean Détente was an occasion to emancipate Europe from the bipolar system by acting autonomously and with one voice into the Mediterranean dimension but without jeopardizing the Atlantic dimension. Moro's initiatives went unheeded in the Western Europe and both the US and the USSR were unwilling to recognize the EEC any mediating or autonomous role, especially in the Arab-Israeli conflict and in the energy sector²²⁶. Nonetheless, Moro used his growing influence in the Arab world to ease ENI's presence in several oil producing countries and to keep alive an Italo-Arab dialogue between the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Moro renewed his Mediterranean diplomacy by visiting Israel and by meeting Riad in Rome in March 1971 and even his successor, Giuseppe Medici, pursued the Mediterranean vocation by visiting Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon a year later²²⁷. However, according to some scholars a stalemate in the negotiations was going to take place. Indeed, despite the Mediterranean diplomacy efforts, no solution to address tensions in the region emerged. The dramatic Munich massacre in September 1972 and the impressive turmoil in October 1973 hinted that no pacification in the Middle Eastern area would take place quickly.

2.3.8 Before the oil shock: Italy, ENI, and the end of the Thirty Glorious Years

A process of increasing economic instability involved western countries since the very beginning of the Seventies. The financial instability had its roots in the end of the Bretton

²²⁴ ACS, Rome. FAM. Scritti e discorsi. Anno 1972, subseries 16. Intervento al Consiglio Atlantico di Bonn, 30 Maggio 1972.

²²⁵ On Italy, the Mediterranean and the Helsinki Process see the following books. Meneguzzi Rostagli, C. (2005). *The Helsinki Process: A Historical Reappraisal*. CEDAM, Padova. Romano, A. (2009). *From Détente in Europe to European Détente: How the West shaped the Helsinki CSCE*. Peter Lang, Bruxelles.

²²⁶ Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). *Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War*. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p.185-193.

²²⁷ Riccardi, L. (2006). *Diplomazia Italiana e PCI di fronte allo Stato Ebraico (1948-1973)*. Guerini e Associati, Milano. p. 374-388.

Woods System. Bretton Woods System was developed in July 1944, envisaging a new economic and financial equilibrium based on new international economic institutions (among them the IMF and the GATT), the gold-dollar standard and the unquestionable American economic supremacy on the other world economies. The system aimed at encouraging the recovery of many countries which in the decades after the war become potential competitors for the American supremacy. Indeed, in order to promote European growth, the dollar had been overrated making the American economy less competitive, being also bounded by the pegged exchange rates regime of the gold dollar standard²²⁸. Moreover, Nixon had to cope with inflation and unemployment, which were damaging the American balance of payments and weakening the American economy. Finally, the US was obliged to devalue its currency printing more dollars to finance the Vietnam War and was no longer capable of maintaining the parity of the gold with the currency. The system the US created in order to recover countries damaged by the war, ended up damaging itself. On 15th August 1971, Nixon proclaimed the Bretton Woods System ended, adding an imports 10% surcharge, which impacted negatively on the European economies. An entire financial system collapsed: the gold-dollar standard, the fixed exchange rate regime and the stability of the global prices were replaced by a flexible exchange rates regime generating speculation phenomena and more uncertainty among investors and consumers. Soon inflation spread in Europe and many countries experienced several losses in the export sectors and stagflation dramatically increased. After 1971, Europe had to cope with the hard consequences of the dollar devaluation, the floating exchange rates and the speculation which generated an immediate negative impact on the European Economic Integration Process. Italy saw its economic growth shrink further, while strikes were affecting many sectors. However, strong export demand and the government's expansionary policies, enabled growth to remain positive. In the early Seventies, the oil sector continued to be entirely crucial for the Italian economy. Moro worked all together with ENI to make the oil market a good platform where Italy could dialogue with the Arab countries. In 1972, ENI agreed to the new terms set by Libya after that the Teheran-Tripoli agreement took place and signed a treaty with the Libyan National Oil Corporation by recognizing its right to own 50% of a joint company²²⁹. While keeping its dialogue with Egypt, ENI improved its relations even with Algeria, Iran and Iraq. In June 1971, Moro visited Algeria and ENI convinced Sonatrach to sign an agreement for the import of natural gas. In 1970, Moro went to Iran where he opened

²²⁸ Di Nolfo, E. (2008). *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 1197.

²²⁹ Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). *Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War*. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p. 190-194; F. Imperato, R. Milano, L. Monzali (2018). *Fra diplomazia e petrolio. Aldo Moro e la politica italiana in Medio Oriente (1963-1978)*, Cacucci, Bari. p. 81-85.

negotiations for an agreement to improve scientific and technical assistance between the two countries. The agreement, that was signed on 17th September, increased the bilateral cooperation on economic and energy matters, by allowing ENI to increase its activities in Iran. In March 1972, ENI contracted to buy 20 million tons of Iraqi crude over a ten-year period and payments had to be made in industrial equipment, machinery, and services provided by ENI and other Italian-state controlled enterprises²³⁰. Although the Italian government and ENI presented themselves as allies of the of the Arab world and played a pivotal role in the oil market, the 1973 oil shock dramatically impacted on the Italian economy, by reopening a phase of great tension in the Mediterranean context.

²³⁰ Smolansky, O.M. and Moretz Smolansky, B.(1991). *The USSR and Iraq: The Soviet Quest for Influence*. Duke University Press Book. p. 50.

THIRD CHAPTER

MEDITERRANEAN DETENTE BETWEEN THE OIL SHOCK AND ITS LEGACY

1973 opened the decade of the oil. During the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries exerted their power by paralyzing western economies. Besides showing the financial vulnerability of the West, the oil shock and the Fourth Arab-Israeli conflict reshaped alliances in the Cold War system, by bolstering Mediterranean autonomous initiative on the part of the EEC. The energy issue started to be addressed internationally, paving the way for the Euro-Arab dialogue in which Italy sought to play a lead role. However, American globalism arrested the EEC plan which slowed after the Energy Conference promoted by the US. Nixon and Kissinger reshaped transatlantic relations, blaming any form of exclusive dialogue and bilateral contacts amongst EEC members and Arab countries. Nevertheless, Italy started to abandon the strategy of the double equidistance by pursuing its Mediterranean interests regardless of Americans constraints and taking a clearer stance into the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Middle Eastern endless war, the Palestinians' conditions, and the energy matters became the core of the Italian foreign policy during the Seventies. Aldo Moro continued to shape his Mediterranean Détente in a mangled Middle East where Détente had never appeared. Although his voice went unheeded and Italy suffered Mediterranean illusions, Moro differentiated Italy from other western countries which engaged in dialogues with the Middle East. Moro's kidnapping and murdering did not sign however the end of the pro-Arab attitude that Italy continued to adopt. Faced with the collapsing International Détente and the new American presidencies, Italy did not leave the Mediterranean vocation. During the Eighties, Andreotti and Craxi re-established the equidistance strategy that was no longer double: the Italian pro-Arab policy was now well-defined but Italy had to look carefully at the US before implementing it. The US continued to exert an influence over Italy until the end of the Cold War but the Mediterranean was the solely item making Italy more autonomous: to a certain extent Sigonella Affair and the El-Dorado Operation demonstrated Italy's determination in protecting its interests, dignity, and sovereignty regardless of the raider.

3.1 ITALY AND THE OIL DECADE: LIMITS AND AMBITIONS OF A PRO-ARAB POLICY

3.1.1 The Yom Kippur War and the Oil Embargo of 1973

The 1973 oil shock irrupted in the Western World exacerbating an economic transition period already started after the end of the Bretton Woods system. The oil weapon came as a surprise during the Yom Kippur War and *altered irrevocably the world as it had grown up in the postwar period*²³¹. After the death of Nasser, the campaign against Israel was perceived as a common purpose into the Arab world. Ghaddafi in Libya, al-Assad in Syria, and the Baath party in Iraq strengthened the anti-Israelian feeling, while the PLO was increasing its military power in the area²³². In October 1973, the new Egyptian President, Sadat, embodied the Arab feeling of revenge against the June War defeat and in the holiest of Jewish holiday unleashed the fourth of the Arab-Israeli War. Sadat waged a war to pave the way for a diplomatic solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict so as to ensure the Arab world a position of strength in dealing with Israel. On 6th October Egyptian jets roared into the sky against Israeli positions on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal, while Syrian aircraft launched an attack on Israeli's northern border. The Egyptian armaments had been supplied by the USSR, which after the expulsion of 20.000 Soviet military advisors from Egypt in 1972, was forced to mount its military support²³³. At the beginning of the war, the Egyptian military action succeeded. On 9th October, the US realized that the Israeli forces were in trouble, suffering short supplies. A day later, the USSR started a massive resupply to Syria and Egypt. Kissinger would prefer to keep a low military profile in the war as to not jeopardize the relations with Arab countries. However, the US could not allow an American ally to be defeated by Soviet arms. The US supported Israel by creating an airlift and sending weapons and, for the very first time, Egypt seemed to break off the Israeli military power. However, on 15th October Israel answered back by fostering a powerful counterattack that allowed them to reassert control over the Golan Heights and to stop the Egyptian advance in Sinai. Israel had succeeded in stopping the Arab offensive by benefiting from the US military aid²³⁴. Egypt and Israel had been explicitly supported respectively by the

²³¹ Yergin, D. (2008). The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 570.

²³² Nolfo E. (2008). Storia delle relazioni internazionali. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 1225.

²³³ Sadat was not pro-Sovietic and he was able to challenge the Soviet influence in the Egypt. Soviet military support was functional to improve the Egyptian war machine and when the USSR refused to increase the supply of arms, Sadat expelled the Soviet advisers. USSR feared that Egypt could turn to other Powers that meant losing an ally on the Mediterranean. On this matter Di Nolfo E. (2008). Storia delle relazioni internazionali. Editori Laterza, Bari. p.1226-1227.

²³⁴ Yergin, D. (2008). The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 587.

USSR and the US; moreover, during the war, the USSR sustained the Arab oil embargo adopted against the western countries and particularly against the US and Netherlands, staunch supporters of Israel²³⁵. On 16th October, the delegates of the Gulf States, five Arabs and an Iranian, met in Kuwait City and announced to raise the posted price of oil by 70%. Their decision was twofold: they raised the price by implying more earnings and they imposed the price unilaterally, without negotiating with the majors. On 18th October, the Arab oil ministers agreed on an embargo, cutting production by 5% in each succeeding month until their objectives were met and oil supplies at previous levels would be maintained to friendly States²³⁶. The US was their target: it had to be subjected to the most severe cuts. Although Kissinger and Nixon had made clear that the American resupply was not an anti-Arab attitude but a reaction against the Russian supply to Egypt, the Arab countries threatened it with the oil weapon. On the same days, Nixon had proposed an aid package of 2.2 dollars for Israel in order to contain the Egyptian menace. In retaliation with the proposal, Libya announced the embargo to the US and even Saudi Arabia followed suit while the other Arab States had done or were doing the same²³⁷. Military operations continued until the 22nd October when the UN Security Council ordered the parties to stop fighting. On 20th Kissinger departed for Tel Aviv where Israeli criticized the UN intervention while they were defeating Egypt; when Kissinger arrived in Moscow to devise a cease-fire formula, Soviets threatened to implement a massive military intervention after that Israel refused to stop fighting. On that context, Kissinger assumed a crucial mediating role between parties: he completed a cease-fire plan with Soviets that actually took time to be implemented. Neither Israelis nor Egyptians wished to observe the cease-fire and the USSR showed an intransigent attitude in dealing with the crisis. There was the imminent risk that the Egyptian third Army would be captured and Brezhnev asked that a joint American-Soviet force move to separate the two sides²³⁸. If Americans would have not cooperated, the Soviets would have intervened unilaterally. The US could not tolerate the USSR taking advantage of a Watergate-weakened Presidency and it could not even tolerate a direct Soviet military intervention. On 25th October, the American military forces went on a nuclear alert; miscalculation in the area could produce a nuclear confrontation²³⁹. As it happened in the Cuban Missile Crisis, the risk of a nuclear confrontation let the fighting in the Middle East to stop and

²³⁵ Di Nolfo E. (2008). *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 1227-1228.

²³⁶ Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 589

²³⁷ King Faisal was reluctant to take any action against the US even because of the historical marriage between the two countries. However, Nixon proposal for helping Israel could not be justified.

²³⁸ Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 593; Valdevit G. (2003). *Stati Uniti e Medio Oriente dal 1945 a oggi*. Carocci, Roma. p. 90-94; Di Nolfo E. (2008). *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Editori Laterza, Bari. p.1228-1231.

²³⁹ Yergin, D. (2008). *The prize. The epic quest for oil, money and power*. Simon&Schulster, London. p. 594.

the cease-fire went into effect²⁴⁰. Two days later, Egypt and Israel met for direct talks, however, the oil weapon continued to be wielded.

3.1.2 Wielding the oil weapon

Kissinger, more than any other political actor, became the protagonist of a complex negotiating process, which saw involved Egypt and Israel²⁴¹. While Nixon was invested in the Watergate scandal, Kissinger assumed a pivotal role in the Mediterranean area by challenging the oil weapon and leading the US to dialogue with both the belligerents. In October, Kissinger met between Suez and Cairo with both the Egyptian and Israeli militants to gain a provisional cease-fire agreement. In January 1974, parties established an agreement on military disengagement by allowing the UN forces to settle between the two contenders. For the very first time, Egypt and Israel seemed finding a *modus vivendi* which could pave the way for a lasting solution of tensions. But the oil weapon remained an open issue that was affecting the entire world. Indeed, a barrel cost shifted from 3 dollars to 12 in December 1973 and the OPEC adopted different economic measures to answer its western enemies. While embargo was proclaimed against the US and Netherlands as it was a total veto toward countries which explicitly and concretely supported Israel during the Yom Kippur war, the European importer countries suffered the higher oil prices and the progressive limitation of the oil distribution in Europe as a clear sign of intimidation. The OPEC strategy wanted to contain and hamper the western countries aid to Israel using a weapon able to paralyze their economies. Considering that Europe really depended on the Arab oil, it faced an economic collapse. Oil nourished many industries and import restrictions and higher prices decreased production and boosted inflation. Even if the US could have enjoyed domestic oil reserves, the government decided not to drain them by respecting its power policy not showing weakness. Although the Arab oil quantities sold were lower, the price was higher and the oil exporting countries benefited from that strategy. Oil was not only an economic weapon but even a political one. All the countries that depended on the OPEC imports were obliged to not deteriorate their relations with the Arab countries. Western countries did not provide for a common response to the oil shock and each of them tried to face the lack of oil supplies by dealing bilaterally with the Arab countries. The 1974-1976 period of

²⁴⁰ On the Yom Kippur War see Bregman, A. (2002). *Israeli's Wars: A history since 1947*. Routledge, London; Rabinovich, A. (2005). *The Yom Kippur War: The Epic Encounter that Transformed the Middle East*. Schocken Books, NY. Herzog, C. (2003). *The War of Atonement: The Inside Story of Yom Kippur War*. Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park.

²⁴¹ Valdevit G. (2003). *Stati Uniti e Medio Oriente dal 1945 a oggi*. Carocci, Roma. p. 90-94; Little D. (2007). *American Orientalism: United States and the Middle East since 1945*. The University of North Carolina Press, US. p. 415-421.

recession was worsened by the oil shock, by forcing industrialized countries to decrease production in order to lower costs. On the other hand, the Arab countries' oil revenues considerably increased, moving from 33 to 108 billion of dollars during the biennium 1973-1974. In Europe, the Italian economy was particularly affected by the 1973 crisis, that reduced the country's oil imports by 20%²⁴². Not surprisingly, industrial production decreased, along with salaries, occupation rates and private consumption, while inflation rose, leading to a recession²⁴³. The "oil shock" thus intersected with, and accelerated, growing and widespread social tensions (with the outbreak of terrorism) and political instability. During the same years, Italy was also experiencing a political evolution and dealing with the Mediterranean issues became increasingly harder.

3.1.3 Between autonomous policy and the US constraints: Italy and the 1973 turmoil

During the years of Détente, several governments took turns in Italy. The political choices made by Moro, attempting to set up a post-center-left stage, made the US looking suspiciously to Italy. On the contrary, the political choices made by Andreotti after the 1972 elections, in an attempt to restore the pre-center-left anti-communist front, perfectly fitted with Kissinger's expectations. However, the US perceived Andreotti's conservative position too weak domestically, while Moro's progressive perspective looked rather uncertain in terms of internal and international stability²⁴⁴. Indeed, the US administration feared and criticized Moro's efforts to pursue an autonomous policy in the Mediterranean. Kissinger strengthened the US relationship with Italy by talking with the prime minister Giulio Andreotti. Kissinger wished to stabilize Italy's domestic situation and consolidate the country's position inside the Atlantic bloc²⁴⁵. In spring 1973, Andreotti visited Kissinger in Washington by stressing the Italian willingness to remain aligned to the US policies and international guidelines. On that occasion, Kissinger disregarded any Italy's autonomous policy by referring to Moro's initiatives in the Mediterranean. Moro's Mediterranean strategy was getting even more difficult. Once Moro came back as the leader of the Italian diplomacy in July 1973, he adopted a strategy of wariness and equidistance to the Yom Kippur War so as to not upsetting the US. Nevertheless, Moro continued to present Italy as a true ally for the Arab world and re-called for the solution of the

²⁴² Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p. 194.

²⁴³ E. Bini, A transatlantic shock: Italy's energy policies between the Mediterranean and the EEC, 1967-1974. p. 155.

²⁴⁴ Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p. 40-41.

²⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 194-195.

Palestinian issue, which was no longer a socio-economic problem but even a political one. In one of his speeches to the Parliament in the middle October, Moro urged a peace-full coexistence among the belligerents by respecting and applying the content of the 242 UN Resolution. However, there was no univocal interpretation of the Resolution and it was the content itself which divided the two parts. During the same speech, Moro re-invoked the EEC diplomatic intervention to influence the tide of the war. The European attitude to address the conflict was seemed debunked by the heterogeneity of the member States in talking with the parties, by opting for bilateral contacts with Arab countries²⁴⁶. Certainly, Italy's strong dependence on Arab oil forced Moro to talk to Arab countries directly, to better enhance the economic and energy relations, by containing the Italian recession. In 1974, Moro visited several Arab countries and posed Italy as a bridge between Western Europe on the one hand and the Middle East and North Africa on the other hand. Certainly, for the government and ENI, gaining access to cheap resources became vital to both handle industrial crisis and prevent social and political crisis. As parts of a broader project, those targets were proper of the Italian Mediterranean vocation, which Moro did not mean to leave.

3.1.4 1973 oil shock and terrorism: Aldo Moro and the collapsing equidistance

There were many reasons behind Moro's vigorous Mediterranean policy in 1974. On 17th December 1973, airport attacks and hijacking occurred at Leonardo da Vinci–Fiumicino International Airport in Rome where Palestinian terrorists killed off 34 people through hostage-taking and firebombing of Pan American World Airways Flight 110. Other gunmen took several Italian hostages and hijacked Lufthansa Boeing 737 and took off for Athens, Damascus, and finally Kuwait City²⁴⁷. The reasons why the attack occurred are still a mystery. According to some scholars, in order to pacify relation with the PLO, Moro gave life to the “lodo Moro” after the Fiumicino massacre. Lodo Moro refers to a secretly non-aggression pact between the Italian State and the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), which was an internal movement of the PLO. The movement of Abu-Nidal, staunch enemy of Arafat, did not take part to the pact. The pact, that seems to be just verbal, allowed Palestinians to gain weapons and explosive free transition on the Italian soil, while in exchange Italy got the guarantee of not being subject to future terroristic attacks. Other schools of thought state that “lodo Moro”

²⁴⁶ France promoted a vigorous filo-Arabism; Britain, Italy, Western Germany, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Ireland fostered equidistance; while Netherland and Denmark supported explicitly Israel. Riccardi, L. (2006). *Il problema Israele. Diplomazia italiana e PCI di fronte allo Stato Ebraico*. Guerini e Associati, Milano. p. 450-451.

²⁴⁷ Some books addressing this topic: Yonah, A. (1994). *Middle East Terrorism: current threats and future prospects*. Dartmounth. p. 367; Dannreuther, R. (1998). *The Soviet Union and the PLO*. St. Martin's Press. p. 94.

existed even before the Airport attack. In this case, Iodo Moro aimed at pacifying the relation between PLO and Italy, by creating a mutual guarantee. However, such an agreement could not be tolerated by a dissident PLO front which actually performed the attack as a protest. Anyway, the Iodo Moro was an instrument adopted between Italy and PLO, it seems to be out of the Euro-Arab dialogue, and to a certain extent, it was intended to witness the special relationship between Italy and some Arab interlocutors. During the Saudi and Algerian oil ministers' visit in Italy in early January, Moro, focusing on the Palestinian issue, reiterated the centrality of the 242 UN Resolution as the basis for a negotiated and fair settlement between Arabs and Israelis. However, the Arab ministers demanded a further step: namely, officializing the endorsement to the French version of the 242 UN Resolution²⁴⁸. Moro got the point and on 23rd January 1974 addressed the Senate's Foreign Commission. Moro remarked Italy's commitment to the process of Middle Eastern pacification into the UN dimension, by suggesting the increasing role the EEC could play so as to ensure peace in the Mediterranean. He reminded the role that Italy had played in making the EEC's 6th November 1973 declaration possible and urged the Euro-Arab dialogue²⁴⁹. Moro demanded of EEC to share resources by implementing an effective integration that allowed room for developing countries to race for prosperity. In his speech, Moro expressed an oriented view on the Middle Eastern issue, truly underlining the end of the years of equidistance. He argued for the Israeli withdrawal from all the June War occupied territories, where Palestinians sought for a homeland, not mere assistance²⁵⁰; it was a broad interpretation of the 242 UN resolution. According to Moro, it was a matter of national rights protection of the Palestinian people, to whom freedom to define their fate should not be denied²⁵¹. Nevertheless, Moro drew attention to the Israel integrity and security. However, Israel criticized the Italian stance as if it was a subjugation to the Arab world. The open Italian pro-Arab attitude turned out to be meaningful in the Euro-Arab building-process, that Italy endorsed along with France. Moro's speech revealed a true intent in carrying out a deeper Mediterranean Détente strategy that partly could take shape into the Euro-Arab dialogue. After the Saudi and Algerian oil ministers visited Italy as part of an extensive tour aiming at encouraging EEC members to a clearer stance on Middle East issues in early 1974, Moro felt truly committed to undertake his pro-Arab policy. Between the end of January and the beginning of February 1974, Moro travelled to North Africa and to the Middle East, paving the

²⁴⁸ Garzia, I., Monzali, L., Imperato, F. (2013). Aldo Moro, l'Italia repubblicana e i popoli del Mediterraneo. Besa, Lecce. p. 92.

²⁴⁹ Compare with paragraph 3.1.5.

²⁵⁰ ACS, Rome. FAM. Riunione di alcuni ambasciatori accreditati nell'area del Medio Oriente. Aldo Moro a Commissione Esteri Senato. B. 157, p. 32-36.

²⁵¹ ACS, Rome. FAM. Riunione di alcuni ambasciatori accreditati nell'area del Medio Oriente. Aldo Moro a Commissione Esteri Senato. B. 157, p. 36-44.

way for a series of agreements for the import of oil from Libya and Saudi Arabia in exchange for development aid and technology. In late January, Moro visited the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. Both countries were defenders of the Palestinian cause and pushed for embargo against the US and Netherlands during the Yom Kippur War. Kuwait was a critical stop: the hijacked Lufthansa Boeing 737 was allowed to land after the Kuwaiti authorities secured the release of the remaining hostages. The hijackers got free passage but later captured by the Kuwaiti authorities, who announced no intention of putting them on trial. It was said they had been released to PLO after Sadat's greenlight. Italy demanded Kuwaiti authorities to put them on trial by expecting a condemnation. Kuwaiti authorities refused by stating that the terroristic attack was a political act²⁵². Moro visited Kuwait to mend fences and for keeping a proliferative dialogue with one of its oil suppliers. A few days later, Moro visited Saudi Arabia to meet with the Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs. As they introduced their dialogue into the wider Euro-Arab projects, Moro focused on the Palestinians issue. Italy followed up its pro-Arab policy by defending the Arab world's aspirations to gain a fair solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict²⁵³. Moro evoked the withdrawal of all the occupied territories and the recognition of the legitimate rights to Palestinian people²⁵⁴. Italy was still eyed with suspicion due to the possible material assistance given to Israel during the Fourth Arab-Israeli war, something that Italy denied²⁵⁵. Moro raised any issue which would underpin the Italo-Saudi dialogue on economic and energy matters as negotiating for increasing Saudi crude imports to Italy. Here too, the meeting allowed for political and economic dialogues but produced tangible results only on energy matters. In mid-February, the Libyan Prime Minister Abdessalam Ahmed Jallud visited Italy and the so called Jallud-Rumor Protocol was signed. The agreement envisaged that Italy would import 30 million tons of oil per year in exchange for technology, industrial, and agricultural support, training for Libyan technicians, and building of petrochemical and fertilizer plants. Later, ENI gained a special role in the exploration, extraction, and transportation of Libyan oil and natural gas²⁵⁶. Besides energy talking, Jallud and Rumor discussed on political issues concerning the Mediterranean. The Italian pro-Arab policy was evident to Jallud: primarily, Italy was stressing

²⁵² ACS, Rome. FAM. Visita dell'Onorevole Ministro in Kuwait. 29-30 Gennaio, 1974. Stato del Kuwait. Rapporti con l'Italia. B. 157, p. 1-3.

²⁵³ ACS, Rome. FAM. Visita dell'Onorevole Ministro in Arabia Saudita. 3-4 Febbraio 1974. Dialogo introduttivo tra Moro e il Signor Ministro Saudita. B.157, p. 1-2.

²⁵⁴ ACS, Rome. FAM. Visita dell'Onorevole Ministro in Arabia Saudita. 3-4 Febbraio, 1974. Dialogo introduttivo tra Moro e il Signor Ministro Saudita. B.157, p. 2.

²⁵⁵ ACS, Rome. FAM. Visita dell'Onorevole Ministro in Arabia Saudita. 3-4 Febbraio, 1974. Rapporti con l'Italia. B.157, p. 17-18.

²⁵⁶ ACS, Rome. FAM. Visita del Primo Ministro Libico Jallud in Italia. Progetto di Dichiarazione a conclusione della visita del Primo Ministro Libico. (Parte Economica). B.157, p. 2-4.

Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). *Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War*. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p. 199-200; Varvelli, A. (2009). *L'Italia e l'ascesa di Gheddafi. La cacciata degli italiani, le armi e il petrolio*. Milano: Baldini Castoldi Dalai.

the need to extend cooperation to Mediterranean countries in the undergoing Conference on security and Cooperation in Europe holding in Geneva, where Italy endorsed the Algerian, Tunisian, Moroccan, Egyptian, and Syrian delegations to have a voice in the conference. Italy and Libya as well, had campaigned for the Euro-Arab dialogue to develop cooperation on several fields. As in other meetings, Italy encouraged the enforcement of the 242 UN resolution that actually Libya still refused to accept. Italy's pro-Arab policy and the renewed commercial agreement with some Arab countries fostered a sturdier course of the ENI activities. Indeed, around the same time, in March 1974, the Italian Parliament approved the Oil Plan wanted by the government. The Plan established a "*public responsibility concerning the satisfaction of the country's oil needs*",²⁵⁷ and awarded the state the duty of bolstering oil consuming countries' ability to define international oil politics. Furthermore, it spurred foreign and commercial policies by aiming at easing ways of supplying oil, based on forms of exchange, investments in industrial sectors, and economic cooperation. ENI played a significant role into the Oil Plan, since the company had to afford the government the technical expertise needed to meet Italy's energy needs²⁵⁸. Through the Plan, ENI would extend its exploration activities internationally by increasing imports of oil and natural gas the country required. According to the Plan, ENI's presence, namely the presence of the state-owned company, into the oil market - where the Seven Sisters were extremely active - was predicted to soar. The approval of the Oil Plan was a crucial step in the history of Italian energy policies. Certainly, it stimulated a deeper cooperation between the state and the oil company in the field of international oil politics and planned a more dynamic for Italy into Mediterranean dimension and inside the EEC. Furthermore, ENI was conceived as an economic instrument capable of affecting the economy of the country by providing for social services and committing to the end of imbalances between the North and the South. Such a plan would ensure Italy's prosperity into the increasingly diversified Atlantic community. However, the Plan was approved too late to be effective, and actually it was never implemented. Nevertheless, the plan resulted from the considerable stimulus that came from the relations between Italy and the Arab countries, which still considered ENI a true economic interlocutor into the Mediterranean area. Mattei's legacy and Moro's pro-Arab attitude protected the Italian role into the Mediterranean where new challenges were taking shape. The Euro-Arab dialogue building-process, in which Italy could

²⁵⁷ E. Bini, A transatlantic shock: Italy's energy policies between the Mediterranean and the EEC, 1967-1974. p. 160.

²⁵⁸ On the Oil Plan: Sapelli, G. and Carnevali F. (1992). *Uno sviluppo tra politica e strategia: ENI (1953-1985)*. FrancoAngeli, Milano; Sapelli, G., (1993). *Nascita e trasformazione d'impresa. Storia dell'AGIP Petroli*. Il Mulino, Bologna.

play a pivotal role, had to come to term with the US intransigence that did not leave space for autonomous initiatives.

3.1.5 “The year of Europe” and the Euro-Arab dialogue: American ambitions and Italy’s Mediterranean illusions

Moro’s Mediterranean vocation emerged even in the Euro-Arab dialogue which took its early shapes in the late 1973. The dialogue was predicted to address energy matters and envisaged the EEC effort to develop shared policies. Around the same time, Kissinger was appealing for an energy action group and within a year, the International Energy Agency (IEA) would be created²⁵⁹. Kissinger’s proposal, a direct consequence of the 1973 oil shock, was also an instrument to improve the transatlantic relations that had deteriorated during the previous years. The Cuban Crisis, the Vietnam War, the end of the Bretton Woods Agreement, and the Watergate scandal fueled incomprehension and misunderstandings into the Atlantic sphere. In 1973, Kissinger strived for an inclusive energy dialogue that the US with the EEC should devise to talk to oil producer countries. Kissinger defined 1973 as *the year of Europe* and *the year that never was*. However, soon after the oil shock, the EEC members adopted an exclusive path to dialogue with the oil exporters. On 6th November 1973, the EEC members announced a conjoint declaration, which marked a political pro-Arab breakthrough in the EEC process-building. The EEC engaged in a common effort and proclaimed a resolution in support for a just peace between Israel and the Arab countries ²⁶⁰. On that context, in which Italy could play a pivotal role, Moro suggested the EEC should promote a cultural dialogue in the Mediterranean. The 6th November declaration produced multiple effects. The EEC avoided any further sanctions from the Arab producers, and triggered an adverse reaction on the part of the US, which blamed the EEC to seek their identity in opposition to the US²⁶¹. According to several scholars, the early stage towards the Euro-Arab dialogue laid in that resolution²⁶². In early December, meeting in Brussels, the Secretary of the State talking with Moro, criticized the EEC autonomous role and showed his concern about the Italian policies in the Mediterranean framework. The US felt excluded from the Euro-Arab dialogue and Kissinger suggested consumer countries to devise a comprehensive cooperation in the field of energy

²⁵⁹ Bini, E., Garavini G., and Romero, F. (2016). Oil shock. The 1973 Crisis and its Economic Legacy. I.B. Tauris, London. p. 142-144.

²⁶⁰ Labbate, S. (2016). Illusioni mediterranee: il dialogo euro-arabo. Le Monnier, Florence. 5-17.

²⁶¹ Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p. 196-197.

²⁶² On the Euro-Arab dialogue see Gfeller, A.E. (2012). Building A European identity: France, the US, and the oil shock 1973-1974. Berghahn Books, New York. Scott-Smith, G. and Aubourg V. (2011). Atlantic, Euratlantic, or Europe–America? Soleb, Paris.

policies²⁶³. He supposed that the glue element between the nine was to opposing the US. Moro stressed the crucial role Italy could play into the Mediterranean dialogue by working as a bridge between two worlds; essentially, according to Moro, there was no intention to erode the already complex relation between Italy and Europe on the one hand and the US on the other hand. Since that moment, Italy pursued a double-track strategy: playing a vital role inside the EEC by leading the Euro-Arab dialogue but not without keeping bilateral contacts with Arab countries²⁶⁴. The US suspicion pressed Kissinger to promote the Energy Action Group on 12th December 1973, aiming at hampering any further Euro-Arab dialogue which would exclude the US²⁶⁵. Few days later, the EEC pro-Arab attitude emerged even in the European Summit held in Copenhagen, where the EEC members endeavored to identify a common policy to face the energy crisis. The summit aimed at establishing shapes of cooperation and mutual aid on energy matters. That embryonal Euro-Arab dialogue was fully embraced by several Arab delegations taking part in the conference but it did not lead to a shared pro-Arab policy that the EEC members refused to adopt²⁶⁶. They feared that assuming a too anti-Israel approach could unleash the US reaction. The US suspicion to the EEC initiatives severely mounted. Kissinger did not appreciate differences within the Atlantic sphere in tackling the oil shock, since they looked like symptoms of internal weakness and rivalries. In Kissinger's view, the EEC's policies were challenging the US primacy, by leading to a strengthening of Soviet position internationally and to a radicalization of the Arab nationalism. The Energy Action Group was about to answer back to an independent approach that several western countries were prompting towards the Arab countries. Certainly, the US, exerting its influence on the EEC, limited the Euro-Arab effort that experienced ups and downs in the years later to fail in the late Eighties. However, it could not be a hazard supposing that the European cooperation on foreign policy developed especially in that period even though 1974 was considered the end of the EEC autonomous effort. It seems appropriate to briefly discuss how the Energy Action Group intersected with the Euro-Arab dialogue, in which Italy took part.

²⁶³ Ibidem, p. 198.

²⁶⁴ Garzia, I., Monzali, L., Imperato, F. (2013). Aldo Moro, l'Italia repubblicana e i popoli del Mediterraneo. Besa, Lecce. p. 90-91.

²⁶⁵ Hamilton, K. and Salmon, P. (2006). The year of Europe: America, Europe, and the Energy Crisis 1972-1974. Routledge, NY. p. 40-44.

²⁶⁶ The EEC members agreed on the willingness to develop a common foreign policy, keeping a proliferative dialogue with the US, and the need of opening for direct negotiations with oil producers. However, the conference did not reach the desired results in energy matters, the Europeans were still divided amongst themselves.

3.1.6 Not without the US: reshaping transatlantic relations after the oil shock

As part of the already mentioned Energy Action Group project, the US promoted an Energy Conference in Washington in February 1974. The conference aimed at defining a common response to energy problems, by sharing policies amongst consumer countries. To a certain extent, it was a testing-ground for transatlantic relations which let emerge Atlantic differences in dealing with the international oil crisis; not surprisingly, the European approach declined in favor of the US reassertion in leading new forms of cooperation across the Atlantic, which brought to the creation of the International Energy Agency (IEA). Indeed, 1974 has been considered as the final point of the EEC common effort to assert its own political presence on the international scene. The US could reassert the American primacy by benefiting from the economic and energy vulnerability of the EEC and the inner divergences that slowed the Euro-Arab dialogue building-process²⁶⁷. Indeed, in April 1974, the EEC members allowed for a mechanism of prior consultation with the US regarding all those sensitive international issues. Namely, the EEC gave up any independent ambition to devise autonomous Mediterranean and energy policies so as to not adopting unwelcome approaches to the US. That mechanism, that took name of Gymnich Compromise, marked the phasing out of all European aspiration in dealing with the energy matters on a common approach. In addition, the electoral victory of Harold Wilson, Helmut Schmidt e Valéry Giscard d'Estaing at the end of 1974, led to a more concrete Atlantic turn in the EEC dimension. All the expectations and ambitions matured in both the October 1972 Paris Summit and Copenhagen Conference declined in 1974, especially after the Energy Conference. After the Energy Conference, the EEC continued to promote a Euro-Arab dialogue, but excluded energy policies from its agenda. The US summit triggered adverse reaction on the part of the producer countries, who perceived the Conference as a rally against the producers. Italy, that took part in the Conference, stressed through its Minister of Foreign Affairs, that the meeting in Washington should not interfere with the activities promoted in Copenhagen. Here again, Moro carried out a double-track strategy. Primarily, during the Energy Conference he suggested to solve the oil crisis through international forms of cooperation between oil producers and oil consumers so to hold an Atlantic approach; second, he warned of the risk that the Energy Conference might lead producers to badly react because jeopardized from consumers, and kept his role in the Euro-Arab dialogue to not to lose the Arab countries confidence. However, the US suspicions to the European foreign ministers were increasing and Moro adopted a wary approach during the conference. He tried to stress

²⁶⁷ Garavini, G. (2012). *After Empires. European Integrati* G. Garavini, *After Empires. European Integration, Decolonization, and the Challenge from the Global South 1957-1986*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. p. 166.

the imminent need of cooperation amongst consumers and the role underdeveloped countries could play into the energy matters, especially after that they had established the Group of 77 inside the UN²⁶⁸. His themes remained marginal and unheeded, while interpreters refused to translate them. According to some scholars, the failure of the Italian politics laid in the Energy Conference: at the beginning, the US viewed Italy's participation especially important for its social and political instability, but finally Italy contribution provided for nothing and the country seemed unable of gaining a voice in the conference. Parallely, the US won its match by urging the EEC to build a common energy policy which had to replace any form of bilateral relations with single producers. The US pursued even bilateral relations, that, they said, could guarantee Western Europe security and prosperity without having to compromise with the Europeans²⁶⁹. The US strategy brought to the creation of the International Energy Agency which was built within the framework of the OECD, while the EEC attempt to emerge internationally as a unified political power began to decline. The Euro-Arab dialogue, prompted by France that took the lead on this matter, did not succeed for several reasons that deserve to be briefly addressed. The Euro-Arab dialogue did not collapse in 1974, several steps took shape in the years later. During different meetings in Paris, Dublin, Luxemburg, and Tunis European and Arab delegates framed the Euro-Arab cooperation that intersected with the changing Middle East. Paris, July 1974 gave life to the Euro-Arab collaboration by even establishing a permanent general Commission made up of the representatives of the 29 participating countries. Projects and collaboration areas had to be discussed into that framework but divergences emerged immediately. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue soon became the core of discussions; Arabs called for the European interest and diplomatic intervention in the matter whilst the EEC members wanted to distance themselves from the Palestinian issue so as to not triggering the US reaction. The Arab demand for the PLO involvement in the Euro-Arab dialogue led to incomprehension and slowdowns in the building-process which would have been overcome only with the Dublin Formula in the early 1975²⁷⁰. However, the relations between the Arab League and the EEC continued to experience ups and down, while the US pressures were mounting. The political fragmentation both inside the EEC and the Arab League emerged soon after the Camp David Agreement by triggering a stalemate in the process. To a certain extent, the Iranian revolution and the new oil crisis pressed the EEC to endeavor for

²⁶⁸ E. Bini, A transatlantic shock: Italy's energy policies between the Mediterranean and the EEC, 1967-1974. p. 159.

²⁶⁹ Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p. 202-203.

²⁷⁰ It allowed for an indirect involvement of Palestinians experts who would take part in the general Commission. Tonini, A. and Simoni, M. (2010). *Realtà e memoria di una disfatta. Il Medio Oriente dopo la Guerra dei Sei Giorni*. Firenze University Press, Florence. p. 218.

strengthening the dialogue. In 1980, excluded Egypt from conversations, the Arab League and the EEC re-opened for a dialogue which led to the Venice Declaration in June 1980. It implied the EEC official recognition of the PLO by claiming the Palestinians' right to self-determination, and the EEC economic support to the Palestinian people²⁷¹. The dialogue, that actually failed at the beginning of the Nineties, was stopped as a consequence of the unstable Middle Eastern context that divided the position of the EEC members, especially after the Gulf War. However, the Euro-Arab dialogue left a considerable legacy and cannot be considered a mere failure. After 1974, the Euro-Arab dialogue experience made the EEC aware on its limits and strengths. While not capable of being a special partner for the Middle Eastern and North African countries, the EEC realized the vital role it could played into the international arena. Indeed, during the Seventies the EEC established strong relations with several countries; it took part in the GATT negotiations and played a pivotal role in the ECSC dimension. The EEC experienced an institutional evolution especially after the establishment of the European Council, which represent a crucial step in the European integration process. Certainly, the US influenced the European path and deepened its role in the Mediterranean through the shuttle diplomacy Kissinger was implementing during the Seventies.

3.1.7 From the Shuttle Diplomacy to Camp David: not a new Middle East

After the Yom Kippur War, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger engaged in his shuttle diplomacy²⁷². The term refers to Kissinger's short flights among Middle East capitals in an effort to deal with the side effects of the October 1973 war. In late October, Israeli forces found themselves embroiled in a war of attrition with the Egyptian and Syrian forces; what a better time to intervene and consolidate the US power in the Middle East. Kissinger was presented with an opportunity to disengage armies from one another and attempting to lay the groundwork for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Nixon, who was invested of the Watergate affair, played a marginal role in the negotiation to follow before his resignation. Shuttle diplomacy is proper of Kissinger's capability of making belligerents talk to each other in order to get a compromise. The first shuttle occurred when Israel put forward a disengagement with the Egyptians on 4th January 1974. After such a proposal, Kissinger realized that it was time to engage in a thorough diplomacy between Egypt and Israel to negotiate for a lasting solution. Kissinger stopped in Aswan on 11th January, where the unfolding of negotiations took place. Negotiation would be

²⁷¹ Tonini, A. and Simoni, M. (2010). *Realtà e memoria di una disfatta. Il Medio Oriente dopo la Guerra dei Sei Giorni*. Firenze University Press, Florence. p. 225-226; Colonna Vilasi, A. (2013). *La Storia del Mossad. Servizi e Segreti*. Sovera Edizioni, Rome. p. 31-32.

²⁷² Bansidhar, P. (2001). *Shuttle Diplomacy and the Palestine question*. Kalinga Publication, London.

around three main topics: where the forward line of each army would be located; the size of the zones where armor was to be limited; and the types of armor to be limited in these zones²⁷³. Israel expected the reopening of the Suez Canal and guarantees for free Israeli passage through the Suez Canal, the Straits of Tiran, and Bab el-Madeb. In addition, Israel wanted Egypt to reconstruct cities along the Suez Canal so that the Egyptian civilian populations living there would risk any danger if Egypt started another war. The first agreement was reached on 18th January and established a U.N. buffer zone on the east bank of the Suez Canal to divide Egyptian and Israeli forces; on his part, Egypt agreed to several of the assurances that Israel had demanded. The first Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement is commonly known as Sinai I. Soon after its conclusion, Kissinger focused on Syria, the other country with armies embroiled with Israel's forces²⁷⁴. Negotiations for a Syrian-Israeli disengagement proved far more arduous than the Egyptian-Israeli ones and took much longer. Through the end of March, Kissinger met separately in Washington with Israeli officials and a Syrian emissary to discuss the groundwork for negotiations. Kissinger wanted to secure the oil embargo lifting on the part of the OPEC, and to get this he had to massively intervene with another shuttle. On 1st May, he left for Jerusalem to begin nearly a month of intense negotiations between the Israelis and Syrians. Syrians wanted the town of Quneitra returned as part of any agreement as well as the territory taken during the October war. Within a week, the Syrians and Israelis agreed with Kissinger to a line of disengagement. However, control of the disputed Quneitra led negotiations into a stalemate pressing Kissinger to offer an American proposal which actually both sides wanted to modify. Nearly a month of strenuous negotiations led Syria and Israel to sign a disengagement agreement. Around the same time, the Watergate affair was convincing many Americans that there was something wrong with the way the country was governed and to avoid Impeachment, Nixon resign the presidency on 9th August 1974; the Vice-President Gerald Ford replaced Nixon and kept Kissinger on board²⁷⁵. A few week later, on 28th October the Arab representatives announced a resolution according to which they recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people and affirmed its right "to establish an

²⁷³Web site of the Department of State, Office of the Historians, Foreign Service Institute. Milestones: 1969-1975. Shuttle Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974-1975. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/shuttle-diplomacy>.

²⁷⁴ Web site of the Department of State, Office of the Historians, Foreign Service Institute. Milestones: 1969-1975. Shuttle Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974-1975. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/shuttle-diplomacy>; Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO. p. 381-382.

²⁷⁵ Gerald Ford succeeded to Nixon in 1974 after the Watergate scandal and he was never elected because he was appointed after the death of the former Vice-President. The Ford years were described as the decline of the imperial policy. The US experienced the final defeat in Vietnam in 1975: the North invaded the South and the US did not intervene. Saigon, the capital of the South Vietnam, became Ho Chi Minh city. Another menace was the rise of the Soviet influence in the Mediterranean, which was the place through which the Asian products came to Western Europe.

independent national authority over all liberated territory²⁷⁶. A Jordanian-Israeli engagement seemed even harder to achieve. The Resolution forced King Husayn to turn to the PLO for engaging in future negotiations with Israelis over the West Bank and Jerusalem. But Israel was unwilling to talk with the PLO and by that time, Sadat took the initiative. Sadat pressed Ford and Kissinger to lead to a second agreement between Israel and Egypt over the Sinai. Kissinger was able to persuade the two parties to sign the document known as Sinai Interim Agreement or Sinai II signed on 4th September, which provided for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from western Sinai and a U.N. buffer zone put in the place of the Israelis. To a certain extent, Kissinger shuttle diplomacy allowed the US to play a lead role into the Middle East while the special relationship between the US and Israel was reconfirmed by an increase of the US military aid during 1974-1975. In the Middle East the true hero was Sadat, who basked in the popularity the Egyptians accorded him. Strengthened by his political triumph, Sadat promised to reconstruct the Egyptian economy by introducing proposals for partly dismantling the socialist system developed under Nasser. The new economic course was called al-Infitah, namely “the reopening” which turned out to be a failure. The Egyptian population took part in a devastating outbreak of antigovernment riots. Sadat answered back by calling in the army, at least 150 Egyptians were killed. Faced with domestic failure, Sadat renewed his diplomatic initiatives hoping that a resolution of the conflict with Israel would lead to an improvement in Egypt’s economic situation²⁷⁷. On 20th November 1977, Sadat traveled to Israel to begin direct negotiations with Prime Minister Begin and proclaimed to the Israeli parliament Egypt’s assent to the peace with Israel. His act made Egypt an outcast into the Arab world and let the US play as a third party. Negotiations proved far more challenging as Sadat wanted to get an agreement on a plan for the Middle East peace which also would include a resolution for the Palestinian issue. Palestinians’ self-determination issue remained a key stumbling block that pressed the then new President Jimmy Carter to invite Begin and Sadat to Camp David for talks²⁷⁸. In

²⁷⁶ Web site of the Department of State, Office of the Historians, Foreign Service Institute. Milestones: 1969-1975. Shuttle Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1975. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/shuttle-diplomacy>.

²⁷⁷ Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO. p. 383.

²⁷⁸ Few general considerations on Carter Presidency. Jimmy Carter was a re-born Baptist and he had a religious zeal. He was elected in November 1976. He was a local figure, being the governor of Georgia but he did not have national or international expertise. He was elected because there was a lack of tolerance towards the (corrupted) political establishment in Washington after the Watergate scandal. In addition, he shifted from the realism of Nixon and Kissinger and he resorted to the thoughts of Wilson around the idealism, or rather the use of moral values in foreign policy. He stressed the issue of human rights. Finally, he had a simple communicative strategy which turned out to be successful (“*You are good people, I am a good man. Just vote for me*”). The tension between idealism and pragmatism still remained during his presidency. The combination of these two theories were embodied by the two main foreign advisors: Brzezinski was the National Security Advisor, who was a cold warrior, harsh fighter against Soviet Union; Vance was the Secretary of State, who was a patient diplomat, more inclined to search compromise with Soviet Union. His mandate was remembered as bizarre because in foreign policy he tried to keep these two dimensions (cold war and diplomacy) together. Westad, O.A. (2017). *The cold*

September 1978, the three leaders engaged in intensive discussions, in which the US tried to find a middle ground between Sadat's desire for Palestinians' recognition rights and Begin's intransigent stance on the West Bank and Gaza Strip²⁷⁹. Discussions ended in Camp David Accords which the three leaders signed on 17th September, 1978. Camp David Accords set forth the conditions for an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and endorsed the 242 UN Resolution as the basis for a lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict²⁸⁰. It submitted a project for achieving Palestinian autonomy over a period of five years. However, the Accords were featured by vagueness and subject to differing interpretations as many UN Resolution turned out to be. Essentially, Israel won a final match in Camp David; Israel was presented with the opportunity to deal with the occupied territories as it saw fit and defeated a tangible plan for a Palestinian State. On 26th March 1979, signed a formal Egyptian-Israeli treaty in Washington, by exchanging Ambassadors during the following years and Israel began its withdrawal from Sinai that was over in 1982, with the US financial support. Israel withdrawal from Sinai but continued to exert control over West Bank and Gaza Strip not without urgings from Egypt and the US for implementing the peace framework. Essentially, Sadat had concluded a separate peace with Israel of which the Arab world was shocked. Increasingly, Sadat collected several enemies and the Islamic opposition mounted. He was condemned for having surrendered Jerusalem to the Jews by signing the Camp David Accords. In September 1981, he ordered the imprisonment of over 1,000 individuals suspected of plotting against the regime taking part in Islamic organizations. On 6th October, while he was celebrating the eight anniversary of the crossing and greeting its occupants, his gesture was returned with gunfire. Egypt was predicted to fall into the establishment of a proper Islamic state. Husni Mubarak, Sadat's vice president, replaced him. By then another Middle Eastern country, Iran, was ablaze with revolt.

War. A world history. Hachette Book Group, New York. p. 492-493; Little D. (2007). American Orientalism: United States and the Middle East since 1945. The University of North Carolina Press, US. p. 253-266; Di Nolfo, E. (2008). Storia delle relazioni internazionali. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 1232-1234; Valdevit, G. (2003). Stati Uniti e Medio Oriente dal 1945 a oggi. Carocci, Roma. p. 91-96.

²⁷⁹ Begin had no intention of leaving the West Bank and Gaza Strip, areas that Sadat wanted to discuss on.

²⁸⁰ Quandt, W. (2016). Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics. The bookings institution, Washington. p. 176-178; Cleveland, William L. (2004). *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder, CO. p. 384.

3.2 WHICH LEGACY?

3.2.1 The last phase of Moro's Mediterranean Détente: an overview

Until his kidnapping, Moro sought to deal with Mediterranean issues. In 1974, Moro assumed a lead role in the DC, especially after the Christian Democrats' defeat after the referendum on the divorce was voted. In December 1974, Moro became Prime Minister and the project for a more tangible cooperation and dialogue with the IPC was intended to take place²⁸¹. Moro deemed the dialogue with the ICP and its political endorsement particularly vital to cope with the Italian economic crisis and any issue concerning energy matters. When he addressed the Senate for putting forward the new government's guidelines on 2nd December 1974, Moro centered on the Euro-Atlantic collaboration, Détente, and cooperation with Third World countries. He welcomed the Greek and Portugal new political course and focused on the then Mediterranean crises, the Arab-Israeli conflict and Cyprus²⁸². As in many other speeches, Moro re-called for the integral application of the UN Resolution 242; he rejected any kind of territorial acquisition through force; and urged the recognition of Palestinians' right to own a homeland²⁸³. Moro encouraged a fair solution for Cyprus, respecting the Greek and Turkish communities'

²⁸¹ Ferraris, L. V. (1998). *Manuale della Politica estera italiana 1947-1993*. Editori Laterza, Bari. p. 289-290.

²⁸² Here, the Mediterranean transitions are briefly discussed just to give an overview concerning the Mediterranean context in the mid-Seventies. Transition in Southern Europe regarded Greece, Portugal, and Spain. 1974 was the crucial year. Since the Thirties, Portugal was governed by the dictatorial regime of Salazar and then by Caetano. It kept its colonies in Africa (Angola and Mozambique), meaning that it did not enter into the process of decolonization. In the first years of the Seventies the country was affected by an economic downturn associated to a political instability. On 25th April 1974 the Carnation Revolution took place. It was a pacific and leftist revolution, having two major goals: decolonization and democracy. However, the country was affected by a period of political chaos. The fear was that the Portuguese Communist party would lead the country towards Soviet Union, changing the status quo, because during the dictatorial regime the country was considered as a western ally. There was no evidence that the Soviet Union was planning a coup d'état in Portugal to put a puppet figure, but the West still posed a question around this perspective. Greece experienced the Colonels regime in 1967, which was supported by US and fell in 1974 after the failed invasion in Cyprus. One of the first decisions taken by the new leader Karamanlis was the withdrawal from NATO in order to discern itself from the previous regime. Spain suffered Francisco Franco regime. He was the dictator until 20th November 1975. Spain suffered a lack of democratization, in spite of an economic development. After the death of Franco, the opposition was headed by the leftists and the uncertainties surrounded King Juan Carlos. Over this context the EEC became the leading actor to solve these questions. It shared the same goals with US: political stability within Europe and the abortion of spill-over effect of the political instability. The means was the perspective of the European integration for Greece, Portugal and Spain. EEC realized to have a *soft power*, or rather power of economic attraction in order to support pro-Western European forces in those countries suffering a democratic transition (Greece, Spain, Portugal). The Foreign Relations of US is a volume containing the diplomatic documents of the Secretary of State. In a paper of December 15th 1975, the US, troubled by a crisis in the international relations, affirmed that it was no longer able to play the role of the security actor in the Mediterranean area and the EEC would have replaced them as the main security actor. Greece, Portugal and Spain applied for membership in 1975. Greece entered in 1981 whereas the other two countries joined the EEC in 1986. The European integration was not only based on the economic features but also on the political reasons. In sum, the Southern European transition was a test case for the soft power of the EEC. Here lies the democratic identity of the EEC because the European integration became the reference point for the parties in Southern Europe and covered the decline of US.

²⁸³ Garzia, I., Monzali, L., Imperato, F. (2013). Aldo Moro, l'Italia repubblicana e i popoli del Mediterraneo. Besa, Lecce. p. 37.

aspiration and protecting the sovereignty and independence of the Cyprus state. Even on that occasion, Moro continued to promote shapes of D  tente by bolstering multilateral cooperation among all States. Not surprisingly, Moro welcomed Vienna and Helsinki Conferences which addressed a range of prominent global issues as reduction of armed forces in Central Europe, security and cooperation all over the European continent. Moro saw fit to tie security and collaboration in Europe to security and collaboration in the Mediterranean: Europe and Mediterranean should be closer to one another to build serious relations and speaking the same language of cooperation. In 1975, when Moro became President of the EEC, he argued that Europe should follow up forms of economic cooperation not only with oil producing countries, but also with all developing nations²⁸⁴. Moro's Mediterranean vocation was expressed through dynamism in dialogues, meetings, and agreements signed with Arab countries. During the first half of the Seventies, Libya and Italy engaged in very proliferative economic dialogues which led to several agreements that involved ENI and in the same years, relations with Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia considerably intensified. The debates that accompanied the organization of the CSCE turned out to be a vital forum where to discuss issues concerning international cooperation in the field of energy resources, and link them to the process of D  tente²⁸⁵. Arab countries, especially Algeria, largely supported Moro's position, and it was in part thanks to him that North African countries had a voice at the Helsinki conference in 1975, through which to advance their own political and economic requests. In the Middle East, Moro campaigned for a lasting and sincere peace between Arabs and Israelis, moving many times his attention to the Palestinians status. Nevertheless, he had always recognized the existence of the state of Israel. Here is his equidistance strategy in the Mediterranean: Moro looked at the dramatic Palestinians' conditions by stressing their need for a homeland, and not only assistance; but he had never denied the Israel's right to exist. As part of his project to encounter Mediterranean D  tente, he endorsed the process of international cooperation between the two Superpowers and set forth his ideas during Helsinki Conference on 30th July, 1975²⁸⁶. Geographical proximity, historical tradition, and common interests were at the bases of the Italo-Arab dialogue that encouraged Moro to reassert the deep liaison that he perceived between Europe and the Mediterranean, by claiming the role that Italy had played and would play as a bridge between two worlds. In April 1976, Moro resigned and focused on international issues which affected the Italian domestic policy. On the one hand, the US and European Powers looked

²⁸⁴ E. Bini, A transatlantic shock: Italy's energy policies between the Mediterranean and the EEC, 1967-1974. p. 160-161.

²⁸⁵ Ibidem, p. 161.

²⁸⁶ On this matter: Cotey Morgan, M. (2018). The final act. The Helsinki Accords and the transformation of the Cold War. Princeton University Press, Princeton; Fry, J. (1993). The Helsinki Process negotiating security and cooperation in Europe. National Defense University Press, Washington.

suspiciously to the *Compromesso Storico* and Moro endeavored to convince the Atlantic allies to support the ICP involvement into the Italian government. On the other hand, he kept his interest to Mediterranean, especially in 1977 when, during a speech, he suggested Europe should extend to the Mediterranean²⁸⁷. Clearly, the European enlargement to the Mediterranean area did not have colonialist features, it simply would ensure a deeper integration between two worlds. A few weeks before his kidnapping, Aldo Moro set forth his profound awe to the Egyptian leader who was travelling to Jerusalem for opening negotiation with Israel. Moro interpreted Sadat choices as laying a middle ground between enemies to open dialogues for a peaceful settlement. Sadat initiative was considered innovative and might have paved the way for a concrete new course in the Middle East. Sadat had to come to terms with the Israeli intransigence and resistance that Moro condemned as they hampered a prove of courage on the part of Egypt. Although Moro's policies and Mediterranean plans remained partly misunderstood, they shaped the Italian foreign policy during the Seventies and left an indelible legacy.

3.2.2 1979: the changing Middle East and the collapsing Détente

By the Eighties, the Middle East was hardly hit by wrenching political and social changes, which affected the entire area and Cold War balances. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 encouraged those Muslims who were disenchanted with western models and led to a deep Islam revival against the reduced role of religion envisaged under Reza Shah²⁸⁸. Since 1975 Reza Shah's regime had suffered cracks in its structure: economic management failings, violations of human rights, and exasperation of absolutism features²⁸⁹. Public dissent mounted with spreading movement calling for Iran's national culture and freedom of press and assembly. In 1978, the moderate reformist movements turned into a popular Islamic revolution inspired by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Khomeini had distrusted Reza Shah's policies, he was twice arrested, and finally exiled to Turkey in 1964 and later to France. Even during his exile, he spoke out against the Shah by acquiring credibility. While Iranian economy was collapsing, urban working classes spread into streets to join students and merchants; they appealed for Khomeini's return. On 16th January, Reza Shah exiled in Egypt. Khomeini triumphed in Iran bringing to an end the Pahlavi dynasty. In its aftermath, the Iranian revolution led to another

²⁸⁷ Garzia, I., Monzali, L., Imperato, F. (2013). Aldo Moro, l'Italia repubblicana e i popoli del Mediterraneo. Besa, Lecce. p. 38.

²⁸⁸ On the Iranian Revolution and Islam revival: January, B. (2008). The Iranian Revolution. Twenty-First Century Books, Minneapolis; Ariomand, S. A. (1988). The turban for the Crown. The Islamic Revolution in Iran. Oxford University Press, 1988.

²⁸⁹ Cleveland, William L. (2004). A History of the Modern Middle East. Boulder, CO. p. 476.

increase in oil prices producing a massive fallout in the western economies and demonstrated to the US that a new pole was created: religion. Khomeini overcame the Cold War systems as he did not seek endorsement from any power. In November 1979 the US ambassador in Teheran Sullivan sent a telegram to Washington “*think the unthinkable*” because the traditional enemy was Soviet Union and the rise of its influence²⁹⁰. Herein, the enemy was the religious movements. Khomeini gave effect to this revolution against US and the West. The revolution was not in favor of Soviet Union and this cracked one of the pillars of the Cold War: it was a zero-sum game because one gains and the other loses. The Détente was based on the idea that nobody gains but in Iran the US lost its influence and an important partnership, but Soviet Union does not gain. A new factor emerged, the religion, which intervened in the bipolar equilibrium between two different ideologies. On the same November, Khomeini’s supporters occupied the US embassy in Tehran by taking diplomats in hostage. Khomeini did not hamper the occupation which undid Carter’s presidency. Hostages releasing was a mess since the American secret operations failed with several deaths. Faced with the damage of the US image, Carter lost the election that Ronald Reagan won, by promising to make America great again. Détente was predicted to collapse. In 1979, increasing tensions centered in Afghanistan where Cold War was about to unleash²⁹¹. In 1978, a military coup brought a Marxist party into power and a period of reforms was opened. The party, which worked closely to the Soviets, faced a vigorous Islamist rebellion staged by neighboring Pakistan and Iran. When the Afghan President, Taraki, was killed, Amin replaced him by leading the country²⁹². Soviet concerns increased due to the advancing Islamist guerrilla and the suspicions of Amin’s contacts with Americans. At the end of December 1979, the Soviet Union sent thousands of troops into Afghanistan and immediately assumed complete military and political control of Kabul and large portions of the country. USSR intervened to maintain a friendly and socialist government on its border by marking a watershed into the Cold War as the only time the Soviet Union invaded a country outside the Eastern Bloc. Carter underlined that the implication of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan could pose the most serious threat to the peace since the Second World War²⁹³. The administration

²⁹⁰ Sick, G. (1985). All fall down. America’s fateful encounter with Iran. I.B. Tauris & Co, London. p. 81-101.

²⁹¹ On the Afghani war: Fremont-Barnes, G. (2012). The Soviet-Afghan War 1979-89. Osprey Publishing; Braitwhaite, R. (2011). The Russian in Afghanistan 1979-89. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

²⁹² Halim Tanwir, M. (2012). Afghanistan: History, diplomacy, and journalism. BRIA in Holland, NL. p. 299.

²⁹³ The Invasion of Afganistan on the part of the Soviet Union allowed to challenge the USSR even in moral terms as Carter did previously. Indeed, Carter challenged the USSR on the human rights protection theme since 1975 and this passage deserves to be addressed. After the Helsinki Conference, there was the perception that Soviet Union was the winner but the stress on the human rights caused problems for Soviet Union. Indeed, Charter 77 was adopted Czechoslovakia and Andrei Sakharov opposed the nuclear proliferation. Also, in Moscow the Helsinki Watch Group was set up in order to monitor the compliance with provisions of the Final Act, empowered with limited capacities. Carter used the issue of the human rights in order to challenge the Soviet Union through the support to the Charter 77 or close relations with Alexander Ginzburg, one of the leading dissidents in Soviet Union or meetings with Andrei Sakharov, who was awarded with the Nobel Peace

enacted economic sanctions and trade embargoes against the Soviet Union, called for a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics, and stepped up its aid to the Afghan insurgents²⁹⁴. Washington was trying to make the Soviets' invasion in Afghanistan as brief as possible. Actually, the invasion lasted ten years before Moscow finally withdrew. In 1982, Reagan Administration massively engaged for the Afghan mujahedin armament to counter deployed Soviets forces; Reagan was aware of the Afghan Islamists' Anti-Americanism but they were the perfect last anti-Soviet bulwark in Afghanistan. The same context of indirect confrontation developed in the horn of Africa, Angola and Mozambique where the Cold War dramatically burned²⁹⁵. The

Prize in 1975, and with Bukovskij, another dissident within Soviet Union. This strategy of challenging Soviet Union through the human rights was influenced by Brzezinski. After the Helsinki Conference, another meeting was held in 1977 in Helsinki as a *Follow-up conference*. In this occasion, the US delegates attacked brutally Soviet Union, blaming it of violations of the human rights provisions. It was a public attack and Brezhnev was in crisis because he was used to talk with Nixon and Kissinger who were conservative as him, sharing common interests. He understood that the détente was no longer possible. Human rights were not compatible with the Soviet system because of the struggle between a liberal democracy and an authoritarian regime. The challenge was based on the violation of the real spirit of the Communist society. According to Isaiah Berlin, there were two concepts of liberty: in liberal democracy the core is the freedom *from* something, or rather freedom *from* the State, meaning that the individual has a private sphere which is protected from the interference of the State. Another kind is the freedom *of*, entailing that the individual is free when he is able to do something. This is the social or jacobinist version of freedom, in which one is free only if he participates actively in the public sphere. The discourse on human rights creates a sphere of protection from the State, going in the direction of the freedom *from*, which means that the individual has human rights which could not be affected by the government. However, the socialist view stressed the idea that the individual is free, being a member of the society. What matters is not the individual but the society whereas the liberal democracy stresses the individual over the society. The human rights became the challenge for Brezhnev more than nuclear weapons.

Westad, O.A. (2017). *The cold War. A world history*. Hachette Book Group, New York. p. 496-497.

²⁹⁴ Web site of the Department of State, Office of the Historians, Foreign Service Institute. Milestones:1981-1988. The Reagan Administration and Lebanon, 1981–1984. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1981-1988/lebanon>

²⁹⁵ Tensions in Africa contributed to deteriorate relations between Superpowers by producing an arrest of the Détente process. Here, a deepening on this matter. After the independence, Angola and Mozambique countries experienced a civil war between factions, supported by either East and West. The Soviet and US troops never fought one against each other but they supported distinct factions. In Angola Soviet Union supported the MPLA whereas US supported the UNITA. Also, Cuba led by Fidel Castro intervened in the war sending troops. According to the Communist bloc, these were wars of liberation and they represented an occasion for them to export socialism in Africa, making socialism a model for developing countries. The US was unable to prevent the victory of pro-Soviet forces because it wanted to avoid the spread of a new Vietnam, thus it did not intervene directly. However, after the defeat in Angola and Mozambique, the US became more sensitive to the African questions and the core of tensions shifted to Horn of Africa. There, a region at the borders between Ethiopia and Somalia, *Ogaden* represented the regional confrontation between Moscow and Washington. Until 1974, Ethiopia was a non-aligned country, led by a king Haile Selassie who took power after the end of the Italian colonial regime. On the other hand, Somalia was a close partner of the Soviet Union, being in a strategic position at the very entrance of the Red Sea (harbor of Berbera). In 1974 there was a coup d'état in Ethiopia and Haile Selassie was overthrown and a new leader took power, Mengistu, a radical Communist who wanted to change the Ethiopian foreign policy from non-alignment to the Soviet bloc. Castro and Brezhnev seized the opportunity because the support to the Ethiopian Communist government could be the starting point for the enlargement of the socialism in Africa. Mengistu became a close partner of Moscow. Though, Soviet Union was unable to maintain relations both with Ethiopia and Somalia because the two countries debated about the status of Ogaden, which was an Ethiopian region inhabited by Somali people. When Soviet Union turned to Mengistu, Somalia turned to US. A regional question turned out to be a Cold War tension. Soviet Union was very keen on helping Mengistu and in 1977 he sent troops and equipment in Ethiopia with the pressure of Castro. Somalian delegates met with US delegates on the strategy against Ethiopia. The US was somehow embarrassed because Brzezinski aspired to help Somalia due to economic reasons of securing the trade with the West; on the other hand, Vance was more cautious and sought for solutions instead of entering into a regional war. The fear was the transformation of that war in a new Vietnam, thus he persuaded Carter not to intervene in Somalia. Overall, US adopted an ambiguous attitude but in June 1977

Middle East encounter even other shapes of instabilities that involved Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran. In April 1981, the Israeli Air Force attacked Syrian forces in Lebanon to prevent them from capturing the strategic Sannin ridge. Syria answered back by deploying missiles that threatened Israel's ability to monitor PLO forces in Lebanon²⁹⁶. Fighting escalated between Israel and the PLO that July and the Reagan administration feared that Israel would invade Lebanon. To make matters worse, Palestinian militants shot the Israel's ambassador to the United Kingdom. Lebanon was at war. On 6th June, Israeli forces invaded Lebanon with the purpose of destroying the PLO bases in southern Lebanon. Actually, Israel aimed at destroying the PLO infrastructure in West Beirut and ensure a friendly and cooperative government. By the summer 1982, areas of PLO concentration faced air, sea, and land bombardments which affected civilian population. Reagan intervened by helping the Lebanese Government to take over West Beirut and negotiating Israeli and Syrian withdrawal. The PLO informed that they would leave Beirut if a multinational force deployed to supervise and protect Palestinian civilians. Reagan agreed to send a multinational force alongside French and Italian troops. By 1st September, the evacuation was ended and US forces withdrew. On 14th September, the pro-Israel Lebanese President was assassinated. Publicly stating to enter West Beirut for avoiding disorder, by 18th September it became clear that the Israelis had allowed units of the Phalange to enter the Sabra and Shatila camps and massacre Palestinian civilians²⁹⁷. An international outcry ensued, and Reagan decided to commit Marines to a new multinational force. On October 28, Reagan called for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon, to help rebuilding the Lebanese Army, and contribute to an expanded multinational force if necessary²⁹⁸. Negotiations among belligerents took time and convinced Reagan to withdraw the Marines in 1984 when stability into the area remained an open issue. As Nixon did before, Reagan worked to mediate but gave once it did not make sense to sacrifice American lives to help to resolve a conflict where the parties

Somalian troops invaded Ogaden. The lack of a clear position was interpreted as a greenlight from the part of US. Washington drew back and it did not follow the Somalian military invasion, seeking for persuading other countries to intervene in that region. On the other hand, Soviet Union engaged massively in that conflict together with Cuba. The position of Cuba caused a dilemma on US: on one hand, if US had not protest against the involvement of Cuba in the conflict, it would have been criticized of passivity; on other hand, if US had protest, it would have been accused of powerlessness. US also offered through a secret channel to lift the economic embargo in the island, but Castro refused because he really felt the obligation to struggle for the African people. The war ended in 1978 with the victory of Mengistu and the preservation of Ogaden in the Ethiopian territory. This war marked a decrease in the US prestige whereas the Soviet prestige increased. In that period, Soviet Union was considered a rising power whereas US was a declining power.

²⁹⁶ Web site of the Department of State, Office of the Historians, Foreign Service Institute. Milestones:1981-1988. The Reagan Administration and Lebanon, 1981–1984. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1981-1988/lebanon>.

²⁹⁷ Nuwayhed al-Hout, B. (2004). Sabra el Shatila: September 1982, Pluto Press.

²⁹⁸ Web site of the Department of State, Office of the Historians, Foreign Service Institute. Milestones:1981-1988. The Reagan Administration and Lebanon, 1981–1984. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1981-1988/lebanon>.

involved showed little interest in working toward U.S. goals. However, others claim that Reagan failed to stand firm against terrorism and demonstrated that the United States was an undependable ally. Over the Eighties, the Iraq-Iran war contributed to challenge the stability into the Middle East²⁹⁹. The war, beginning with an Iraqi surprise-attack, was extremely championed by the oil Companies which sought to weaken the two main oil producers to get benefit from their instability. Saddam Hussein, a product of the American policy to contain the revolutionary Iran, attacked Iran to seize the area of Shat El-Arab, a vital hub to control oil routes. The war, that did not really go anywhere, was indeed a war of attrition in which the Superpowers supported military both sides indifferently. The changing Middle East and the great American activism pressed Italy to take a stance in the years of turmoil.

3.2.3 Italy in the Eighties: realigning to the US?

While keeping element of continuity, the Italian political framework experienced a considerable evolution between the Seventies and the Eighties. As it was briefly addressed, 1969 was characterized by a challenge to the Christian Democratic Party, unable to solve the economic and political crisis. The crisis of the latter was associated by a rise of the Communist Party with a new leader Enrico Berlinguer. He was aware of the necessity of a dialogue between the two major parties in order to face the economic and social challenges. Berlinguer also believed that the Communist Party shall renew its international image since by the WWII the Italian Communist party followed the guidelines of Moscow, being considered as an orthodox party. Berlinguer supposed the Communist Party should change its attitude towards West by fostering Eurocommunism; communism could not be exported without taking into account the national peculiarities, and elements of western democracy shall be included into Eastern European Communist parties. In addition, he showed a support to the European integration due to the benefits Italian workers could enjoy. This was instead opposed by Moscow because it seemed taking the features of an imperialistic plan of US in Italy. In the interview to *Corriere della Sera* in 1974, Berlinguer affirmed that he would not spur the withdrawal from NATO, should instead the Italian Communist Party have been included in the government coalition. Kissinger feared that the involvement of Communist Party in the government would have allowed it to accede to national security documents regarding the Atlantic Alliance and its defensive strategy so as to leave Italy more vulnerable to the USSR. Nixon administration decided to intervene.

²⁹⁹ The following book deepens the Iraq-Iran war: Ashton, N. and Gibson, D. (2013). *The Iran-Iraq War. New international perspectives*. Routledge; Kaikobad, K. H. (1988). *The Shat al-Arab Boundary Question: A legal Reappraisal*. Clarendon Press.

Gladio, a secret organization, was financed by the US in order to promote activities which sought for preventing Communist Party from entering into government. In early 1976, Giovanni Leone, the President of the Republic, was forced to call a national election; in the major western capitals it was thought that the Italian Communists would win and come to power through legal means³⁰⁰. Christian Democrats gained about 37% and stepped out of the election as the main party against the Communist Party 33%, which by the way reconfirmed its strength. However, Berlinguer Eurocommunist line and the overture to European integration did not persuade the West about an Italian government involving the Communists, as they were perceived a Communist threat. During an informal meeting in Puerto Rico, the leaders of France, Germany, Britain, and the US assented for preventing any direct involvement of the communists in future Italian governments by linking the western financial support to Italian economy with the exclusion of the ICP from governmental responsibilities. The then cabinet, formed by Andreotti, drew on the abstention of the ICP. In late Seventies, Italy suffered domestic turmoil with bloody terrorism and economic troubles but the US attention was less focused on Italy; it was moving to other matters as the protection of human rights since Carter Presidency aimed at turning on moral values in foreign policy. Indeed, Carter abstained from massive intervention in other countries' domestic affairs by warding off any intransigent attitude. In addition, Giulio Andreotti denied any direct communist participation in his government by appeasing concerns into the Western Sphere. Even after Moro's murdering, Andreotti was able to limit any direct Communist participation in the creation of a national unity government. Moro's kidnapping and murdering in 1978, signed a watershed into the Italian domestic and foreign policy. Above all, Berlinguer Historical Compromise was never accomplished and to a certain extent, Italy's Mediterranean vocation would realign to the US policies. Indeed, when Francesco Cossiga, a vigorous pro-Western Christian Democrat, led the cabinet to follow, he turned to a full realignment with the West, by assenting NATO's 'dual-track' strategy implying the installation of Euromissiles on Italian territory³⁰¹. Communists opposed to the Atlantic strategy, but acting this way make them outcast. In 1979 general election, the ICP was partially defeated, and in the years to follow, the collapsing Détente episodes laid the groundwork for the creation of a new five-party center-left coalition which took the name of *Pentapartito*³⁰². Christian Democrats which exerted a lead role into the *Pentapartito* had to come to terms with the smaller parties which were increasing their political power. Into this new political entity, some exponents

³⁰⁰ Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p. 102.

³⁰¹ Ibidem, 103.

³⁰² Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p. 105.

emerged vigorously to take even part in the international area. Sandro Pertini was elected president of the Republic in 1978; Giovanni Spadolini, who was a convinced pro-Western politician and was the head of the cabinet in 1981 and 1982; the Socialist Bettino Craxi, who was chairman of the Council between 1983 and 1987, and Andreotti, Foreign Minister between 1983 and 1989 and head of the cabinet between 1989 and 1992 drew the attention the international role that Italy could play especially into the mangled Mediterranean context.

3.2.4 Italy between shapes of Mediterranean Détente and American Globalism

Unlike the previous American administration, Reagan entangled counterterrorism with Cold War balances. Faced with the increasing international terrorism, Reagan wanted to show American strengths by challenging the new threat and the USSR which was supposed to sponsor terroristic associations in the world³⁰³. The first Reagan Presidency was centered on some key items: tough rhetoric, military build-up, confrontational policy, and regional conflicts. Italy, entangled in the new American course, continued to inherit Mattei's and Moro's efforts to dialogue with the Middle Eastern and North African countries for building constructive relations. However, by the Eighties, Italy and its political exponents backtracked by partly resorting to the double equidistance strategy that fell apart during the Seventies. Indeed, during the first half of the 1980s, the Italian governments led by Spadolini and Craxi endorsed the Euromissiles installation at the Sicilian base of Comiso; symptom of true loyalty to NATO. Certainly, Reagan intransigence made the US move through unilateral decision not caring about Italian interests and expectations on common issues. Mediterranean remained an open question and a contended zone, where the US and Italy were perceived as separated and mostly differentiated actors who essentially shared the fear of a military and political Soviet raising in the area. Italy continued to view the Arab-Israeli conflict as the root of any political instability in the Middle East which was far more vulnerable to Soviet influence and Jihadist feelings. In light of this, Italy, unlike Americans, had truly and explicitly defended the rights of the Palestinian people by affirming its stance in bilateral talks and public speeches and consolidating relationships. Once again, Italy attempted to work as a bridge: talking with Yasser Arafat meant giving shapes of recognition to the PLO by involving the US more closely to the Mediterranean dynamics. Such shapes of legitimization to PLO would allow the US to increase its mediator role to led to a peaceful solution into the mangled area. Italy, strongly believed in the power that the US could exert on belligerents especially after Kissinger shuttle diplomacy

³⁰³ Soave, P. (2017). *Fra Reagan e Gheddafi. La politica estera italiana e l'escalation libico-americana degli anni '80*. Rubettino, Bologna. p. 70-75.

and Carter efforts. Although they did not provide for a lasting solution, those initiatives presented the US with an opportunity to appease the conflict so as to ensure a channel of communication with the Middle East. Italy's equidistance between Mediterranean autonomous initiatives and the US loyalty remained a constant element of the Italian foreign policy even during the Eighties, when, despite Reagan's suspicions against the PLO, the US did not hinder the Italian dialogue with Arafat. Indeed, the PLO could set up an unofficial diplomatic representation in Rome. However, Rome and Washington would compete on other fields. As it was explained, the Reagan administration dealt with many foreign policy issues as affairs in and around Southwest Asia that continued to present multiple challenges. The Lebanese civil war, strained relations with Iran, and increasing tensions after the bombing of Libya in retaliation for a state-sanctioned terrorist attack in Berlin represented foreign policy focuses that the White House could not elude³⁰⁴. Finding a middle ground with the US to deal with Muammar Ghaddafi was not effortless for Italy. As it was explained, building a peaceful dialogue with Libya took time especially since Ghaddafi saw fit to expel Italians leaving there. However, more than other countries Italy was capable of handling relation with an unscrupulous interlocutor. Dialogue turned into agreements that Italy signed since Libya satisfied Italian economic and energy interests. However, Ghaddafi was said to concretely endorse extremist and anti-western terrorist groups, an aspect that Italy refused to see in order to keep a proliferative dialogue with the oil exporter. The US approached differently. It is not clear what Libya was for the US, according to some scholars it was a way to overcome the Vietnamese trauma³⁰⁵. Libya was the suitable enemy for the US into the Cold War: a preemptive strike against that country which had supported terroristic attacks against American would reach a broad consensus³⁰⁶. The US adopted a coercive diplomacy against Libya which Italy distrusted by following a very cautious policy³⁰⁷. When the US diplomatic and economic sanctions against Libya turned into military initiatives in early Eighties, Italy informed Ghaddafi about a plan to bomb the building in which he was hosted³⁰⁸. Around the same time, Italy strengthened his relation even with Iraq which received tangible aid from the West to contain the Iranian

³⁰⁴ Web site of the Department of State, Office of the Historians, Foreign Service Institute. Milestones:1981-1988. The Reagan Administration and Lebanon, 1981-1984. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1981-1988/lebanon>.

³⁰⁵ Mead, W.R. (2005). *Il serpente e la colomba. Storia della politica estera degli Stati Uniti d'America*. Garzanti, Milano; La Feber, W. (1994). *The American age: United States foreign policy at home and abroad: 1750 to present*. Norton, New York.

³⁰⁶ Toaldo, M. (2013). *The origins of the US war on terror. Lebanon, Libya, and American intervention in the Middle East*. Routledge, London. p. 125-154.

³⁰⁷ Zimmerman, T. (1994). *The limits of Coercive Diplomacy*. Westview Press, p. 204-228. The coercive diplomacy aimed at inducing Ghaddafi to repudiate terrorism or leading to the fall of the regime.

³⁰⁸ Varsori, A. Zaccaria, B. (2018). *Italy in the International System from Détente to the End of the Cold War*. Effie G.H. Pedaliu LSE Ideas London, UK. p. 109. According to some scholars, Craxi's government had informed Ghaddafi's of the US plan.

threat. Through ENI, Italy was capable of maintaining good relations with historical countries as Egypt and Northern African countries and it continued to work as a bridge by strengthening the western position into the Mediterranean. In 1982 -1983, Spadolini government join the multinational peace force promoted by the US and France by sending an Italian contingent to Lebanon. Unlike those of the USA and the French, the Italian contingent appeared to be truly neutral among the various Lebanese and foreign fighting factions, and their presence was effectively limited to peace-keeping³⁰⁹. The most challenging episode that impacted on the US-Italy relations seemed to be the well-known 'Sigonella affair'³¹⁰. In October 1985, Italian cruise ship 'Achille Lauro', was hijacked by a group of Palestinians in the Mediterranean. Negotiations to free hostages started immediately among Craxi, Mubarak, and Abu Abbas, a representative of the radical front of the PLO, who actually encouraged the hijacking. An agreement was later reached between the Italian government and the Egyptian authorities: the passengers and crew of the 'Achille Lauro' would be freed, and the terrorists, accompanied by Abu Abbas, would be allowed to reach an Arab country from Egypt by air. However, during the hijacking an American-Jew was killed by terrorist and when the Reagan administration was informed of that murder, it decided to capture not only the terrorists but also Abu Abbas. The US fighter planes forced the Egyptian aircraft to land at Sigonella in Sicily where the US Delta Force immediately intervened by surrounding the aircraft. Here, Craxi could not tolerate such breach of Italian sovereignty that resulted from that operation. Craxi ordered that the terrorists would be taken into Italian custody and the US Delta Force found in turn surrounded by Carabinieri Unit. Sigonella could become an armed conflict. Reagan backtracked and let the three terrorists would taken into custody by the Italian authorities while Abu Abbas was released in Yugoslavia. Certainly, by those days the relations between Italy and the US freeze but the crisis did not produce a fallout in the long term. After Sigonella, Craxi's consensus found its apex and he was also supported by the majority of the parties who appreciated Craxi's strong defense of Italy's national pride. Only two months later, on 27th December 1985, Italy was hit by a terroristic attack. The Israeli El Al airlines and the American TWA check-in were the targets: four Arab gunmen fired and threw grenades, they killed 16 persons and injured 77. A simultaneous attack occurred in Vienna by adopting similar way to act. According to some sources, Abu Nidal Organization staged the attacks. Why choosing Rome and Vienna remained a mystery, but it could not be a hazard supposing that the Airlines check-in mattered, not the cities to hit. Certainly, after the attacks, the Reagan's war on terror was exacerbated and

³⁰⁹ Ibidem, p. 109.

³¹⁰ On Sigonella Affair see Craxi, B. (2015). *La notte di Sigonella. Documenti e discorsi sull' evento che restituì orgoglio all' Italia*. Mondadori, Milano; Cassese, A. (1989). *Terrorism, Politics, and Law: the Achille Lauro Affair*. Polity Press, Oxford.

perceived as the final round to overcome the Cold War. Reagan answered back to terrorism by implementing a global diplomatic and public affairs campaign to isolation³¹¹ which escalated into the El Dorado Canyon Operation³¹². Here, the US defended its position by asserting that it was a legitimate exercise of self-defense. The operation took place in the mid-April 1986, few days later the TWA from Rome to Athens hijacking and a terrorist attack in Berlin. Since the beginning, Craxi rejected any shape of military retaliation since it would force other Arab countries to flank Libya and condemn the US attack. Italians living in Libya would suffer a significant fallout by risking to be killed during bombings. Italy France and Spain denied the US fighters the military bases to allow bombings in Libya and finally fighters take off from Britain³¹³. Ghaddafi answered back by launching missiles to the NATO Loran military base in Lampedusa, missiles fall in sea. Once again, El Dorado Operation demonstrated to Craxi that the US went head through unilateral decisions regardless of Atlantic allies' opposition. The US, by acting unilaterally, had jeopardized Mediterranean security. The European Parliament censored the US operation which was considered unfair and exorbitant. However, Craxi and the EEC members as well, blamed the Libyan missiles episode, especially in the Luxemburg Summit when they condemned the State Terrorism adopted by Ghaddafi. The EEC took the distance from the US and its members shared a position on dealing with a Mediterranean crisis. On that occasion, the EEC resulted unified and in open opposition to the US approach.

3.2.5 What is left?

The American unilateral decisions and the raid against Ghaddafi showed the EEC weakness to the great influence that the US still exerted on Europe. In Tokyo Summit 1987, to which industrialized countries took part, Libya was defined as clearly involved into international terrorism and it was unanimously condemned. However, Italy could not remove its dialogue with Libya, and on the contrary, Andreotti saw fit that Italy would keep tabs on Libya by keeping relations so as to prevent radical or Soviet derives. However, Moscow seemed no longer capable of increasing its influence in Libya and did not present a major concern for the US. Rather, the US recommended to undertake commercial isolation of the regime to possibly let to its fall. Craxi and Andreotti, who feared a power vacuum, opposed the tightening of the embargo, the resulting isolationism, and the potential fall of the regime. The Iran-Contra Affair,

³¹¹ Soave, P. (2017). Fra Reagan e Gheddafi. La politica estera italiana e l'escalation libico-americana degli anni '80. Rubettino, Bologna. p. 121-122.

³¹² Venkus, R. (1992). Raid on Qaddafi. The untold Story of History's Longest Fighter Mission By the Pilot Who directed It St. Martin's Press, NY. p. XIII.

³¹³ Soave, P. (2017). Fra Reagan e Gheddafi. La politica estera italiana e l'escalation libico-americana degli anni '80. Rubettino, Bologna. p. 136.

tarnishing the Reagan Doctrine, made the US more vulnerable to moral critics which Andreotti moved: he wrote that the war on terrorism required a serious commitment which did not leave room for sagging³¹⁴. However, the 1988 Lockerbie plane crash isolated Libya internationally and consolidated a western realignment. Nevertheless, Italy proved to be capable of preserving and defending a vital dynamism in the Mediterranean by carrying out its own foreign policy. Moro's Mediterranean Détente dragged on for years, even after his death. Certainly, Enrico Mattei laid the groundwork for a very embryonal Mediterranean Détente that was later upheld by Aldo Moro and other Italian leaders. Mediterranean dialogues centered on energy, economic but also political matters through the role of mediator which Aldo Moro played into the Arab-Israeli conflict. Mattei and Moro proved to exert a bold policy, which tried to dodge the Cold War constraints. Perhaps, Moro more than Mattei, was forced to adopt a double equidistance so as to not jeopardizing Italy's position inside the Atlantic alliance. Nevertheless, Italy endeavored to protect his Mediterranean foreign policy by extending the dialogue proper of the Détente to the mangled Mediterranean context.

³¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 160.

Conclusion

Ultimately, was the Mediterranean Détente successful? In answering this question, some remarks are required. The process of Mediterranean Détente is intended as a purely Italian effort to enhance a foreign policy strategy which has its roots in the Fifties. It was promoted by a country that lost the war and that was gradually included in the Atlantic sphere. Mediterranean Détente was a political ambition that Italy tried to protect vigorously, in spite of the Cold War constraints. The Mediterranean Détente succeeded in making an impression in Italy and in producing effects in the Cold War system. Italy played a political, economic, and energy role in the mangled and contended Middle East and North Africa, by raising suspicions and reactions on the part of the Atlantic Powers. However, the Mediterranean Détente did not succeed in building a dialogue between the Atlantic Powers as a whole and the Arab countries. Talking with one voice to the Middle East and North Africa seemed arduous: Atlantic Powers had different interests in the Mediterranean and Arab countries perceived Western States as separated actors. Partly, Mediterranean Détente remained a process which saw involved especially Italy and the Arab countries. The US limited and criticized several Italian initiatives and hampered the Euro-Arab dialogue. As a Super Power in the Cold War, the US interfered in any initiative that could jeopardize the American primacy in dealing with those contended and vulnerable areas. Indeed, according to the US, Mediterranean Détente between the West and the Middle Eastern and North African countries was no longer possible if led by Italy. In spite of Cold War constraints and Atlantic encroachments, two Mediterranean players did not fear to enhance a pro-Arab policy. Mediterranean Détente was shaped especially by two political actors who had several elements in common. Enrico Mattei and Aldo Moro led a revolutionary wave in dealing with the Arab countries. They both shaped the Mediterranean Détente: while Mattei focused on the energy and economy side, Aldo Moro centered on developing a political dialogue with the Middle East and North Africa. Besides building dialogues, they both created bridges through agreements between Italy and countries featured by political instabilities. They both defended an autonomous foreign policy, by challenging Cold War balances. They both benefited from the Cold War phases and evolution. Mattei took advantage from Decolonization, the spreading Arab nationalism, the short-sighted western policies in the Mediterranean, the Suez Crisis, and finally the Seven Sisters aggressive policy. Mattei endeavored to support the process of decolonization by giving countries assistance in managing their own resources to foster economic development. Mattei intersected his energy policies with the need of those countries of recent independence or looking for independence. Mattei was not afraid of

criticizing the Western Seven Sisters and the Western Powers, especially after the Suez Crisis. He strongly believed that a small country with no raw materials could become great.

Aldo Moro took advantage from the period of global transition the world was experiencing, the considerable international issues that gripped the Superpowers, and the resulting increasing relaxation in relations between the two Blocks and in Europe. Moro tried to extend Détente to the Mediterranean and acted as a mediator in the Middle East, by intersecting his policies with the escalating Arab-Israeli conflict and the energy issues in the oil decade. Not surprisingly, Moro, benefiting from Mattei's legacy, alongside with ENI strengthened Italy's relations with several oil producing countries. Moro's dynamism in the Mediterranean was also eased by the well pronounced stance he took in addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moro focused on the Palestinian refugee issue by remarking that Palestinians with their own organization were political entities and they did not expect shape of assistance but a political recognition. Mattei and Moro adopted a multi-table approach by containing the US suspicions and keeping the Mediterranean policies alive. However, Mattei and Moro approached differently in enhancing the Mediterranean Détente. Mattei felt less conditioned by the Cold War constraints, while Moro was forced to adopt a double equidistance-strategy that was actually abandoned after 1973. His equidistance-strategy declined after the Yom Kippur War and in spite of a severe American criticism he assumed a clearer pro-Arab policy, strengthening bilateral contacts with several Arab countries in 1974. His Mediterranean foreign policy had lasting effects in Italy and the Mediterranean vocation remained vigorous even in the Eighties. Both Mattei and Moro presented Italy with the opportunity to emerge in the Cold War as a country which could build dialogues with the Middle East and North Africa regardless of borders and sphere of influence. They both implemented a too bold policy and, to a certain extent, they collected several enemies. Finally, they both shared a mysterious and tragic end of their life and it will remain a mystery how they would have carried on the Mediterranean Détente in the years to follow.

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Summary

Enrico Mattei and Aldo Moro: shaping the Mediterranean Détente in the Cold War

On 27th October 1962, Enrico Mattei died in a plane crash. The circumstances of the crash are still a mystery. The man, who turned ENI into a world force also led Italy to play a pivotal and autonomous role in the Middle East and North Africa, challenging not only the oil Companies, but also the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Enrico Mattei figured out the importance of engaging in constructive dialogues with several Middle Eastern and North African countries, making the dialogue across the Mediterranean a purely Italian initiative. Mattei, alongside several Christian Democrat leaders, aimed to ensure a place for Italy in the post-war oil order and endeavored to pursue bilateral relations with producer countries. That Mediterranean dialogue would turn out to be the embryonal stage of a longer path which would form the shape of a Mediterranean Détente in the late Sixties. Mediterranean Détente is a deeply rooted strategy whose evolution begins with an energy dialogue between Italy on the one hand and Middle Eastern and North African countries on the other hand. The early stages of the Mediterranean Détente and the figure and choices of Enrico Mattei deserve a deepening in order to better explain how Italy behaved in finding its place in the oil market.

The oil market evolution and the increasing relevance of oil in all industrialized countries paved the way for a new era based on a race to monopolize natural resources and, in the early Twentieth century, Middle Eastern and North African countries, as oil-rich zones, turned out to be the centre of attraction for world Powers and mighty Companies, the so-called Seven Sisters. The Seven Sisters were as a State within a State. They had established a monopolistic cartel so as to handle their business with no limits by defining oil purchasing and selling prices. By directly managing oil resources in Middle Eastern and North African countries, the Seven Sisters maximized profits and laid down oil rules. Concurrently, subtle shapes of western imperialism continued to exist in the Mediterranean during the Cold War and Italy was presented with the opportunity to play a lead role in encouraging colonies toward national independence, by giving them economic support. Indeed, in the early Fifties, Mattei was able to take advantage of the spreading Arab nationalism and the increasing decolonization process that undermined western imperialism. The Arab nationalist revolutions, which drove transformations in the political landscape, firmly jeopardized western interests in the Mediterranean. The process of decolonization intersected with the Italian approach to the post-war oil order, that was devised by Enrico Mattei. Mattei, condemning the abuse and the

imperialistic attitudes by Western oil Companies, embraced the Arab cause and supported the Arab countries energy and economic growth, possibly laying the groundwork for further steps to free Middle Eastern and North African countries from the Seven Sisters grip. Mattei wanted to give Mediterranean countries a voice in the petroleum order, promoting collaboration with them to increase their earnings, boosting Arab nationalism feelings, which helped the decolonization process at the expense of the imperialist Powers. After ENI's creation with the 136 Institutive Law on 10th February 1953, Mattei had a powerful instrument to make Italy less dependent on the multinational oil cartel and sought to enter into a tug of war between oil producer countries and oil Companies, exploiting the western imperialism crises in North Africa and Middle East. The October 1956 Suez Crisis signed a watershed in the history of ENI into the Mediterranean: the crisis triggered the Anglo-French retreat from the Middle East and allowed for a more autonomous course of the Italian foreign policy in the Mediterranean. After the Suez Crisis, Italy established a favoured channel of communication with Egypt and strengthen its anti-colonialist image so as to become an even more valid and sincere interlocutor for the Arab world. The Crisis put the western oil Companies on the defensive and made ENI capable of challenging even the oil cartel order. ENI's autonomous policy took place in that context and found its apex with the revolutionary *75-25 Mattei Formula* which broke the oil order equilibrium. Mattei began talking to Iran in 1957, by introducing his *Formula*. Till that moment, the fifty-fifty formula regulated the oil concessions order, according to which the oil producer country kept just the half of the profits from the oil sales and could not exert any power on the Companies which operated on the soil of the oil producing country. Mattei formula was revolutionary for two main reasons. Primarily, it crushed the fifty-fifty formula allowing the oil producing countries to gain the 75% of the profits coming from the oil sales. Second, it provided for the establishment of a mixed society made up of the foreign oil Company and the granting authority, which was actively involved in the exploration and production of oil and in exploiting activities. The oil producer country worked alongside with ENI and it was then allowed to acquire a technological know-how functional to carry out more autonomous researches and production activities on its territory. Mattei formula gave the oil producer country the opportunity to break free from the Western oil Companies' technological monopoly and to play a role in controlling oil production. The revolutionary formula was extended to Egypt, Iraq, and several North African countries. The relations between Italy and the Middle East were plain to all yet in the fifties. Mattei created a transactional system which was intended to produce long-term effects in the post-war oil order and in the Italian foreign policy. In the wake of the Mattei Formula, the oil producing countries perceived Italy as a country campaigning for their economic development, emancipation, and political

independence. One can argue that Mattei encouraged the exporters' consciousness about their power and helped them to free from the oil Companies. Not by chance, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was founded in 1960, by calling for a system of regulation in oil production to counter the monopoly of the oil cartel. To a certain extent, OPEC dissolved the constraints of post-war neocolonialism that found Western Powers still manipulating the Arab affairs. Soon after the creation of OPEC, Mattei thought that a new organization of oil consuming countries should be created to negotiate with OPEC for granting western interests. National governments had to coordinate their oil policies in a new Western organism, speaking the same language to the oil exporting countries. Mattei's proposal hampered the power of the Majors and fell on deaf ears by the western countries. Nevertheless, Mattei engaged in an intensive dialogue with OPEC, making Italy closer to the Middle East and North Africa. His dynamism grew up quickly in the late Fifties, by defending the independence and the resources of Arab countries. Italy, which through ENI flanked oil producing countries in boosting their economic development, wanted to be a Mediterranean bridge and a mediator between the Arab leaders and the Atlantic alliance. However, the US had always looked suspiciously to ENI autonomous policies in the Middle East and North Africa: indeed, Americans and British protested to Italy after the implementation of the 75-25 formula, by alerting that subverting the fifty-fifty formula rule would have harmed the political stability of the Middle East. Mattei, who acted according to specific needs he had to satisfy and sought to take advantage from the international context, did not care about the Cold War constraints, and challenged the US oil politics and supremacy. The US feared that ENI and the revolutionary formula might encourage oil-producing countries to become even more autonomous challenging western petroleum interests. In addition, after ENI signed an agreement with the USSR in 1959, the US supposed Mattei's ambitions could pose Italy into a position of subservience to the Soviet Block. Not surprisingly, Mattei collected several enemies during his career. Nevertheless, he neither denied nor abandoned his project of leading Italy to defend an area of great interest where it could play an exclusive role. Mattei, capable of affecting the Italian political scenario, could often rely on the DC political exponents who strengthened Italy's pro-Arab image, especially Fanfani's Neo-Atlantic leadership. Neo-Atlantism was the attempt to realise a twin strategy - both Mediterranean and Atlantic - now possible to be achieved thanks to the Italian economic recovery sped up by ENI's investments both in Italy and abroad. But Mattei's autonomous initiatives had never fitted with the US, and the Atlantic Powers limited Italian ambitions in the Mediterranean many times. However, it was too late. Italy differed from other Western States in that it did not exert an imperialistic power to deal with Arab countries; Italy spoke the language of emancipation and economic development. In

the late Sixties, it was soon clear that Mattei's policies had produced a vital legacy for the Italian foreign policy. In the wake of Mattei's dynamism and Fanfani's Mediterranean vocation, the Italian involvement in the Middle Eastern and North African area will be the core of Moro's foreign policy during the years to follow.

In the mid-Sixties, Aldo Moro, the then Italian Prime Minister, emphasized the role that Italy could play in the Mediterranean, but without drawing up a specific plan to carry out. The Mediterranean vocation was strengthened especially after 1967, when Italy was called to take a stance in the mangled Middle Eastern framework. Indeed, Moro's interest in the international issues increased in the second half of the Sixties, especially after the Six Day War. The Six Day War of 1967 produced long-term effects on international policies in the Mediterranean and internationalized the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, by making the Mediterranean a crucial political issue for Italy as well. Over that context, Aldo Moro forged the strategy of the double-equidistance. It was implemented in the Middle East as a strategy to cope with the Arab-Israeli conflict, as to not to damage relations with Arab countries and Israel. The Italian policy of equidistance was also performed in the relations between the Middle East and the US, since Moro was capable of keeping the Mediterranean vocation alive, while assuring loyalty to the US international guidelines. In spite of Cold War constraints, the Mediterranean vocation remained the constant target of the Italian foreign policy and in 1968 it was eased by the changing international context. Indeed, some events as demonstrations, increasing social issues, domestic and international terrorism, the Vietnam War effects, and the Prague Spring showed the collapsing US-USSR bipolar system, by introducing an international Détente. Moro tried to address and to rid the complexity of that period of transition. Primarily, Moro sought to overcome the constraints imposed by the Atlantic dimension, even by opening to ICP that was becoming more autonomous from the Soviet protectorate. Second, Moro took advantage of the International Détente by arguing to extend the dialogue to the Mediterranean context where several changes were taking place. Moro, by acting as a mediator, was allowed to deepen the Mediterranean dialogue, which turned into a more detailed project in the early Seventies, when some events urged Italy to increase its dynamism in the region. The Six Day War, the coup in Libya (1969), the Black September, Nasser's death (1970), and the terroristic attacks against Israel implied new challenges in the Middle Eastern area with which a new dialogue should be promoted. Moro realized that the Palestinian question and the increasing terroristic attacks against Israel abroad became the glue element among the Italian parties. The escalation of the tensions produced an Italian pro-Arab attitude which was endorsed by most of the parties. In a more unified political context, Moro would be encouraged to pursue his Mediterranean Détente. In this attempt, Aldo Moro tried to connect the period of transition taking place in the Middle

East with the process of *Détente*, by pursuing an autonomous Mediterranean course that challenged the bipolar system. When Aldo Moro became the Minister of Foreign Affairs in August 1969, he assumed the leading role in talking with the Middle East and North Africa, also to establish stronger relations between oil producers and western countries. Moro strengthened his Mediterranean diplomacy in 1970, when regional tensions in the Middle East flared up and the 1969 Libyan coup instilled doubts on the stability of North Africa. Events happening in Libya and the significant rearmament of Israel and the Arab countries led Italy to increase its diplomatic initiatives in the Mediterranean. Moro emphasized the potential escalation in the Middle East and his activism mounted in the middle of 1970, by meeting with Nasser and Abba Eban to test their willingness to negotiate for a compromise. The political divergence between Italy and the US on the Mediterranean was intended to mount. Although Moro stressed the Italian neutral and equidistant strategy in dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict, the historical link between Italy and the Arab countries clearly emerged in the mentioned meetings and, once again, the Italian attitude in the Mediterranean distanced itself from the US. Indeed, Moro continued to be a sincere interlocutor for Egypt and even Nasser was convinced that the Arab-Israeli conflict should come to an end for achieving a lasting peace in the mangled area. Nasser was interested in reaching a compromise after the disastrous defeat suffered in 1967. On the contrary, Abba Eban adopted an attitude of intransigence by stressing that there was an *abyss* between the Israeli and the Egyptian position. Israel would negotiate from a position of strength and not surprisingly, Abba Eban demanded a direct negotiation between Israel and Egypt. Abba Eban thought that Soviet Union, which had increased its military influence on Egypt during the Sixties, would threaten the entire Mediterranean area: Eban supposed that the USSR infiltration in the Middle East perfectly fitted with the Arab exigence to answered back the Israeli presence. Eban feared the Sovietization of the Arab countries and the politicization of the Palestinian organizations, which could imply a perpetual deadlock in the negotiations between belligerents. Moro informed the US about the intransigent positions of the parties by admitting the risk of impasse, but he remarked the need and the occasion to elaborate an agreement among the belligerents now that some convergences on the cease-fire need emerged. Essentially, Moro was asking the US to intervene for reopening the dialogue between the belligerents as soon as possible. A fair negotiation for a lasting peace was the instrument to avoid the progressive Sovietization of the Arab countries which would have damaged Italian interests in the Mediterranean. However, Italy was increasingly suspicious about the American military endorsement to Israel. Italy was playing on every negotiation table, holding the strategy of equidistance but not without showing a pro-Arab attitude in order to protect its area of interest. Undoubtedly, Aldo Moro acted as a mediator into the Mediterranean

sphere in 1970, by attempting to create a climate of mutual trust to get at least a ceasefire in the area. The US shared Moro's remarks and envisaged new plans for pacification that did not succeed since Middle East was experiencing brutal instability in Jordan, while skirmishes and bombing never arrested around Suez, and Israel increased its demand for military support to the US. Moscow had assured Egypt with military support, by prompting the US to follow suit with Israel. While Italy was aiming at remaining the main US ally in the Mediterranean to cope with the Soviet menace, it distrusted the pro-Israeli attitude promoted by the US and insisted on the UN intervention to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict. By getting closer to the US in order to contain the Soviet expansion, Moro pointed out that the Atlantic dimension would not question the Italian pro-Arab attitude that was treasured by historical bonds of friendship. Moro carried on focusing on the Palestinian refugee issue by remarking that Palestinians with their own organizations were political entities and they were not expecting assistance but a political recognition. Recognizing Palestinians as a national entity meant betraying Israel and it was a step too far for the US, which could risk to lose an ally in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean arena became even more complex by the end of 1970: while the US was reticent to distance itself from the Israeli intransigence, Italy called for a more active UN intervention into the peace process that was actually rejected by Israel due to the considerable guarantees and protection that Palestinians could enjoy under the UN umbrella. Moro insisted on the US' power to influence Israeli political attitude to negotiate for a compromise in the Middle East, and assumed an evident pro-Arab policy which could not entirely fit with the US purposes. The political divergences in dealing with the Mediterranean framework had never seriously jeopardized the relation between the US and Italy, but certainly a pro-Arab foreign policy finally matured in the Moro's era, by laying the groundwork for a deeper dialogue with several Arab countries. Moro's effort made Italy closer to the Middle East but without producing desired results. Moro and the Italian government walked a tightrope: while they criticized Israeli intransigence and aimed at keeping a special relationship with the Arab world, they also contained any tension with the US, especially in the Mediterranean. However, the Italian Mediterranean vocation walked alone several times: in 1970, Moro sponsored multiple meetings with Arab leaders and political exponents. He visited Morocco, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Iran, Egypt, and received the UAR Economic Minister, Zaki, the UAR Minister of Foreign Affairs Riad, and the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Abba Eban. Bilateral contacts between Italy and the Arab world were part of the Mediterranean Détente process building, in which the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict had to be addressed involving all the Mediterranean countries. Italy, by maintaining a special relation-ship with the Middle East and North Africa, could work as a bridge between two worlds and could be a mediator among the Arab countries

and Israel. Moro thought that in order to avoid the outbreak of regional conflicts and overcome the destabilizing effects of bipolarism, the Mediterranean issues should be part of a larger policy carried out by the EEC as a whole. In Moro's view, the EEC members as a whole should adopt a common approach to the Mediterranean and, particularly to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moro aimed at establishing a more active international role for the EEC, which should talk to the Middle East with one voice by promoting energy policies which fitted with the Arab countries' interests. The organization of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) opened for a new space of intervention. Moro suggested that the CSCE could be a precedent to organize a similar meeting for the Mediterranean which would include all regional actors, the US and the USSR. The meeting would have taken place once a lasting solution for the Arab-Israeli was provided. The proposal aimed at encouraging political stability in the Mediterranean to allow regional countries to recover economically. By establishing a more vigorous international role of the EEC, Moro would stress the foreign policy differences between Europe and the US. The Mediterranean Détente was an occasion to emancipate Europe from the bipolar system by acting autonomously and with one voice into the Mediterranean dimension but without jeopardizing the Atlantic framework. Moro's initiatives went unheeded in the Western Europe and both the US and the USSR were unwilling to recognize the EEC any mediating or autonomous role, especially in the Arab-Israeli conflict and in the energy sector. Nonetheless, Moro used his growing influence in the Arab world to ease ENI's presence in several oil producing countries and to keep alive an Italo-Arab dialogue between the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Moro renewed his Mediterranean diplomacy by visiting Israel and by meeting Riad in Rome in March 1971 and even his successor, Giuseppe Medici, pursued the Mediterranean vocation by visiting Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon a year later. However, according to some scholars a stalemate in the negotiations was going to take place. Indeed, despite the Mediterranean diplomacy efforts, no solution to address tensions in the region emerged.

The dramatic Munich massacre in September 1972 and the October 1973 Yom Kippur War hinted that no pacification in the Middle Eastern area would take place quickly. 1973 Yom Kippur War and the oil shock altered alliances in the Cold War system and impacted on western countries, exacerbating an economic transition period already started after the end of the Bretton Woods system. Besides showing the financial vulnerability of the West, the oil shock and the Fourth Arab-Israeli conflict reshaped alliances in the Cold War system, by bolstering Mediterranean autonomous initiative on the part of the EEC. During the Yom Kippur War, Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) raised the posted price of oil by 70%. On 18th October, the Arab oil ministers agreed on an embargo against the US and Netherlands, cutting production by the 5% in each succeeding month until their

objectives were met. Considering that Europe really depended on the Arab oil, it faced an economic collapse. The energy issue started to be addressed internationally, paving the way for a Euro-Arab dialogue in which Italy sought to play a lead role; not surprisingly, American globalism arrested any of the EEC plans. Once Moro came back as the leader of the Italian diplomacy in July 1973, he continued to present Italy as a true ally for the Arab world and urged the EEC diplomatic intervention to influence the tide of the Arab-Israeli war. Certainly, the Yom Kippur War, the December 1973 airport attacks at Leonardo da Vinci–Fiumicino International Airport in Rome, and the Euro-Arab dialogue building-process pressed Moro to shape his Mediterranean Détente in a mangled Middle East, by intensifying bilateral contacts with Arab leaders. Moro wanted to bring Détente where it had never appeared. The US blamed Italy to challenge the American primacy by encouraging a radicalization of the Arab nationalism. Moro defended the Italian Mediterranean vocation and after 1973 he abandoned the strategy of the double equidistance by pursuing Italy's Mediterranean interests regardless of Americans constraints. He took a clearer stance into the Arab-Israeli conflict, by arguing for the Israeli withdrawal from all the June War occupied territories, where Palestinians sought for a homeland, not mere assistance. Alongside with ENI, he paved the way for several energy agreements with Saudi Arabia, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. As part of his project to implement the Mediterranean Détente, he endorsed the process of international cooperation between the two Superpowers and set forth his ideas during Helsinki Conference on 30th July, 1975. Geographical proximity, historical tradition, and common interests were at the basis of the Italo-Arab dialogue that encouraged Moro to reassert the deep liaison that he perceived between Europe and the Mediterranean, by claiming the role that Italy had played and would play as a bridge between two worlds. Moro worked for getting closer worlds among which walls had been raised; he challenged the bipolar system by acting more autonomously in an area of great interests while keeping the western linkages secure; he proceeded with bilateral agreements by establishing a direct dialogue with his interlocutors. Moro's projects always came to terms with the US and the USSR reluctance to leave Italy's initiatives taking shape in the Mediterranean context, and not surprisingly the Mediterranean Détente met several obstacles in its building process. On 16th March 1978 Aldo Moro was kidnapped and finally killed on 9th May. Unlike Mattei's plan crash, Moro's death is attributable to some culprits, however, his tragic fate still has some dark sides. Both Mattei and Moro left a significant legacy to the Italian foreign policy. In spite of a partial but significant realignment to the US during the Eighties, Italy proved to be capable of preserving and defending a vital dynamism in the Mediterranean by carrying out its own foreign policy even after Moro's death. Ultimately, was the Mediterranean Détente successful? In answering this question, some remarks are required.

The process of Mediterranean Détente is intended as a purely Italian effort to enhance a foreign policy strategy which has its roots in the Fifties. It was promoted by a country that lost the war and that was gradually included in the Atlantic sphere. Mediterranean Détente was a political ambition that Italy tried to protect vigorously, in spite of the Cold War constraints. The Mediterranean Détente succeeded in creating a climate of mutual trust between Italy and Arab countries and in producing effects in the Cold War system. Indeed, Italy played a political, economic, and energy role in the mangled and contended Middle East and North Africa, by raising suspicions and reactions on the part of the Atlantic Powers. However, the Mediterranean Détente did not succeed in building a dialogue between the Atlantic Powers as a whole and the Arab countries. Talking with one voice to the Middle East and North Africa seemed arduous: Atlantic Powers had different interests in the Mediterranean, and Arab countries perceived Western States as separated actors. Partly, Mediterranean Détente remained a process which saw involved especially Italy and the Arab countries. Furthermore, the US limited and criticized several Italian initiatives and hampered the Euro-Arab dialogue. As a Super Power in the Cold War, the US interfered in any initiative that could jeopardize the American primacy in dealing with those contended and vulnerable areas. In spite of Cold War constraints and Atlantic encroachments, two Italian actors did not fear to enhance a bold pro-Arab policy. Enrico Mattei and Aldo Moro shaped the Mediterranean Détente: besides building dialogues, they both created bridges through agreements between Italy and countries featured by political instabilities and they both defended the Italian autonomous foreign policy in an area of great interest. In conclusion, one can argue that Enrico Mattei and Aldo Moro were revolutionary figures who led a revolutionary wave in dealing with the Mediterranean countries, by leaving a significant legacy to the Italian foreign policy in the Cold War.