

## Viewpoints

### EUROPE'S FAILED MIDDLE EAST POLICIES

Europe's policies towards Arab-Israeli peace efforts and the promotion of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation have produced little success.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, the evidence demonstrates that these initiatives have been unrealistic and without credibility. The breakdown of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations has added to instability, while European-Israeli relations are characterized by intense confrontation.

These failures cannot be attributed to divisions within Europe: this is one area on which there is a wide consensus, and the explanations are substantive. As the following discussion shows, Europe's failures result from myths instead of understanding, an ideological framework that denies the role of force in maintaining stability, and an overemphasis on rhetoric.

Europe's substantive policy is based on a belief that stability in the Middle East will come from a formal agreement to create a Palestinian state. This theology was formed in the aftermath of the 1973 war and the oil boycott, and has remained unquestioned. Since then, in explaining the absence of peace, Europe has consistently blamed Israel, while ignoring signs that the Palestinian leadership is not interested in a 'two-state solution', and seeks to roll back the 1947 UN partition resolution.

After the 1993 Declaration of Principles, Europe became the primary financial backer of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian

Authority and turned a blind eye to Palestinian corruption. At the same time, European-funded textbooks (Eisen, 2002) and NGOs such as the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network became vehicles for denial of Israel's legitimacy (*NGO Monitor*, 2003), while secret funds from Sweden, Britain, Denmark, Norway, and Holland for the PLO's Negotiation Support Unit were used to further this agenda at the UN and the International Court of Justice (Lambert, 2004; Schwamenthal, 2004).

Beyond such funding activities, Europe's policies in the Middle East region consist of lofty declarations based on unquestioned assumptions and limited understanding. The flood of official statements emanating from Brussels is far removed from reality, with no feedback mechanisms, and serious criticism of European policy is rare, reflecting the absence of a debate on core assumptions. The EU's Institute for Security Studies published its first analysis of Arab-Israeli issues in 2003, which repeated the conventional wisdom rather than presenting an independent examination. This monograph includes critical analyses of domestic political factors in US policymaking, but provides no examination of political and ideological factors in European policies (Asseburg et al., 2003).

Europe's dominant pro-Palestinian narrative starts with the 1967 war – thus erasing the Arab aggression of 1948 – and is used to justify the claim that the removal of post-1967 Israeli settlements and 'occupation' will end Palestinian rejectionism and violence (Patten, 2002b). In a more radical version, the creation of Israel on 'Palestinian lands' is condemned, denying the right of the Jewish people to self-determination in their ancient homeland. In a typical example, Greta Duisenberg

<sup>1</sup> In this analysis, Europe is defined broadly, including the European Union and its member-states as well as Norway and Switzerland.

(wife of the head of the European Central Bank) described Israel's actions as 'worse than the Nazis' and paid homage to Arafat (Evans-Pritchard, 2003). Demonstrations demonizing Israel have been commonplace in Western European cities for many years and are increasingly linked with anti-globalization and anti-Americanism (Strauss, 2003).

This narrative has produced distorted analyses based on hostility to the policies of Israel's democratically elected governments. For example, a report by the Centre for European Policy Studies claims that 'Ariel Sharon's promenade on the al-Aqsa esplanade [not Temple Mount or Haram e-Sharif - GMS] on 28 September 2000 dealt the final blow to the moribund Oslo peace process. . . . Israel has carried on expanding settlements contrary to the Oslo agreement [these agreements make no mention of settlements - GMS] as well as reoccupying militarily the West Bank. . . . The reoccupation, devastating use of force, curfews, closures, checkpoints, and human rights and humanitarian law violations, are resulting in a rapidly rising number of civilian Palestinian casualties' (Emerson & Tocci, 2003: 23) This tendentious version patronizingly absolves the Palestinians of responsibility and ignores continued terrorism.

Another example is found in Hovdenak's 'Viewpoint' article in *Security Dialogue*, which blames Israel for the failure of the Quartet's 'road map', based on a distorted ideology reinforced by media reports. Hovdenak asserts that 'efforts by the Palestinians to implement their obligations . . . were reciprocated only with reluctance . . . on the Israeli side. What could have been a start for a renewed dialogue ended with more Israeli assassinations' (Hovdenak, 2003: 503-506). In fact, the Palestinian leadership made no significant efforts to halt terror, and the 'calm' was due to Israeli interceptions.

These policies are amplified by Europe's Kantian ideology and faith in diplomacy's unlimited ability to resolve 'existence' conflicts through the Versailles model of

peace conferences and formal agreements. As a result, Europe consistently opposes pragmatic efforts to manage the conflict, while promoting unreachable 'permanent status agreements'. However, in the Hobbesian Middle East, where force is employed for political and ideological objectives, European approaches such as 'constructive dialogue' and trade incentives are ineffective.

Similarly, post-heroic Europe is blind to 'hard' security factors, such as the implications of Palestinian use of the Gaza airport to import weapons forbidden under Oslo. The EU has also maintained the fiction of separate charitable and military 'wings' of Hamas and Hezbollah, and has clung to the myth that Israeli military strategy against terror is 'counterproductive'. Policymakers, journalists, and academics dismissed the sharp decline in Israeli casualties following 'targeted killings' and counter-attacks against terror centers. In December 2002, the European Council's Declaration on the Middle East condemned Israel for 'excessive use of force' and 'extra-judicial killings', declaring that these 'do not bring security to the Israeli population'. Similar false slogans came from European leaders after the attacks on Hamas leaders in 2004.

As a result, Europe has lost all credibility and influence among Israelis. The condemnations and policy initiatives are dismissed as reflecting simplistic images of 'Palestinian victimization' and Israeli power ('excessive use of force'), resulting from the false narratives, media distortions, (Nirenstein, 2001; Asserson & Mironi, 2002) academic boycotts, and NGO demonization campaigns. The use of aggressive terms such as 'apartheid' and 'racism' are seen as anchored in European biases, including anti-Semitism. (Sharansky, 2003; Klein-Halevi, 2004). In November 2003, the EU blocked publication of its study of anti-Semitism, creating a furor and highlighting the impact of this factor.

The critique extends to Europe's 'immoral equivalence', in which Israeli actions to protect its citizens are condemned as

being equivalent (at best) to Palestinian mass terror. Following the Passover terror attacks of 2002, External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten declared that 'while Israel has totally legitimate security concerns, the Palestinians have totally legitimate political concerns' (Patten, 2002a). In response to the operation in Jenin against terror networks, Patten spoke brutally, declaring that 'the Israeli defense forces are trampling over the Geneva Convention' (Patten 2002c). Similarly, after the failure of Oslo, the EU's Institute for Security Studies made the banal and false claim that 'the two parties considered that they would have more to gain from acts of violence than from negotiations and agreements' (Ortega, 2003: 9).

These biases are reinforced by the economic self-interest in a pro-Palestinian and pro-Arab position that emerged after the 1973 war and the oil boycott. At each stage, such as the Venice Declaration (1980), the Berlin Declaration (1999), and the effort to impose the entirely unrealistic 'road map' on Israel (via the USA), Europe advanced the Palestinian/Arab goal of an externally imposed 'solution' to the conflict, including the threat of sanctions to gain Israeli withdrawal to the 1949 armistice lines. EU representatives to the Mitchell Commission focused on 'internationalizing' the conflict, in the form of external forces, ignoring the weaknesses inherent in this approach. And while the USA and Israel recognize that Arafat's rejectionism will not change, Europe continues to demonstrate its support, undermining the possibility of a new leadership. In response, the USA excluded the EU from the Aqaba summit, and Israel reduced the level of its contacts with the EU even further. At this point, Europe's role in regional diplomacy reached absolute zero.

Another factor in this record of failure is Europe's narrow engagement with Israeli society, largely filtered through the shattered remnants of the peace movement. EU officials, including former special envoy Miguel Moratinos, maintain a dis-

proportionate dependence on the secular Israeli Left, thereby reinforcing misperceptions. Informed Israeli critics of European policy are dismissed as 'anti-European'.

The deep misunderstanding of Israeli democracy and society is illustrated by Europe's embrace of the so-called Geneva peace framework, composed by a small group of Palestinian officials and members of the Israeli Left, and purporting to offer peace terms based on the pre-1967 parameters. In Israel, this document disappeared quickly from the public agenda, reflecting the lack of credibility among the individuals responsible for Oslo. In contrast, Europe's enthusiastic support, including financing for the failed campaign, was simply another example of wishful thinking without substance.

Taken together, the combination of fictitious history, arrogance, and ignorance of Israeli society, as well as other factors, have led Europe to cling to a mythical and counterproductive policy. If Europe seeks to actually play a role in managing the Arab-Israeli conflict and in bringing some stability to the Middle East region, fundamental changes are necessary. Policies based on the slogans of Kantian idealism need to be tempered by Hobbesian realism and analysis based on evidence. As long as European politicians, academics, and journalists are unable to question core assumptions and recognize their failure in the Middle East, there is little opportunity for change.

GERALD M. STEINBERG

Director of the Program on  
Conflict Management and Negotiation  
Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan,  
Israel  
steing@mail.biu.ac.il

## References

Asseburg, Muriel; Dominique Moïsi, Gerd Nonneman & Stefano Silvestri (edited by Martin Ortega), 2003. 'The European

- Union and the Crisis in the Middle East', Chaillot Papers 62. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies.
- Asserson, Trevor & Elisheva Mironi, 2002. 'The BBC and the Middle East: A Critical Study'; available at <http://www.bbcwatch.com/prev.htm> (accessed 20 May 2004).
- Eisin, Miri, 2002. 'Briefing by Colonel Miri Eisin, IDF Intelligence Officer', Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 23 April; available at <http://www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=11596> (accessed 20 May 2004).
- Emerson, Michael & Nathalie Tocci, eds, 2003. *The Rubik Cube of the Wider Middle East*. Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies.
- Evans-Pritchard, Ambrose, 2003. 'Israelis Are Worse than Nazis, Says Duisenberg's Wife', *Daily Telegraph* (London), 14 January.
- Hovdenak, Are, 2003. 'Middle East: More Need for Traffic Police than Road Maps', *Security Dialogue* 34(4): 503–506.
- Klein-Halevi, Yossi, 2004. 'Hatreds Entwined: Why Anti-Semitism and Anti-Americanism Are Becoming One and the Same', *Azure* 16: 25–31.
- Lambert, Nick, 2004. 'The PLO's Negotiation Support Unit', European Institute for Research on the Middle East, Brussels; available at [http://www.europeaninstitute.info/Negotiation%20Support%20Unit%20v%200\\_1.pdf](http://www.europeaninstitute.info/Negotiation%20Support%20Unit%20v%200_1.pdf) (accessed 20 May 2004).
- NGO Monitor, 2003. 'Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)', *NGO Monitor* 1(8); available at <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/editions/v1n08/v1n08-1.htm> (accessed 20 May 2004).
- Nirenstein, Fiamma, 2001. 'The Journalists and the Palestinians', *Commentary* 111(1): 55–58.
- Ortega, Martin, 2003. 'Introduction', in Martin Ortega, ed., 'The European Union and the Crisis in the Middle East', Chaillot Papers 62. Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies (7–10).
- Patten, Chris, 2002a. 'Patten Urges Immediate Ceasefire in the Middle East', 2 April; available at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/mideast/news/ip02\\_488.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/mideast/news/ip02_488.htm) (accessed 20 May 2004).
- Patten, Chris, 2002b. 'Situation in the Middle East', speech to the European Parliament, 9 April; available at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/news/patten/sp02\\_143.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/news/patten/sp02_143.htm) (accessed 20 May 2004).
- Patten, Chris, 2000c. 'Comments on the Situation in the Middle East: Interview with BBC "Hard Talk"', Brussels, 10 April; available at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/news/patten/sp02\\_146.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/news/patten/sp02_146.htm) (accessed 20 May 2004).
- Schwammenthal, Daniel, 2004. 'The PLO's European Paymasters', *Wall Street Journal–Europe*, 2 March.
- Sharansky, Natan, 2003. 'On Hating the Jews', *Commentary* 116(4): 26–34.
- Strauss, Mark, 2003. 'Antiglobalism's Jewish Problem', *Foreign Policy* 139: 58–67.

## THE CHINESE THREAT TO US LEADERSHIP IN SPACE

The launch of the *Shenzhou 5* made clear to many what was already known by the experts: in space, as on earth, the most likely challenger to the current US-dominated unipolar order is China. Because of the huge stakes involved, this space competition risks being accompanied by a rapid 'Star Wars' arms race.

The Reaganite years saw the introduction of the Star Wars program, which was halted during Bill Clinton's presidency but reinstated when Donald Rumsfeld was nominated to the position of US secretary of defense. The zeal with which Rumsfeld relaunched US space programs – acquiescing to requests from military and military-industrial lobbies for rapidly developing space weapons – is evidence

of a throwing down of the gauntlet to potential 'peer competitors' of the United States. Furthermore, this decision conforms to the desire expressed by the neoconservative Bush administration to definitively reaffirm and consolidate the unipolar role of the United States in the 21st century and to begin the new millennium with a 'New American Century', an expression originating in the 'Project for the New American Century', a US think-tank that has Rumsfeld as its president.

Such a unipolar/imperial grand strategy has to be based on the search for overwhelming power – an instrument for the 'benevolent' protection of the USA's allies and a deterrent to those who might wish to defy it: in short, a concrete series of plans aimed at 'full spectrum dominance', meaning worldwide military domination through the ability to project unilaterally into all possible battlefields and thus control the outcome. According to the US Space Command, the USA will be able to establish and perfect this 'full spectrum dominance' from space, giving them the power to choose whom to include and whom to exclude (see 'Mastering the Ultimate High Ground: Next Steps in the Military Uses of Space' – a document released at the beginning of 2003 by the Rand Corporation that asserts the necessity for the USA to 'ensure our continued access to space and deny space to others, if necessary'; this expression makes implicit reference to China and is very similar to views presented in the strategic plans of the US Space Command).

The Bush administration's withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and its decision to terminate the self-imposed military limitations of the defunct bipolar order reveal the USA's desire to increase the 'power gap' between itself and potential 'peer competitors'. Such competitors, they hope, will need to think long and hard before entering into a race with the USA, which would involve an enormous diversion of national resources to minimize the considerable technological lead the USA currently enjoys.

The last challenger in a US-initiated arms race was the Soviet Union in response to Ronald Reagan's Star Wars program; it is unlikely that potential challengers today would choose to follow the Soviet Union's strategy.

The EU and Japan have the economic and technological means to deploy weapons in space, but they lack the political will to emancipate themselves from their traditional alliance/subordination relationship with the USA. Russia also has the knowhow to compete militarily in space but lacks the financial resources necessary to do so. In 2003, its forecast expenses for space programs were only a tenth of the \$3 billion allocated by China, which should be viewed in relation to the \$23 billion that the USA puts into NASA. Nevertheless, if it had the means, Russia would probably put into effect a space policy aimed at closing the power gap between itself and the USA and attempt to re-establish a multipolar international order.

### The Rise of China as a Space Power

Of the potential 'peer competitors', China appears to be the most able to mount any sort of challenge to US primacy. Its space program is strongly supported by Chinese leaders, who wish to assert and maintain Chinese regional power, as well as to dispute the current unipolar world order. With the technical assistance of Russia and other former Soviet countries, the new nation is making such significant progress that it is now the focus of US concern.

According to the Pentagon, China publicly opposes the militarization of space and is trying by diplomatic means to prevent or slow down the development by the USA of anti-satellite weapons and missile defence; however, in private, it considers the development of such weaponry to be inevitable if it wishes to maintain any pretence to multipolarity in the future, and is even going to the length

of searching abroad for technical knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

For instance, Beijing is developing a new family of modular rockets to send heavy loads into space, with the aim of being able to put 25 tons into low earth orbit and 14 tons into geostationary orbit by 2007. Beijing has also begun to develop a smaller launch vehicle with a solid propellant, the *Kaituo* (Pioneer, KT or KTZ-1). The KT-1 is the first step towards the development of a series of small rockets that will be needed to launch a new generation of small satellites currently undergoing development. China is investing massively in the development of this type of mini-satellite, which could eventually be used offensively against other satellites.

China is also making substantial progress in manned space missions, with the first mission successfully completed on 17 October 2003, and it has long-term plans for its own space station and probably a reusable space shuttle. According to some US analysts, national prestige and pride are the main motivations behind this (very expensive) program, whose indigenous nature has been emphasized by China, though it could not have been achieved without Russian assistance. But, for the Chinese, the program is more than simply symbolic: it is a reaction to China's newfound awareness that space is important for the future of military operations (in relation to the US 'Revolution in Military Affairs') and is a domain from which China cannot remain excluded. China's efforts to send men into space will also contribute, indirectly, to the development of the expertise required for future military applications between 2010 and 2020.

### US Perceptions of the Chinese Space Program and Vice Versa

For some analysts, the *Shenzhou*, and the rest of China's space program, is intrinsically tied to Chinese efforts to modernize

its military forces and to catch up with the USA's space assets. According to Michael Stokes, aerospace analyst at the Department of the Defense, 'the Chinese human space flight program is part and parcel of the nation's broader ambitions in space that have very clear implications for U.S. national security 10 to 20 years in the future'. Stokes declared that China has paid great attention to the strategic role played by space assets in US military actions in the post-Cold War period (from the 1991 Gulf War to the recent war against Iraq). And he commented that he was personally worried less about China's attempt to catch up with the 'human space flight club' (the launch of *Shenzhou 5* had not then occurred) than about its efforts 'to develop a robust network of military satellites of its own, while at the same time researching ways to take out the other's satellites in the event of a conflict'.<sup>2</sup> Evidently the US military think the enemy has the desire to 'deny space to others, if necessary' – a US goal expressed many times in US Space Command documents, in the conclusions of the Space Commission presided over by Donald Rumsfeld (before his nomination to the head of the Pentagon), and finally sealed by the Rand Corporation's 'Mastering the Ultimate High Ground'.

China's official response to US anxieties over its desire to abuse space is to declare that it intends to abide by international law regarding this new territory. In fact, China emphasizes that 'certain countries' – that is, the USA – have shown that they wish to realize 'space weaponization', notably following the abrogation of the ABM Treaty and the declaration of an intention to develop theater missile defense. The Chinese authorities, therefore, indirectly admonish the USA in these terms: 'China is concerned about certain countries' joint research and development of theater missile defense (TMD) systems with a view to their deployment in the Northeast Asian region. *This will lead to the*

<sup>1</sup> See US Department of Defense (2003).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Berger (2003).

*proliferation of advanced missile technology and be detrimental to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. China resolutely opposes any country which provides Taiwan [a notoriously independent state] with TMD assistance or protection in any form' [PLA Daily (2002); italics in original].'*

As shown, China intends to ensure that it is equipped to look after its own interests and to withstand a possible conflict with the USA. At the geostrategic level, China has significant grounds for entering into a conflict with the United States. In order of increasing importance, these areas of dispute include the USA's increasing influence in Central Asia, its interference in Korean affairs, the Spratly islands, and Taiwan. Indeed, the Taiwan issue is the fulcrum of US strategy (which, according to Chinese analysts, even anticipates the destabilization of China's entire area of influence in order to prevent China's rise) and one that will necessitate a battle of wills between China and the USA in the 21st century, a trial of strength for which China is preparing itself. Indeed, the *Shenzhou 5* – as was admitted by Chinese officials – 'will have a CCD camera attached to the exterior with a ground resolution of 1.6m, which could be used for military reconnaissance purposes'.<sup>3</sup>

### 'Deny Space to Others': The Last Chance To Stop China

As the situation currently stands, it is clear that the expression 'to assure our continued access to space and deny the space to others if necessary' – which recurs, with little variation, in many US military planning documents – is specifically directed towards China. The Pentagon believes that China shares its own goal of ousting potential competitors from space, and it considers China's polemical declarations about 'rumored' US plans of space weaponization – expressed before the UN

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space – as a weapon for diplomatically damaging and slowing down US efforts, while actively working in secret towards the same objective. According to Richard Fisher of the Jamestown Foundation, the People's Liberation Army is aware that the 'control of space' concept – as theorized by the US military – is an objective that China must achieve: 'China needs to be able to deny to the United States access and use of space, as they themselves exploit space to support their own forces'.<sup>4</sup>

Several factors, therefore, suggest that the impact of the space challenge between the USA and China will exceed previous expectations about the strategic-military use of space (spy satellites). The result will be a new race to install weapons, both offensively and defensively (concepts that are difficult to distinguish from each other, particularly in regard to the USA's ultimate military objective to 'deny Space to others, if necessary', suggesting that the offensive dimension will prevail against the defensive one).

While we may not know much about the character of China's space policy (with the exception of its declarations condemning US space weaponization plans – though China's real intentions can be deduced from its desire to expel the USA from its own area of influence), we do know more about China's progress in space. At the same time, it can be asserted definitively that the USA is determined to maintain by all means possible (including denying the rest of the world access to space) its own space leadership, the key to 'full spectrum dominance' and the fundamental presupposition of the unipolar-imperialistic 'New American Century'.

The relation between the USA's space dimension and its imperialistic dimension (with echoes of 'manifest destiny') is sealed by the conclusions of a book written in 1996 by arms experts George and Meredith Friedman (1998): 'Just as by the year 1500 it was apparent that the

<sup>3</sup> See Hou Yi (2003).

<sup>4</sup> See David (2002).

European experience of power would be its domination of the global seas, it does not take much to see that the American experience of power will rest on the domination of space. Just as Europe expanded war and its power to the global oceans, the United States is expanding war and its power into space and to the planets. Just as Europe shaped the world for a half a millennium [by dominating the oceans by its fleets] so too the United States will shape the world for at least that length of time' – by dominating space.

GABRIELE GARIBALDI  
Viareggio, Italy  
gabri.garibaldi@virgilio.it

### References

- Berger, Brian, 2003. 'China Launch Won't Ignite New Space Race, Analysts Say', *Space.com*, 14 October.
- David, Leonard, 2002. 'China's Space Program Driven By Military Ambitions', *Space.com*, 13 March.
- Hou Yi, 2003. 'Shenzhou-5 Launcher Ready for Transfer to Jiuquan Launch Site', *SpaceDaily.com*, 11 August.
- Friedman, George & Meredith Friedman, 1996. *The Future of War: Power, Technology and American World Dominance in the 21st Century*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- PLA Daily, 2002. 'Missile Defense and Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space'; available at <http://english.pladaily.com.cn/special/book/c2002/07-3.htm>.
- Rand Corporation, 2003. 'Mastering the Ultimate High Ground: Next Steps in the Military Uses of Space'; available at <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1649/>.
- US Department of Defense (2003). 'Annual Report to Congress on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China', July 2003; available at <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/china/dod-2003.pdf>.