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# ***Florida Political Chronicle***

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**Florida Political Science Association**

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**Peer-Reviewed Regional Scholarly Journal for Faculty, Students and  
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**—FLORIDA POLITICAL SCIENCES ASSOCIATION—**

**JOIN FPSA: Membership see: [www.fpsanet.com](http://www.fpsanet.com)**

The Florida Political Sciences Association is committed to promoting political science research, education and service throughout the State of Florida. Our Board of Officers represents the diverse educational opportunities available for higher education in Florida. From the University of West Florida in Pensacola to Florida International University and the University of Miami, our FPSA association spans the state bringing together political scientists at public and private institutions to network, to collaborate on research and to discuss innovative strategies in the classroom.

**Join/Renew Membership in FPSA (Includes Annual Conference Registration): [CLICK HERE](#)**

- **Faculty:** \$75 (includes membership fee)/\$85 by time of FPSA Annual Conference
- **Student:** \$35 (includes membership fee)/\$40 by time of FPSA Annual Conference

## PUBLICATIONS: FLORIDA POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

### *Florida Political Chronicle*

<http://www.fpsanet.com/florida-political-chronicle.html>

The *Florida Political Chronicle* is the bi-annual peer-reviewed scholarly journal of the Florida Political Sciences Association, which encourages submissions from all discipline sub-fields.

Call for Submissions to the *Florida Political Chronicle* (FPSA academic journal): <https://www.fpsanet.com/florida-political-chronicle.html>. Scholarly articles from past FPSA conferences are welcome, plus any papers not previously published. Please contact the Editor, Marco Rimanelli ([Marco.Rimanelli@saintleo.edu](mailto:Marco.Rimanelli@saintleo.edu)) to start the peer-review process.

### *The Political Scientist: Newsletter of the Florida Political Sciences Association*

<http://www.fpsanet.com/the-political-scientist.html>

*The Political Scientists* newsletter is a semi-annual publication of the Florida Political Sciences Association. Call for Submissions to *The Political Scientist*, the semi-annual newsletter of the FPSA: <https://www.fpsanet.com/the-political-scientist.html>. Possible submissions include short research articles, reflections on classroom activities, reviews of teaching resources, and/or short book reviews. Participation by graduate students and junior faculty is encouraged and welcomed! Please contact the Editor, Austin Trantham ([austin.trantham@saintleo.edu](mailto:austin.trantham@saintleo.edu)) for more information concerning submission guidelines.

See FPSA website: [www.fpsanet.com](http://www.fpsanet.com)





## FLORIDA POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

### CHARTER OFFICERS 2022-2023

**President FPSA:** Leah H. Blumenfeld,  
Barry University, Miami, [l Blumenfeld@barry.edu](mailto:l Blumenfeld@barry.edu)

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**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President:** David Hill,  
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**Marco Rimanelli, Editor, Florida Political Chronicle, peer-review scholarly journal of FPSA**  
Saint Leo University, near-Tampa, [Marco.Rimanelli@saintleo.edu](mailto:Marco.Rimanelli@saintleo.edu)

**Austin Trantham, Editor, The Political Scientist Newsletter of FPSA**  
Saint Leo University, near-Tampa, [austin.trantham@saintleo.edu](mailto:austin.trantham@saintleo.edu)

**Past FPSA President:** Kelly McHugh, Florida Southern College, Lakeland, [kmchugh@flsouthern.edu](mailto:kmchugh@flsouthern.edu)

### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (staggered 3-years terms)

**Austin Trantham, (2021-2023),** Saint Leo University, [austin.trantham@saintleo.edu](mailto:austin.trantham@saintleo.edu)

**Brian Kupfer (2021-2023),** Tallahassee Community College, [kupferb@tcc.fl.edu](mailto:kupferb@tcc.fl.edu)

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**Kathryn VanderMolen (2022-2024),** University of Tampa, [kvandermolen@ut.edu](mailto:kvandermolen@ut.edu)

**Kevin Wagner (2022-2024),** Florida Atlantic University, [kwagne15@fau.edu](mailto:kwagne15@fau.edu)

**Richard Murgo (2022-2024),** Tallahassee Community College, [ricmurgo@gmail.com](mailto:ricmurgo@gmail.com)

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**Bradley Gardner (2023-2025),** Bethune-Cookman University, [gardnerb@cookman.edu](mailto:gardnerb@cookman.edu)



# Call for Papers: Florida Political Science Association Annual Conference: Saturday, 9 March 2024 University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida

**Program Co-Chairs:**

Dr. Kelly McHugh, Florida Southern College  
Phone: 1 (863) 680-4313  
E-mail: [kmchugh@flsouthern.edu](mailto:kmchugh@flsouthern.edu)

Dr. Austin Trantham, Saint Leo University  
Phone: 1 (352) 588-6313  
E-mail: [austin.trantham@saintleo.edu](mailto:austin.trantham@saintleo.edu)

**Arrangements Chair:**

Dr. Ben Smith, University of Florida  
Phone: 1 (352) 273-2345  
E-mail: [bbsmith@ufl.edu](mailto:bbsmith@ufl.edu)

The 2024 FPSA Annual Conference will be held on **Saturday, 9 March 2024**, at the **University of Florida in Gainesville**. All information pertaining to the conference, including driving directions, parking and hotels, will be posted on the FPSA website in January 2024. Faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students are strongly encouraged to participate. Please submit your proposals for individual papers or panels directly to the relevant Section Chairs.

**Proposals should include the following:** Name, Institution, Rank (Faculty, graduate student, undergraduate student), Contact Information (including E-Mail Address), Paper Title, and Abstract of 150-250 words.

**The deadline for proposals is 28 anuary 2024. Accepted papers will be notified by 30 January 2024.**

<u>Sections/Panels</u>	<u>Section Chairs</u>	<u>Contact Information</u>
American National Politics	Austin Trantham Saint Leo University	<a href="mailto:austin.trantham@saintleo.edu">austin.trantham@saintleo.edu</a> 352-588-6313
Political Theory	Brian Kupfer Tallahassee Community College	<a href="mailto:brian.kupfer@tcc.fl.edu">brian.kupfer@tcc.fl.edu</a> 850-201-9951
Public Policy & Public Administration	Douglas Rivero St. Petersburg College	<a href="mailto:rivero.douglas@scollege.edu">rivero.douglas@scollege.edu</a> 727-394-6948
State & Local Government	Sean Foreman Barry University	<a href="mailto:sforeman@barry.edu">sforeman@barry.edu</a> 305-899-4098
International Relations	Leah Blumenfeld Barry University	<a href="mailto:lblumenfeld@barry.edu">lblumenfeld@barry.edu</a> 305-899-3386
Comparative Politics	Houman Sadri, IPAC & University of Central Florida	<a href="mailto:houman.sadri@ucf.edu">houman.sadri@ucf.edu</a> 407-823-2608
Regional Security from World War I to Today	Marco Rimanelli Saint Leo University	<a href="mailto:marco.rimanelli@saintleo.edu">marco.rimanelli@saintleo.edu</a> 352-588-8277
Roundtable: Teaching Political Science	Kelly A. McHugh Florida Southern College	<a href="mailto:kmchugh@flsouthern.edu">kmchugh@flsouthern.edu</a> 863-680-4111

**Registration:**

Registration includes conference attendance, lunch and subscriptions to both *Florida Political Chronicle* and *The Political Scientist* Newsletter. **Registration** is available on our **new FPSA website:** [www.fpsanet.com](http://www.fpsanet.com) or [www.fpsanet.com/annual-conference.html](http://www.fpsanet.com/annual-conference.html) or mail to our Treasurer, Aubrey Jewett at [Aubrey.Jewett@ucf.edu](mailto:Aubrey.Jewett@ucf.edu)  
**Pre-registration on-line is \$75 for faculty and \$35 for students.** All Paper Presenters, Panel Chairs and Discussants please pre-register.  
**On-site registration at the FPSA Annual Conference is \$85 for faculty and \$40 for students.**

**FPSA Awards:**

A \$250 award is given to the **FPSA Best Graduate Student Paper Award**, and a \$200 award to the **FPSA Best Undergraduate Student Paper Award** at the FPSA Annual Conference. Award winners will have their papers published in the *Florida Political Chronicle*. Faculty papers, all Best Award Papers and Runner-Ups, are also eligible for publication in the *Florida Political Chronicle*.

# **FPSA Awards**

**Manning J. Dauer Award**  
**Best Graduate Paper Award**  
**Best Undergraduate Paper Award**

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## **Manning J. Dauer Award**

Manning J. Dauer was a distinguished Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Florida for over half a century. When he passed away in 1986, he left a legacy that is unparalleled in the State of Florida. He had served as both a formal and an informal advisor to scores of governors, the state legislature, mayors, county commissioners and city council-members. Indeed, it is said that he left his imprint on many public policies at both the state and local level. He is perhaps best known for leading a team of scholars and public officials that devised a reapportionment scheme for the State of Florida in the aftermath of the famous *Baker v. Carr* and *Reynolds v. Sims* cases.

As an academic, he wrote numerous articles and books on state and local government and politics, and his work was frequently cited by other scholars. He also edited a well-received book on government and politics in Florida. Professor Dauer was a well-known figure within and outside of academia including both the political science and public administration communities, local and state government, and the media. But, his heart and loyalty were perhaps tied closest to the organization that helped to co-found—the Florida Political Science Association (FPSA).

In the late 1990s, the FPSA decided that it was time to establish a lasting and fitting tribute to the person who had breathed life into our Association and devoted so much of his time and energy to the FPSA and the state he loved. To that end, the Association's officers, Executive Council, and membership in 2000 created the Manning J. Dauer Award that would be given every three years to a faculty member at a Florida institution.

Recipients of the Manning Dauer Award should have a sustained exemplary record of research, teaching, mentoring and service related to Florida politics and policy and supportive involvement with the Florida Political Science Association. Like Manning Dauer himself, recipients of this award should be recognized experts on Sunshine State politics and have impact and recognition beyond the discipline of political science reaching out to their local community, the state, nation and/or internationally.

### **Manning J. Dauer Award Recipients**

- 2020 Aubrey Jewett, University of Central Florida
  
  - 2016 Jonathan West, University of Miami
  
  - 2009 J. Edwin Benton, University of South Florida
  
  - 2006 Joan Carver, Jacksonville University
  
  - 2003 Susan A. MacManus, University of South Florida
  
  - 2000 Thomas R. Dye, Florida State University
-



## Best Graduate Paper Award

The FPSA recognizes the best graduate paper presented at the annual meeting. The recipient of the award is recognized at the following meeting and receives a \$250 check from the association. In addition, the paper is considered for inclusion in the next volume of the association's journal, *The Florida Political Chronicle*.

### Best Graduate Paper Award Winners

- 2023 Alexander Krest, University of South Florida-St. Petersburg  
"Citizen Departure: Investigating Party Dissolution Within Urban & Rural Populations"
- 2022 Sara Belligoni, University of Central Florida  
"Held in the Grip: Governing Institutions and Emergency Management Procedural Arrangements in the Cases of Florida and Puerto Rico."
- 2021 Craig Wilding, University of Central Florida  
"Florida Campaign Money: Are Constituents Being Represented?"
- 2019 Davide Dell'Isola, University of Central Florida  
"Immigration and Demise of Social-Democratic Parties in Western Europe: France, United Kingdom, Germany and Italy."
- 2018 Sandor Fabian, University of Central Florida  
"Why Does David Sometimes Defeat Goliath? Effects of Military Culture on the Outcome of Asymmetric Wars"
- 2017 Christopher Faulkner and Joshua Lambert, University of Central Florida  
"Sign on the Dotted Line: Contracting Private Military and Security Companies in African Civil Wars"
- 2016 Jennifer L. Hudson, University of Central Florida  
"Legislative Gridlock, Partisanship and Trust in Government"
- 2015 Thomas Just, Florida International University  
"Post-Communist Recovery and the State: Case Studies of Poland and Ukraine"
- 2014 Enrijeta Shino, University of Florida  
"Absentee Voting: A Cross State Analysis"
- 2013 Essien Ukpe Ukoyo Ukpe, Akwa Ibom State University  
"The Arab Connection & the Upsurge of Insurgency in Africa: A Case Study of Boko Haram in Nigeria"
- 2012 Tammie Marcus Clary, Florida Atlantic University  
"Politicians of a Feather, Tweet Together"
- 2011 Magda Giurcanu, University of Florida  
"Europe at Stake at first European Parliament Elections Organized in an Enlarged Europe"
- 2010 Jordan Michael Ragusa, University of Florida  
"Chamber Hopping" in the U.S. Congress: Structure-Induced Learning and the Development of a Partisan Senate."

## Best Undergraduate Paper Award

The FPSA recognizes the best undergraduate paper presented at the annual meeting. The recipient of the award is recognized at the following meeting and receives a \$200 check from the association. In addition, the paper is considered for inclusion in the next volume of the association's journal, *The Florida Political Chronicle*.

### Best Undergraduate Paper Award Winners

- 2023 Colin Kennerly, Stetson University  
"Mauritius: A Question of Democratic Development"
- 2022 Carlos Gonzalez, New College of Florida  
"Paving over Democracy: The Relationship Between Highways and Voter Turnout in Florida"
- 2021 Alyson E. Johnson, University of Central Florida  
"Explaining Income Inequality in Florida: 2000-2016"
- 2019 Meghan L. Stevens, University of Central Florida  
"Differences in Vote Margin of Candidates in the Florida Legislature"
- 2018 Alexander Bruens and Mirella Miranda, Florida Atlantic University  
"Redefining Post-Conflict Peacekeeping Success in Regional and International Missions"
- 2017 Bradley J. Caouette, University of Central Florida  
"Regional Political Power in Florida"

## FPSA President's Message

by FPSA President Kelly McHugh, Ph.D. (Chair Florida Southern College, Lakeland)

Greetings FPSA members and all interested readers!

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Florida Political Chronicle*, vol.30, n.1 (2023) at 178 pages, presented under the leadership of our esteemed Editor, Professor Marco Rimanelli of Saint Leo University. As we approach our 2024 Annual Conference of the Florida Political Science Association hosted by the University of Florida in Gainesville (and the 2024 election season culminating in November) the idea of critical thinking has been on the top of my mind. In a 2019 essay in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Elizabeth Oljar and D.R. Koukal observed a lack of precision around the term “critical thinking.” They noted, “We all want our students to be critical thinkers, but we are collectively unable to say with any degree of precision what that actually entails.”<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, I also find this term hard to define concisely; for me, it is less a specific learning outcome that I assess with an assignment and more of a “meta” approach that infuses the way I design my courses, the way I run my class sessions, and a disposition I seek to encourage among my students. If I were to define it briefly in relation to Political Science, I would argue that promoting critical thinking in Political Science requires students to be able to construct and advance evidence-based arguments about contemporary political issues. Concomitantly, students should also be able to interrogate the statements made by others, most notably by policy-makers and members of political parties.

Promoting critical thinking in the discipline of Political Science has particular resonance this year. The *Economist* dubbed 2024 “the biggest election year in history,” noting that more than half the world’s population will participate in some form of election this year.<sup>2</sup> This includes the 2024 Presidential Election in the United States, which will likely feature a rematch between former-President Donald J. Trump and incumbent-President Joseph R. Biden. This election will be closely contested, along with this year’s national races in the United Kingdom and Mexico, as well as the contest for seats in the European Parliament. In contrast, numerous other states will hold token election contests where the outcome is a foregone conclusion. The most notable among these is the presidential election in Russia (by now a dictatorship), which will almost certainly keep Vladimir Putin in power for a third consecutive term.

The cultivation of critical thinking skills is essential for those participating in all these election contests, as well as for those observing them from afar. Most fundamentally, discerning fact from fiction in politics has become difficult, as voters are now inundated with AI-generated content and disinformation circulated on social media sites. The political polarization, distrust in institutions and extremism that have plagued even well-established democracies make the proliferation of this false content even more perilous.

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Oljar & D.R. Koukal, "How to Make Students Better Thinkers" in *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 3 February 2019, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-to-make-students-better-thinkers/>

<sup>2</sup> Zanny Minton Beddoes, “2024 will be Stressful for Those Who Care about Liberal Democracy” in *The Economist*, 13 November 2023, <https://www.economist.com/the-world-ahead/2023/11/13/2024-will-be-stressful-for-those-who-care-about-liberal-democracy>

There is no simple solution to this profound challenge to democracy, and the free and fair elections that are essential to their functioning. National governments and tech companies must play a central role in identifying and limiting the distribution of disinformation as a targeted, planned malign content on all social media platforms. A more essential concern, however, is making sure that citizens are not just passive recipients of this disinformation. This task is one that the discipline of Political Science is well equipped to address. Through our teaching and scholarship, Political Scientists can highlight the degree to which democracy and the ideas that undergird it can become imperiled when elected leaders violate democratic norms and the voting public reacts with apathy.

Moreover, those who take a comparative approach to studying politics can demonstrate that the challenges currently faced by the U.S. are hardly unique or unprecedented. Numerous countries in Latin America and Europe have contended with the double-edged sword of political populism for decades. While populist leaders can excite the voting public and catalyze much-needed change, they can also usher in periods of illiberalism and extremism. As faculty members, it is vital that we help students in our classes -- whether they be first-year students in a survey class or graduating seniors in a seminar -- develop critical thinking skills they can utilize as citizens in a democracy.

The state of democracy in the U.S. and abroad will be among many topics addressed at the 2024 Annual Conference of the Florida Political Science Association (FPSA). The 2023 FPSA Annual Conference took place at Stetson University in DeLand, FL on Saturday 22 April with a high level of discussion and an even broader range of analysis of the 2022 Mid-Terms and Florida Gubernatorial Elections, as well as key topics in U.S. and international politics. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the next 2024 FPSA Annual Conference at the University of Florida in Gainesville on Saturday 9 March 2024!

I also hope that you will get to know our organization through our publications, offered free to the public: both the *Florida Political Chronicle*, our scholarly peer-reviewed regional Journal, and *The Political Scientist*, our professional newsletter. Please contact me if you have any questions on the FPSA, or wish to become involved in our work.

Sincerely,

*Kelly McHugh, Ph.D.*

**Chair & Associate-Professor Kelly McHugh, Ph.D.**  
**President Florida Political Science Association**  
**Florida Southern College, Lakeland**

## Editor's Introduction: FPSA & Florida Political Chronicle in 2023

by Marco Rimanelli, Ph.D. (Saint Leo University & 2013-14 Fulbright Chair College of Europe-Bruges)

Dear FPSA Political Scientists and "Fellow-Travelers",

welcome to this new 178 pages issue of the *Florida Political Chronicle*, vol.30, n.1 (2023), regional peer-reviewed scholarly journal of the Florida Political Sciences Association (FPSA) published on-line and in colour. All our **Current Issues** (2022-2023), **Recent Issues** (2009-2022) and **Archived Issues** (1989-2009) are free for access on the FPSA website with our **new URL domain**: <http://www.fpsanet.com/florida-political-chronicle.html> and <http://www.fpsanet.com/>.

The *Florida Political Chronicle* is a community resource for members, scholars, students and public interested in domestic and international affairs, as well as FPSA work. Connections to both URLs is secure.

Since 2021 the *Florida Political Chronicle* has created a new section, **Books-Special Issues**, to showcase our two books available free to the public and the interested teaching faculty in Florida:

- ❖ John Bertalan, *A Brief Introduction to Florida Government*, Special Issue-Book of the *Florida Political Chronicle*, vol.29, n.2 (Fall 2022 updated to the 2022 Mid-term Elections), pages 100: <http://www.fpsanet.com/florida-political-chronicle.htm>
- ❖ Marco Rimanelli, ed., *World War I and League of Nations Centennial, 1914-2019*, Special Issue-Book of the *Florida Political Chronicle*, vol.28, n.1 (Summer 2021), pages 351: <http://www.fpsanet.com/florida-political-chronicle.htm>

Since 2018, EBSCO Library collection of sources include also the *Florida Political Chronicle* and all its past issues as current references in library and university searches.

This new *Florida Political Chronicle* regular issue, vol.30, n.1 (Summer 2023) at 178 pages, welcomes readers to an introductory "President's Message" (p.11-12) of our renewed President of the Florida Political Science Association, Chair and Associate-Professor in Political Science Kelly McHugh, Ph.D., at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, discussing on changes at FPSA and the state of the Political Science Discipline and the 2023 FPSA Annual Conference at Stetson University in DeLand, FL. This is followed by my own "Editor's Introduction" (p.13-16) summarizing key contributions to this issue from 7 authors in 8 essays.

This issue salutes the new 2023 FPSA Best Graduate Student Paper Award by Mr. Alexander Krest, M.A. & ABD at the University of South Florida--St. Petersburg with the essay "Citizen Departure: Investigating Party Dissolution at the County Level" (p.128-145). Mr. Krest's paper analyzes how during the past 2010s decade, a growing number of American voters have abandoned their political affiliations, seemingly disillusioned with the actions of their respective party and/or its candidates. This phenomenon will undoubtedly shift the political spectrum, having unforeseen consequences at every level government and in every aspect of the electioneering process will likely have consequential impacts on closed primary systems. Unaffiliated voters currently comprise roughly 28% of the electorate in Florida and approximately 23% in New York. From these numbers alone, it is clear to see that the unaffiliated voter will have substantial impact on elections, either from their absence in primaries or their inclusion in general elections. This essay investigates trends in the unaffiliated populous at the county level, in both Florida and New York between 2012 and 2022, using statistical analysis, as well as geographic information system (GIS) and resulting visuals to elucidate party desertion variations at the county level in these two politically important states. However, despite background level trends, all but one of the variables assessed in this study (population, majority affiliation and year of occurrence) were not significant.

The new 2023 FPSA Best Undergraduate Student Paper Award was conferred to Mr. Colin Kennelly, B.A. at Stetson University, Florida, with the essay "Mauritius: a Question of Democratic Development" (p.146-153). Mr. Kennelly's paper stresses how according to multiple indexes, including the E.I.U. Democracy index, the Island of Mauritius is among the strongest democracies in the world and a notable

regional outlier compared to the other governments of sub-Saharan Africa. The author's research focuses on the conditions for Mauritius' democratic emergence and durability. Using a mostly similar systems case study comparison with Seychelles, the research tested the validity of the National Identity Theory of democratic formation as well as other Mauritius-specific theories found in the literature on the subject. Ultimately, the research found soft rejections of the National Identity Theory, as well as of the British Constitutionalism and Coalition-Building Theories, while finding support for the Civil Society Theory. The research also proposes as explanation differences in geopolitical standing and early leadership.

The first essay in this issue, "Developing and Implementing a Framework for Dispute Resolution: Key Elements of Negotiation" (p.17-23) is again by University President Robert W. Robertson, Ph.D., of the University College of Cayman Islands and Senior Research Fellow at the University of London--School of Advanced Studies & Commonwealth in Great Britain, who has contributed his work also in a past issue (vol.29, n.1, 2022). President Robertson's current essay discusses on how conflict is a common daily element of both individuals and organizations with increasingly complex inter-personal and inter-organizational relationships also in the global, technological economy. Political Scientists must understand conflict and the key skills needed to address conflict to achieve success as both individuals and as organizations. President Robertson's essay defines and discusses "conflict", as well as the importance of negotiation as a structured method to address and manage conflict using a seven-steps theoretical model.

The second essay in this issue, "Explaining Differences in the 2016 Florida Vote for Trump and Rubio" is co-authored by Florencia Miguez Devesa, B.A. Honors and Professor Aubrey Jewett, Ph.D., both from the University of Central Florida in Orlando (p.24-44). The authors analyze the differences in Florida between the county-level vote received by Republican President-elect Donald Trump and Republican Florida U.S. Senator Marco Rubio in the 2016 Florida general elections. The authors used Regression analysis to examine both support and the difference in support among these two once rival candidates in 2015-16 for the U.S. Presidency. The results indicate that President-elect Trump did better in Florida counties with larger percentages of lower-educated Whites, lower-income households and higher-unemployment rate. Instead, Senator Rubio performed better than Trump in Florida counties with larger numbers of Cuban and non-Cuban Hispanics, plus women and voters not registered with either parties.

The third essay in this issue, "The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: the Case of the United States", is by our twice former-FPSA President and Associate-Professor Leah Hutton Blumenfeld, Ph.D., of Barry University, Miami (p.45-53). Dr. Blumenfeld's essay is a research project that reconsiders Professor Juan Linz's seminal work with Dr. Alfred Stepan on comparative and Latin American politics focusing on the erosion of democracy and eventual breakdown of democratic regimes in the book, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration* (1978). Working from his discussion of the elements and process of breakdown, this essay posits that the United States (U.S.), while not a true case of a breakdown of regime *per se*, does indeed exhibit some of the characteristics of states struggling in a democratic crisis. In this context, we can move past the idea of "American Exceptionalism" because the U.S. is much more like its neighbors in the Western Hemisphere when it comes to a variety of socio-economic metrics and in the political realm, too. Thus, it is worth examining where and how the stability of U.S. democracy may be at risk of democratic backsliding, which however does not always lead to a breakdown in examining contentious Presidential politics in 2015-2022. At the moment, this essay concludes that the recent democratic backsliding in the U.S. did not lead to any major political breakdown, although the need remains for continuing to study, observe and participate in democracy at the polls and in all levels of governmental institutions.

The fourth essay in this issue, "Italy vs. Balkans and East Mediterranean: from Lost Imperialism to Advocacy of Regional NATO-E.U. Integration, 1860s-2024" is by Marco Rimanelli, Ph.D., Professor of Political Sciences & International Studies at Saint Leo University (p.54-126). Professor Marco Rimanelli analyzes the evolution of Italy's policies towards the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean, long been conditioned by her

weak national image as the "Least of the Powers" in Europe since her 1860-70 National Unification. Thus, Italy pursued 4 phases of limited imperialist penetration in the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean, with only limited regional influence and brief periods of dominance through the Triple Alliance, World War I, Fascism's imperialism and Axis alliance, and World War II. Military defeat in 1943-1945 saw Italy's collapse and loss of all wartime annexations, Istria and colonies, while frozen-out of the Soviet-occupied Balkans and Eastern Europe during the Cold War bipolar division of Europe (1946-90). This was followed in both the Cold War and post-Cold War by a reversal of diplomatic approach: as Italy became a pro-U.S./Western democratic state, she also was a key NATO front-line defensive state and key European Community/Union (E.U.) liaison in the Balkans, alongside Germany. Regardless, Italy in both organizations pursued passive, non-imperialist security and economic policies in the Cold War under the U.S.-led NATO and E.U., while limiting her diplomatic approach to the Balkans and Eastern Europe to economic cooperation with anti-Soviet communist Yugoslavia and supporting pro-Euro-Atlantic Greece and Turkey in 1970-90, as well as limited trade relations with Soviet communist enemies (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria). Finally, the Post-Cold War saw the collapse of Communism and Soviet control of East Europe and Balkans, while Italy's own domestic political collapse under the corruption scandal of "Open Hands" left the country bereft of any leadership and initiative to either annex independent Slovenia or play a dominant political role in the 1990s five Yugoslav Civil Wars, beyond her critical logistic and military base for NATO peacekeeping in the region. Nevertheless, a politically and economically weak Italy remained just a passive Western "facilitator" in the new Balkans and East Mediterranean, with a minimalist diplomatic role in the Post-Cold War just to support the gradual integration of new Balkans democracies in Europe's regional NATO-E.U. dual-Enlargements (Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Montenegro, North Macedonia). But today's post-imperialist, democratic and Euro-Atlantic Italy since 1946 remains self-marginalized by her inner politico-economic fragility and economic decline (1946-55, 1970s, 2000-2024) as a declining "courtesy" G-7/G-8 medium Power compared to U.S.-German regional dominance, and thus unable and unwilling to exercise any past dreams of Balkans/East Mediterranean influence within the NATO-E.U. dual regional system of democratic economico-security integration, or leading peacekeeping missions abroad for regional stability, or even being central to build regional energy cooperation efforts to build gas-pipelines and diplomatically mediate all regional tensions. Finally, Balkans security remains vulnerable to Russia's anti-Western strategy to undermine NATO's integration (opposing Alliance Enlargements in 1999-2020s, fostering Serbia's resentment on Kosovo, destabilizing Montenegro and Bosnia, opposing NATO's Missile Defense in Romania and Poland) and East Mediterranean (Russia's ambiguous ties with an ambivalent Turkey, penetration in Syria, naval drills with China and security cooperation with Islamic Iran), especially after Russia's 2022-24 disastrous invasion of Ukraine seeking to reunify most ex-Soviet states (Belarus', Ukraine, CSTO) in a neo-Russian Slavic empire against the West fully aligned in trade, security and dictatorship with Syria, Islamic Iran (destabilizing the Middle East) and Communist China (herself threatening to invade Taiwan). But Russia's failure in 2022 to quickly conquer Ukraine, or split Europe and NATO with her botched energy-blackmails, and her horrendous war-crimes in Ukraine has sparked instead broad U.S.-Western sanctions and coordinated escalating military aid to Ukraine, plus new NATO enlargements (Sweden and Finland), beefed-up NATO military defenses of its previously lightly armed "Eastern Flank" and Scandinavia, while decoupling Europe's energy dependency from Russia, and promising future NATO-E.U. memberships for Ukraine and Georgia. In all these dramatic changes, Italy under new Premier and former post-Fascist leader Giorgia Meloni has positively shocked all observers by strongly siding the U.S., NATO and E.U. against Russia and China, while completely stomping previous pro-Putin and pro-China support among her junior Right-wing coalition partners (late-Senator Silvio Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* and Matteo Salvini's League).

This issue showcases as Book Review, "World Politics" (p.175-176), by Houman Sadri, Ph.D., Deputy-Director of the Information and Policy Analysis Center (IPAC) of the University of Central Florida (UCF) and Associate-Professor of Political Sciences at UCF, as well as former FPSA President in 2012-2013.

Finally, this issue displays the Florida Political Science Association's "Statement of Support of Academic Freedom" (p. 177).

The two Back-Covers for the *Florida Political Chronicle*, traditionally highlight the institutional profile of current FPSA University Members:

- the first one (p. 178) covers Saint Leo University, near Tampa, founding institution for FPSA's *Florida Political Chronicle*;
- the second one (p. 179) portrays the Information & Policy Analysis Center (IPAC) of the University of Central Florida in Orlando as a valued FPSA sponsor, under IPAC's Deputy-Director Houman Sadri, Ph.D. who is also Associate-Professor at the University of Central Florida in Orlando (and ex-FPSA President in 2012-2013) who has generously funded the FPSA Best Undergraduate Paper Award to meritorious candidates in 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2022.
- Dr. Houman Sadri has reconfirmed IPAC's continued sponsorship of future FPSA Best Undergraduate Paper Awards (see p.178 with photo of Sadri's IPAC annual contribution chèque given at the 2023 FPSA Conference to then-FPSA President Leah Blumenfeld).

**Our Mission:** since 1989, the *Florida Political Chronicle* is the peer-reviewed, regional, scholarly journal of the Florida Political Sciences Association, serving the academic disciplines and professors of Political Sciences and International Relations in a balanced, non-political, analytical, intellectual and non-discriminatory way that fully embodies both our regional association's and U.S. Department of Education's requirements for public policy in universities. The *Florida Political Chronicle* is registered on EBSCO and encourages submissions of scholarly academic essays and Book-Reviews from all Political Sciences-related Disciplines: American Government & Politics; Political Theory & Philosophy; Comparative Politics; International Affairs & Security; Diplomatic History; International Political Economy; Public Administration; International Law & Organizations. Our FPSA regional scholarly journal supports submissions from current and past FPSA members, as well as domestic and foreign scholars who have either presented their work at any FPSA Annual Conference or support our organization's mission.

Thank you for your enduring trust in the *Florida Political Chronicle* ([Submission Guidelines](#) on p.8).

Most sincerely,

*Marco Rimanelli, Ph.D.*

Editor of *Florida Political Chronicle*, FPSA's regional scholarly journal, <http://www.fpsanet.com/florida-political-chronicle.html>

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## Developing and Implementing a Framework for Dispute Resolution: Key Elements of Negotiation

by President & C.E.O. Robert W. Robertson, Ph.D. (University College of Cayman Islands & Senior Research Fellow, University of London—School of Advanced Studies, Great Britain)

**ABSTRACT:** Conflict is a very common element of our daily lives as individuals and from an organizational perspective. Fundamentally, conflict is related to people and the increasingly complex inter-personal and inter-organizational relationships that are so prevalent in the global, technological economy. As Political Scientists an understanding of conflict and the key skills that can be used to address conflict are important to our success as individuals and as organizations. This paper defines and discusses “conflict” and the importance of negotiation as a structured method to address conflict. In particular, the paper explores the way that conflict can be managed using a seven-steps theoretical model.

### Introduction

In 2021, M. Kelly published a monograph of 15 interdisciplinary research papers through Princeton University that, in part, highlighted “...the increasingly polarized political landscape in the United States (U.S.) — and much of the world — (which) is experiencing a catastrophic loss of diversity that threatens the resilience not only of democracy, but also of society” (Kelly, 2021). These papers identified how polarization is produced and influenced over time by the actions and interactions of individual voters, people in power, and various social networks—leading to conflict.

In that regard, it is increasingly clear that society can be described as a “global village.” On planet Earth the global population in the 2020s now exceeds eight billion people (United Nations Department of Economic & Social Affairs, Population Division, 2022) and there is, by necessity, more interaction that occurs between individuals and organizations economically and socially. At times, this added level of interaction can include more complexity as cross-cultural tensions may increase. Wilmot and Hocker (2011, p.2) suggest that “...conflict is a fact of human life. It occurs naturally in all kinds of settings. Nations still struggle, families fracture in destructive conflicts, marriages face challenges and often fail, and the workplace is plagued with stress.”

Indeed, the term “conflict” is quite common in warfare, Politics Sciences, workplace and daily lives. In many cases, “conflict” is used interchangeably with term “dispute”. As employees and as individuals, it is evident that conflicts and disputes are all around us every day. The term “conflict” is defined in a variety of ways including: “existing in any situation where facts, desires or fears pull or push participants against each other or in divergent directions” (Heitler, 2012). Heitler also suggests a key to successfully resolving conflicts is the need for the parties to agree and support a framework or conflict-resolution process that specifically identifies methods by which all parties are provided with an opportunity to present their side of the conflict and essentially be heard. This process of negotiation is critical to successfully reaching a resolution to the conflict. In addition, Wilmot and Hocker (2011, p.11) state that conflict can be defined as “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources and interference from others in achieving their goals.” On a practical level, Fisher, R., Ury, W. and Patton, B. (2011), suggest that the method of negotiation is critically important. They suggest that it is important to separate the people from the problem, focus on interests not positions; invent options for mutual gain; and insist on using objective criteria (Fisher, Ury & Patton, 2011, p.16).

In fact, there is a long history of study related to conflict management. For example, Batten (2018) notes that *The Art of War*, a highly influential and succinct treatise on military strategy, was written by Sun Tzu, in the sixth century B.C. Tzu's *The Art of War* "clearly identifies that war is the ultimate, and most often the worst, approach to conflict resolution. As a result, war should be avoided if at all possible" (Tse, 1997). Further, General Tzu suggests there are, in fact, similarities that are evident between war and other conflict resolution approaches which are more peaceful in nature and, in fact, more effective. A key aspect to *The Art of War* is that "war or a battle should be avoided if possible as victory can possibly be achieved by other means" (Tse, 1997). Indeed, "the essence of *The Art of War* is not to defeat the enemy but to maximize gain (by negotiation) for one's own self" (Batten,2018).

Historically, conflict has increasingly been resolved using a formalized legal system which includes litigation. Unfortunately, the legal system is perceived as generating a winner and a loser. The legal system is viewed as taking too long and costing too much to resolve conflicts efficiently and effectively. Access to the legal system has been raised as a potential concern (United Nations, n.d.). In that regard, an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) approach has been advocated as a supplement to litigation. In many cases, ADR alternatives can assist in generating "win/ win" solutions to a conflict. The U.S. Department of Labor defines ADR as "any procedure agreed to by the parties of a dispute in which they use the services of a third party to assist them in reaching an agreement and avoiding litigation" (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.).

Fundamentally, there are advantages to ADR including:

I) flexibility and control—the parties generally have more input into the procedural rules and timing as compared to the public litigation process;

II) speed—on average U.S. District Court cases took 12-16 months longer than arbitration;

III) costs—less time generally equals less cost;

IV) evidence and discovery rules—often these elements are less formal and easier to address;

V) privacy—in contrast to litigation there is a higher threshold of privacy and confidentiality;

VI) arbitrator—the parties may select an arbitrator who often is a subject matter expert as opposed to a judge who may not understand the specific industry/sector;

VII) finality—appeal rights are limited" (Arbitration Resolution Services, 2018, p.16).

Although frequently viewed as negative, conflict has another important side that is important. For example, Wilmot and Hocker (2011, p.9) state that, "in the Chinese language the character for conflict is made up of two different symbols: one indicates danger whereas the other indicates opportunity." In that regard, there may be benefits within the process of conflict resolution. Specifically, the conflict resolution process could be important in generating innovative solutions. The traditional and historical resolution processes including both war and litigation often generates "winner/ loser" outcomes. The newer conflict resolution models including formal negotiations are more capable of developing "win/win" options that could be beneficial to both parties (win/win).

As discussed, conflict is a form of disagreement between two or more parties. Critically, conflict involves individuals—people. Goleman (1995) states that a key to being successful in managing conflict is linked to a series of key skills related to managing inter-personal relationships including: Emotional self-awareness; Accurate self-assessment; Self-confidence; Self Control; Trustworthiness; Conscientiousness; Adaptability; Achievement orientation; Initiative; Empathy; Organizational awareness; Service

orientation; Developing others; Leadership; Influence; Communication; Change- catalyst; Conflict Management; Building bonds; and, Teamwork and collaboration. It is useful to reflect on these emotional intelligence elements as we seek to improve our negotiation outcomes.

### **The Seven Element Model of Conflict**

Patton (2005) has enumerated a seven-elements framework that highlights the key steps to be considered in successfully managing conflict:

**Interests:** In any conflict each party has basic motivations and needs. It is important for us to understand the interests with respect to the positions of our counterparts. At times, these interests may not be overtly evident, and we need to probe to establish these basic motivations. For example, a car salesman may be interested in selling the car; however, an underlying interest may include the need to clear the old model year cars off the lot to accommodate the new model year automobiles. Understanding this broader interest is important. In fact, understanding this fact may suggest that timing as a motivating factor can assist in our conflict resolution and negotiation process.

**Legitimacy:** In negotiations we see that many decisions or outcomes are viewed under the lens of legitimacy or fundamental fairness. In the event we are faced with an offer we see as fundamentally unfair we may simply reject that offer and walk away. For a negotiation to be perceived as successful the process and the outcome must be viewed as fair and legitimate. For example, a new employee may be excited to negotiate a start to a new job. However, if they find out that other new hires with the same qualifications and job description are paid more this excitement may diminish markedly. Legitimacy speaks to the importance of sustainability with respect to an agreement.

**Relationships:** In any negotiation it is important to recognize that the relationship with your counterpart must be viewed as something that is not a “one off”. We should recognize the importance of an ongoing relationship as an underlying dynamic of the conflict and the negotiation process. In the cases in which there is an existing ongoing relationship it is important to build trust and rapport with our counterpart. Using a more ethical approach can drive longer term relationships. For example, this element can be particularly important in cross cultural negotiations as building the relationship is deemed as important with many cultural groups. The Project on Negotiation (2019) suggests that the relationship component is a very important piece of the negotiation process as we are more apt to agree with someone with whom we have built some rapport.

**Alternatives and BATNA:** In any negotiation it is important to be pragmatic and consider alternatives to reach our objectives. In advocating this pragmatic approach, Patton (2005) suggests that having alternatives on the table may identify mutually acceptable options. In addition, Patton (2005) notes that we should undertake an analysis of our Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA). The concept of BATNA is developed in *Getting to Yes* and it essentially means that we need a back-up plan in the event that we cannot achieve a negotiated resolution. For example, in the event we are negotiating with an employer with respect to a particular position it is of advantage to us to have a BATNA. In this case, a BATNA may include moving on to another employer or alternatively assessing other options to pursue graduate education. A BATNA may include simply walking away. Patton (2005) notes that it is important to know the BATNA of the other party as this can facilitate creating options. As you develop your understanding of the BATNA of the other party you are more prepared for the negotiations.

**Options:** In any negotiation, having a range of options should be considered as these may assist one or both parties in achieving their interests and motivations. Too often alternatives are constricted as parties focus on a limited agenda. Patton (2005) advocates a broader range of options that may highlight the similarities within both parties. A key objective here is to create a larger pie to be shared by both parties—adding value to the negotiation process.

**Commitments:** As an outcome of a negotiation there is often a commitment made by the parties which can be classified as an agreement or promise(s). A commitment could be simply an agreement to meet at a prescribed time to continue the negotiation. Alternatively, a commitment could occur at the end of the negotiation to codify the outcome of the process. For example, commitment could take the form of agreement with respect to the negotiation agenda; the physical place and time for the meeting(s) or ultimately at the successful conclusion of the negotiation.

**Communication:** Fundamentally, negotiation is a communication process between individuals. In that regard all of the elements proposed by Patton (2005) include communication. Communication can use a variety of different modes including an increasing use of technology. In that regard the process of communication using technology can have an added level of complexity. Communication is based on a sender and a receiver including the critical component of active listening. As negotiators we must recognize that communication is iterative, and it gradually builds a level of trust between the parties. A successful negotiation can rise or fall on the communication process. At times it is not what is said but how it is said. A key issue with respect to communication is to recognize the importance of cross-cultural diversity and ensure that our communication reflects the many different parties that we may encounter in a conflict situation (Faure and Sjostedt, 1993).

Of course, Patton (2005) identifies all of these seven elements as important. However, the cross-cultural aspect of communication is crucial. For example, my personal experience in Central Asia is that building a relationship is a key part of the negotiation process. This involves inter-personal skills, communication skills and emotional intelligence. As we look to negotiate with someone from another culture patience is important. Too often my experience has included seeing colleagues from Europe and Asia looking to quickly negotiate a contract with little success. A more deliberate approach was often a better option even though this option is more time consuming.

### Summary

Conflict is a fact of life facing us as individuals and as organizations. It is particularly important that political scientists understand conflict and the important role that negotiation plays in resolving conflict. Although some may try to avoid or simply ignore conflict, it is omnipresent.

From *The Art of War* to *Getting to Yes* there have been many articles and books written to provide guidance in resolving conflict and improving our skills as negotiators. The seven-steps model advocated by Patton (2005) provides a useful framework that can assist in the development of more effective negotiation skills and build “win/win” results. Patton (2005) suggests that a simple but robust framework or model can be of assistance to a negotiator in that it can help define our goals and identify and take advantage of opportunities as they arise. As Fisher, Ury and Patton (2011 p. XXVII) note in *Getting to Yes* “...conflict is a growth industry;” and a principled negotiation framework based on these elements identified by Patton can yield better and more sustainable outcomes.

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## Explaining Differences in the 2016 Florida Vote for Trump and Rubio

by Florencia Miguez Devesa, B.A. Honors & Aubrey Jewett, Ph.D. (University of Central Florida)<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** What explains the electoral difference in Florida between the county-level vote received by Republican (R) President-elect Donald Trump and Florida U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R) in the 2016 Florida general elections? Regression analysis is used to examine both support for Trump and Rubio, and the difference in support between these two once rival candidates in 2015-16 for the U.S. Presidency. The results indicate that President-elect Trump did better in Florida counties with larger percentages of lower-educated Whites, lower-income households and higher-unemployment rate. Instead, Senator Rubio performed better than Trump in Florida counties with larger numbers of Cuban and non-Cuban Hispanics, plus women and voters not registered with either of the main parties.

### Introduction

In 2016 Floridians voted both for Republican (R) President-elect Donald Trump and for Florida Republican Senator Marco Rubio. However, while Trump eked out a victory over Democrat (D) contender Hillary Clinton by over 1% (49% to 47.8%), Rubio won by a more comfortable margin of almost 8% over Patrick Murphy (52% to 44.3%). What explains these victories and, even more importantly, what explains the difference in their margin of victory? These are important questions given that many political analysts and researchers did not expect Trump to win nation-wide or in the Sunshine State (Florida). Trump pursued an unorthodox path to victory in terms of campaign strategy, rhetoric and issues that seemed to alienate some groups (immigrants, minorities and women), while seeking to mobilize others (working class Whites, those strongly opposed to illegal immigration, and people fed up with establishment politics and economics – “the Swamp”). Meanwhile, Rubio engaged in a more orthodox campaign that sought to broaden the appeal of the traditional conservative establishment Republican brand to groups outside the usual base: Hispanics, immigrants and women among others.

### Literature Review

The 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012 Presidential Elections in Florida were among the closest in the United States; and in 2012 the .09-point difference between Mitt Romney (R) and Barack Obama (D) represented the closest contest in any of the 50 states (MacManus, Jewett, et al., 2015, p.116 & 2019). Florida became competitive largely due to its explosive population growth, which made Florida “one of the most diverse states in the country in terms of race, ethnicity, immigration, religion and age” (Jewett, 2017, p.7).

In 2016, both Presidential Campaigns made Florida a central element of their strategy: while Florida has been a “luxury” to some Democratic candidates in the past (they could have won the Electoral College without Florida’s electors), many people thought that a Hillary Clinton (D) victory in Florida would have made it exceedingly hard for Donald Trump to reach 270 electors (Knuckey & Jewett, 2018). The general election campaign started immediately following the conventions, with the Hillary Clinton campaign trying to inflict so much damage to Trump’s image among voters that it would be virtually impossible for him to recover – Hillary Clinton’s efforts began in August, when the Trump campaign had not yet aired a single TV advertisement (Knuckey & Jewett, 2018). The Hillary Clinton campaign also devoted significant

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on the Honors Undergraduate Thesis by Florencia Miguez Devesa under supervision of Professor Aubrey Jewett at the School of Politics, Security & International Affairs of the University of Central Florida in Orlando.

resources to their “ground game” and opened 14 offices throughout the state, while the Trump campaign only opened one office in Sarasota (Knuckey & Jewett, 2018). The Trump campaign believed that mass rallies (which many cable news channels carried live to a much broader audience) and Trump’s status as a part-time Floridian would help him win Florida’s 29 Electoral College votes (Knuckey & Jewett, 2018).

For years, conventional wisdom has dictated that to win in Florida, it was important to engage Hispanic voters. For example, Puerto Ricans appear to have been crucial to Republican President George W. Bush's reelection success in Florida in the 2004 election (Bishin & Klofstad, 2009). In 2012 a central element of both Presidential campaigns in Florida was to target Hispanic voters (MacManus, Jewett, et al., 2015, p.121). Yet Trump’s campaign ignored these precedents: his aggressive rhetoric angered many Hispanics and it led to a surge in registration among members of these groups in the state, something that undoubtedly worried Republicans (Knuckey & Jewett, 2018). In addition, Trump decided to run an English-only campaign (Goldmacher, 2016).

Research on political behavior has found that social characteristics such as race, gender, social class and levels of education influence vote choice. Opinions about issues, parties and candidates are affected by both social characteristics and long-term predispositions (Flanigan & Zingale, 2010). Some studies suggest that in 2016, voting was more influenced by attitudes than demographic characteristics (Smith & Hanley, 2018, p.197).

McClurg and Holbrook's study found that campaigning "activates" certain tendencies among voters; for example, the relationship between ideology and vote choice was much stronger in battleground states than in non-competitive states (McClurg & Holbrook 2009, p.498-499). McClurg and Holbrook (2009) found that economic voting is less common in battleground states.

Heersink and Peterson studied the effects of campaign visits in the 1948 Presidential election and found that Democrat President Harry Truman’s visits improved his election outcomes in the counties where he made appearances. One study found that independent voters are the ones most affected by campaign visits – a visit by Governor Mitt Romney (R), for example, increased Independent voters’ probability of voting for the Republican candidate by 5% -- and Independents were the only group affected by visits for more than two days (Wood, 2016, p.123).

Victor Devinatz, notes that the 2016 Presidential election marked the first time since the New Deal was passed when members of organized labor did not follow the advice of Union leaders and opted to vote for Donald Trump instead of labor-endorsed Hillary Clinton (Devinatz, 2017, p.233).

Inglehart and Norris argue that times of economic instability or insecurity create political conditions in which "authoritarian xenophobic" candidates may be able to succeed, while economic prosperity leads to more willingness to accept foreigners and openness. The increasing economic inequality has created an environment that fosters populism in many Western countries, including the United States; and while these parties and candidates are not a new feature of politics in these countries, they have been especially successful in the last few years (Inglehart & Norris, 2017, p. 444-445).

Robert Erikson (1989) notes that Political Scientists have found significant evidence that suggests that the economy is a major factor that explains vote choice and that income change is a peculiarly good predictor of Presidential vote (p.567). Income growth, measured as "percent change in real disposable income per capita in 12 months prior to the election" is a relevant factor in vote choice (Bartels & Zaller, 2001, p.10).

Inglehart and Norris argue that economic factors were superseded by a "powerful emotional reaction" and cite Arlie Hochschild's book *Strangers in Their Own Land* to explain what is behind this feeling: the transition to an Artificial Intelligence society has left many less-educated Americans behind and they feel like some groups are benefiting at their expense; the authors note that Donald Trump's rhetoric provided "emotional support" as he validated their feelings instead of merely dismissing them as “bigots” and provided their concerns with a platform (Inglehart & Norris, 2017, p.452).



Teigen, Shaw and McKee examined the "relationship between population density, racial context and the preferences of Black and White voters in the 2008 and 2012 elections" and the result of their analysis provides more evidence of the cultural element involved in voting. The authors found that both density and racial composition of a given area (based on analyzed ZIP codes) affect vote choice, and that white voters in particular are susceptible to these factors (Teigen, Shaw & McKee, 2017, p.2). The authors also found support for the racial threat and contact hypothesis (as described by Sigelman & Welch in 1993): their study showed that in rural areas with a high concentration of minority residents, White voters were less likely to vote for Obama, while in contrast, White voters who lived in urban areas with high levels of minority residents were more likely to vote for Obama (Teigen, Shaw & McKee, 2017, p.4). They explain that White voters in rural areas are less likely to have contact with minority residents because population density is low, whereas in areas with higher population density, it is more likely that people will have contact with others from a wider variety of backgrounds (Teigen, Shaw & McKee, 2017, p.5). As a result, we might see disproportionate support for Donald Trump in Florida's most rural counties.

Campbell and Sumners examined Senate races held in Presidential election years from 1972 to 1988 and found a positive correlation between Senate and Presidential election vote choices (Campbell & Sumners, 1990, p.517). Party affiliation, ideology and the "trend of greater support for Republican candidates" during the period they studied were common variables in both types of races (Campbell & Sumners, 1990, p.515). While many things have changed since Campbell and Sumners' study was published in 1990, their results suggest that Trump and Rubio's election results should be similar.

Donald Trump performed well in traditionally Republican areas; Knuckey and Jewett found "an almost perfect relationship" between Trump and Romney's performance in Florida's 67 counties (Pearson's  $r = .97$ ) and that Donald Trump did not win in Democrat enclaves; he only won four "Obama counties": Indian River, Jefferson, Monroe and Pinellas. In addition, the authors' regression analysis found that the variables that explained why Trump over performed (or underperformed) relative to Romney were percentage of Hispanic residents in a county, level of educational attainment ("percentage with a college degree") and median income (Knuckey & Jewett, 2018).

Table 1 displays selected Florida exit poll results from 2016 for both Republican President Trump and Senator Rubio. Rubio received 5% or higher support than Trump from the following groups: Cubans, non-Cuban Hispanics, high school or less, income under \$50,000, independents, urban voters and from people that thought that the economy was the most important issue, the condition of the economy was good, and whose financial situation was about the same as four years ago. Rubio received substantially less support than Trump from people who thought that illegal immigrants should be deported.

**Table 1: Selected Florida 2016 General Election Exit Poll Results**

Category	Trump	Rubio	Difference
Females	46%	50%	4%
65 and older	57%	55%	2%
Whites	64%	62%	2%
Cubans	54%	68%	14%
Non-Cuban Hispanics	26%	39%	13%
High School or less	46%	53%	7%
Whites with no degree	66%	62%	4%
Income under \$50k	42%	51%	9%
Income between \$50k and \$100k	52%	54%	2%

Income greater than \$100k	56%	58%	2%
Republicans	89%	91%	2%
Democrats	8%	12%	4%
Independents	47%	52%	5%
Immigration most important issue	69%	70%	1%
Economy most important issue	46%	51%	5%
Illegal immigrants should be offered legal status	33%	36%	3%
Illegal immigrants should be deported	92%	84%	8%
Immigrants hurt the country	87%	84%	3%
Trade takes away U.S. jobs	70%	66%	4%
Condition of national economy: good	14%	19%	5%
Condition of national economy: poor	67%	70%	3%
Financial situation compared to 4 years ago: better	20%	24%	4%
Financial situation compared to 4 years ago: worse	70%	70%	0%
Financial situation compared to 4 years ago: same	51%	57%	6%
Life for the next generation of Americans will be: worse than today	65%	68%	3%
Urban voters	41%	47%	6%
Suburban voters	53%	54%	1%
Rural voters	61%	64%	3%

Source: CNN.

Categories where difference in support for Trump (R) and Rubio (R) is equal or greater than 5 are highlighted.

### Theories Explaining Vote Choices

**Economic Voting:** economic voting suggests that the performance of the economy is a major factor that influences vote choice. This theory holds that voters evaluate politicians from an economics-based perspective: they are more likely to support a candidate from the incumbent President’s party if the economy is doing well and just as likely to seek change if they believe the economy is performing poorly. In particular, several studies have found income change to be a particularly good predictor of vote choice. In addition, we know that people vote based on their own self-interest: voters will support candidates they perceive will benefit people in their income group. In terms of economic voting, we should see very little difference between Trump and Rubio. Economic considerations cloud all other variables; for example, evaluation of candidate characteristics depends on performance of the economy. Since both Trump and Rubio are members of the Republican Party, the opposition party, they should have performed better in counties with lower income growth, higher unemployment rate, lower median household income and higher percentage in poverty. If economic voting applies to the 2016 election in Florida, then we would see little to no difference in the voting patterns of Trump and Rubio despite their different campaign messages: they would perform, as well as any other generic Republican. This theory includes variables like: median household income, real income change, unemployment rate and percentage of population in poverty.

**Cultural Voting:** cultural voting suggests that attitudes and prejudices are the driving force behind vote choice or political behavior. Cultural voting theory holds that voting can be a highly emotional act, responsive to fears about the future, increased automation in the workforce and changing cultural norms as a result of immigration patterns. This theory includes variables like: percentage of foreign-born

population, percent of population that speaks a language other than English at home and population density. Because Trump's message appealed to emotions about immigration, its effects on American culture and the changing economy in a way that other candidates – even from his own party – could not, then these variables should be strongly related to his level of support. In addition, because these variables affected Trump's level of support more than Rubio's, these variables should also be strongly related to the difference in support for the Republican candidates.

**Demographic Voting:** Demographic voting theory holds that social characteristics are the major determinant of vote choice. It includes variables like: race, gender, age and level of education.

**Campaign/Political Communication:** This theory holds that campaigns and events affect vote choices. It includes variables like election campaign visits and amount of advertising spending.

### Hypotheses

Based on previous literature, exit polls and theory a number of hypotheses are proposed. The first set seeks explanations for the Republican victories in both the 2016 Presidential and Senate races in Florida. The second set suggests plausible reasons why Rubio won by more than Trump.

#### Hypotheses that apply to both Trump and Rubio

**H1:** There is a positive relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) and unemployment rate. The higher the unemployment rate, the higher his share of the vote. Voters will often blame candidates from the incumbent President's party for adverse economic conditions, so if the unemployment rate is higher, it is less likely that they will support any Democrat candidates. In addition, Donald Trump made jobs and the economy a central focus of his campaign.

**H3:** There is a positive relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) and median household income. Exit polls found that there was a positive relationship between income level and the likelihood of supporting Trump. Alternatively, it might be the case that if voters are to make evaluations about the state of the economy, they might take into account how much their relatives, neighbors and other members of their community are earning, and the lower the median household income, the lower their approval of the performance of the economy will be, making them more likely to vote for candidates of the opposition party.

**H4:** There is a positive relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) and the percentage of the population in poverty. While poorer people were more likely to support Democrats Hillary Clinton and Patrick Murphy (Florida's Treasure Coast), the number of people living with incomes below the poverty line might affect voters' perception of the economy regardless of their own income level; therefore, the higher the poverty rate, the more likely voters were to support Republican candidates.

**H5:** There is a positive relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) and the percentage of White voters in a county. Exit polls found that White voters overwhelmingly supported Trump (64%), while a similar number supported Rubio (62%).

**H6:** There is a negative relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) and the percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents in a county. Exit polls show that Hillary Clinton overwhelmingly won the support of non-Cuban Hispanic voters (62%) and Patrick Murphy had a slight edge over Rubio over voters in this demographic group (50% vs. Rubio's 48%).

**H7:** There is a positive relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) and the percentage of Cuban residents in a county. Exit polls found that Cuban voters supported Trump (54%) and Rubio (68%).

**H8:** There is a negative relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) and the percentage of African-American voters in a county. African-Americans strongly favored Hillary Clinton, with 84% of Blacks casting a vote for her, while 8% supported Trump. In the Senate race, African-Americans strongly favored Murphy, with 80% of Blacks voting for Murphy, while 17% supported Rubio.

**H9:** There is a negative relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) and the percentage of female residents in a county. Exit polls found that Democratic candidates received a greater level of support than the Republican candidates (46% of women supported Trump, while 50% of women voted for Rubio).

**H10:** There is a positive relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) with the percentage of residents aged 65 and older. Both Republican candidates received significant support from this demographic group according to exit polls: 57% of these voters supported Trump and 55% voted for Rubio.

**H11:** There is positive relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) with the percentage of Whites with a high school diploma or less. Because these voters are the ones most likely to be “left behind” by structural changes in the economy, it is likely that their evaluation of the economy was more negative, making them more likely to seek change.

**H12:** There is a positive relationship between the Republican voting percentage (President and Senate) and numbers of Trump visits to a county. The Trump campaign relied on massive rallies as a way to mobilize their base and Senator Rubio might have benefited from the “Coattail Effect”.

**H13:** There is a negative relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) with the percentage of foreign-born residents in a county. Given the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the Trump campaign, it is likely that voters in counties with a high proportion of foreign-born residents will vote for Democrats: even if some of these foreign-born residents are not naturalized citizens, contact with immigrants might make voters less responsive to anti-immigration rhetoric.

**H14:** There is a negative relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) with the percentage of residents who speak a language other than English at home. As in the previous hypothesis, contact with people from different cultural backgrounds might make voters more likely to support legal immigration, thus making them less likely to support Republican candidates.

**H15:** There is a negative relationship between the Republican percentage of the vote (President and Senate) with population-density per square mile. Urban voters are more likely to support Democratic candidates, while suburban and rural voters tend to support Republican candidates.

**Hypotheses that Apply to the Differences between Trump and Rubio:**

**H16:** There is a negative relationship between difference in support for Trump and Rubio vs. county unemployment rate. Since Trump campaigned on pursuing a different course for the economy and made that a central part of his campaign, counties with high unemployment may show more support for Trump than for Rubio.

**H17:** There is a positive relationship between differences in support for Trump and Rubio and county economic growth rate. Trump’s promise of economic policy change may resonate less with voters who live in counties already experiencing strong economic growth.

**H18:** There is a positive relationship between differences in support for Trump and Rubio with the percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents in a county. While exit polls indicate neither Republican received majority support from non-Cuban Hispanics who tend to vote Democratic, Trump did significantly worse than Rubio. This may be due to Trump’s harsh language concerning illegal immigration from Mexico and other Latin American countries.

**H19:** There is a positive relationship between the difference in support for Trump and Rubio and percentages of Cuban residents in a county. Exit polls show that both candidates received a majority of Cuban votes in Florida. However, Rubio polled better than Trump among Floridians who identify as Cuban. Rubio’s parents fled Cuban after the Castro take-over and Rubio has deep roots and friendships in the Cuban community in South Florida.

**H20:** There is a positive relationship between the difference in support for Trump and Rubio with the percentage of female voters in a county. Trump’s crude private comments about women became a major national story, and thus women on average may vote for Rubio more than they vote for Trump.

**H21:** There is a negative relationship between the difference in support for Trump and Rubio with the percentage of White residents in a county with less than a high school diploma. Trump’s rhetoric targeting low educated Whites, left behind by automation and international trade and fearful of illegal immigration, should result in a higher vote for him among these voters compared to Rubio Exit polls show that Rubio outperformed Trump among all voters without a high school degree, but that Trump did better than Rubio among White voters with no degree.

**H22:** There is a positive relationship between the difference in support for Trump and Rubio and the percentage of residents who make less than \$50,000 a year. Exit polls found a 9-points difference in support for Trump and Rubio among voters in this category (Rubio 51% vs. Trump 42%).

**H23:** There is a positive relationship between the difference in support for Trump and Rubio with the percentage of voters registered with no party-affiliation or a minor party. Exit polls found that Rubio won the support of 52% of voters who identified as independents, while Trump obtained the support of 47% of these voters. While identifying as independent is not the same as registering with no party affiliation or supporting a minor party, it is likely that self-identification and registration overlap.

**Table 2: Hypotheses Summary**

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Relationship
<b>Hypotheses that apply to both Trump and Rubio (Dependent Variable: Republican Percentage of the Vote)</b>		
1	Unemployment rate	Positive
2	Income growth	Negative
3	Median household income	Positive
4	Percentage of the population in poverty	Positive
5	Percentage of White voters	Positive

6	Percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents	Negative
7	Percentage of Cuban residents	Positive
8	Percentage of African-American voters	Negative
9	Percentage of female residents	Negative
10	Percentage of residents aged 65 and older	Positive
11	Percentage of Whites with a less than a High School diploma	Positive
12	Number of Trump visits to a county	Positive
13	Percentage of foreign-born residents in a county	Negative
14	Percentage of residents who speak a language other than English at home	Negative
15	Population per square mile	Negative
16	County unemployment rate	Negative
17	County income growth	Positive
18	Percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents	Positive
19	Percentage of Cuban residents	Positive
20	Percentage of female residents	Positive
21	Percentage of Whites with a less than a High School diploma	Negative
22	Percentage of residents who make less than \$50,000	Positive
23	Percentage of voters registered as no party affiliation	Positive

**Methodology and Measurement**

In order to answer the research question, this study will use regression analysis for a cross section of data from the 2016 general elections in Florida. The unit of analysis will be each of Florida’s 67 counties. Information about the following variables will be collected to explain the variables that affected Trump’s level of support, Rubio’s level of support and the differences between their respective levels of support.

**Dependent Variables**

Trump’s percentage of the vote – Trump’s percentage of the vote represents the proportion of the vote received by Trump in a county, expressed as a percentage of total votes casted in the Presidential Election. This information can be obtained from the “Election Results” website published by the Florida Department of State.

Rubio’s percentage of the vote – Rubio’s percentage of the vote represents the proportion of the vote received by Rubio in a county, expressed as a percentage of total votes casted in the Senate election. This information can be obtained from the “Election Results” website published by the Florida Department of State.

Differences in support for Trump and Rubio – this is the net difference between the percentage of the vote received by Trump and Rubio. This value is calculated by subtracting Trump’s percentage of the vote from Rubio’s percentage of the vote (Rubio’s percentage of the vote minus Trump’s percentage).

**Economic Variables:**

Unemployment rate – the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ definition of unemployment includes people who do not “have a job, have actively looked for work in the prior four weeks, and are currently available

for work.” The unemployment rate “reflects the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the labor force.” Statistics provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Real income growth – this variable represents the net change of income from one period (year) to the next English (data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau).

Median household income – the median household income for each county is provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Percentage of population in poverty – this variable represents the proportion of population in a county that earns an amount of money below the poverty line (data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau).

**Cultural Variables:**

Percentage of foreign-born population – this variable represents the proportion of population in a county that was not born in the U.S. (data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau).

Percentage of people that speaks a language other than English at home – this variable represents the proportion of population in a county whose primary language is not English (data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau).

Population density – this variable represents the number of people living in a set area (i.e.: square mile; data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau).

**Cultural Variables:**

Percentage of White voters in a county – this variable represents the proportion of voters whose race is White, and whose ethnicity is not Hispanic (data collected by the Division of Elections of the Florida Department of State).

Percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents in a county – this variable represents the proportion of residents whose ethnicity is Hispanic and not of Cuban descent (data collected by U.S. Census Bureau).

Percentage of Cuban residents in a county – this variable represents the proportion of residents whose ethnicity is Cuban and who are descendants of Cuban immigrants or immigrants themselves (data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau).

Percentage of African-American voters in a county – this variable represents the proportion of voters whose race is Black (data collected by the Division of Elections of the Florida Department of State).

Percentage of female residents in a county – this variable represents the proportion of residents in a county who are women (data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau).

Percentage of residents aged 65 and older – this variable represents the proportion of residents in a county who are older than 65 (data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau).

Whites who did not finish high school – this variable represents the level of educational attainment, reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in terms of percentage of White residents in a county, aged 25 and older, who have not earned a high school diploma.

Independents – this variable represents the number of voters who registered with no party affiliation or with a minor Party. To obtain this value, the number of registered Democrats and Republicans will be subtracted from the value of registered voters in a county.

**Campaign Variables:**

Campaign visits – a campaign visit is defined as public event such as a rally, in which either the U.S. Presidential or Vice-Presidential candidate participated. The effect of campaign visits tends to be geographically contained, but nevertheless they can increase the amount of local media coverage. Therefore, a county receives 2-points increase for every visit; a county receives 1-point if any candidate visited its local media market.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 3: Explaining the 2016 Florida County Vote for President Trump: Bivariate Regressions**

Independent Variable	B	Standard Error	Beta (R)	R-square	Hypothesized Direction?
Unemployment rate	.458	1.901	.030	.001	Yes
Income growth	-1.446*	.800	-.219	.048	Yes
Median household income (\$1000s)	-.399**	.197	-.243	.059	No
Percentage of residents in poverty	.575*	.306	.227	.037	Yes
Percentage of White voters	.753***	.067	.814	.663	Yes
Percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents	-.647***	.152	-.468	.219	Yes
Percentage of Cuban-American residents	-1.111***	.345	-.371	.138	No
Percentage of Black voters	-.784***	.156	-.528	.279	Yes
Percentage of female residents	-1.993***	.377	-.548	.300	Yes
Percentage of White residents 65/older	.488**	.207	.280	.079	Yes
Percentage of White residents with less than a high school diploma	1.743***	.249	.656	.431	Yes
Number of Trump campaign visits	-2.215***	.644	-.392	.154	No
Percentage of foreign-born residents	-1.024***	.156	-.631	.398	Yes
Percentage of residents who speak a language other than English at home	-.632***	.107	-.591	.349	Yes
Population density	-.014	.003	-.551	.304	Yes

Statistical Significance Level: \* = .10      \*\* = .05      \*\*\* = .01

Table 3 displays the results of 15 bivariate regressions with independent variables hypothesized to have an effect on the county level variance in the 2016 Florida Presidential vote for Donald Trump. Thirteen independent variables are statistically significant at .10 or better. Of these, 10 variables are in the expected direction. Income growth, the percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents, Black voters, female residents, foreign-born residents and residents who speak another language at home other than English, all have a negative association with the Trump vote as predicted. Conversely poverty rate, the percent of White voters, White residents over age 65 and White residents with less than a high school education have a positive correlation as anticipated. Three statistically significant independent variables have a negative bivariate correlation with the Trump vote in a county even though hypothesized to have a positive effect: median household income, percentage of Cuban residents and number of Trump Campaign visits.

The percentage of White voters has the biggest single impact of all these variables explaining about two-thirds of the variance in the county-level vote for the President. A 1% increase in the



percentage of White voters correlates with a .75% increase in a county’s vote for Trump. The percentage of White residents with less than a high school diploma explains 43% of the variance, and a 1% increase in lower educated Whites leads to a 1.7% increase in the vote for Trump. Conversely, the percentage of foreign-born residents in a county has the largest negative impact on the Trump vote, accounting for about 40% of the variance, with a 1% increase in foreign-born population associated with a 1% decrease in the Trump vote. Two variables were in the expected direction, but did not achieve statistical significance in a bivariate relationship with the vote for Trump: county unemployment rate and population density. We now turn to multivariate regression in order to test relationships in a more comprehensive fashion.

**Table 4:  
Explaining the 2016 Florida County Vote for President Trump: Full Model with Multi-Collinearity Problems**

Independent Variable	B	Standard Error	Beta	VIF	Hypothesized Direction?
Constant	34.783	39.050			
Unemployment rate	2.676**	1.029	.174	2.830	Yes
Income growth	-.651	.420	-.098	2.538	Yes
Median household income	.413**	.177	.252	7.308	No
Percentage of residents in poverty	-.042	.291	-.016	8.299	No
Percentage of White voters	.204	.243	.221	43.416	Yes
Percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents	-.099	.402	-.072	52.972	Yes
Percentage of Cuban-American residents	.610	.388	.204	10.542	Yes
Percentage of African-American voters	-.510**	.230	-.343	15.025	Yes
Percentage of female residents	-.372	.310	-.102	4.568	Yes
Percentage of White residents 65 and older	-.197	.127	-.113	3.344	No
Percentage of White residents with less than a high school education	1.265***	.253	.476	5.718	Yes
Number of Trump visits	-.072	.355	-.013	2.483	No
Percentage of foreign-born residents	-.287	.464	-.177	51.412	Yes
Percentage of residents who speak a language other than English at home	-.266	.648	-.248	230.649	Yes
Population density	-.002	.002	-.069	2.382	Yes

Statistical Significance Level: \* = .10      \*\* = .05      \*\*\* = .01  
 R-Square = .919      Adj. R-Square = .895      F = 38.486\*\*\*      DW = 2.051

Table 4 displays the results of multiple regression analysis of all 15 independent variables hypothesized to affect the 2016 county level vote for Trump in Florida. Unfortunately, this full model suffers from multicollinearity and thus the results are not reliable and its explanatory value is questionable. There are only 67 cases (counties), but 15 independent variables. The R-Square is quite high at .919 but only four independent variables are statistically significant. Nine of the 15 variables have a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) greater than five, with six of these variables greater than ten. Correlations greater than +/- .6 exist in the following sets of variables:

- Non-Cuban Hispanic Residents with Foreign Born Residents (.74) and with “Other than English at Home” Residents (.90) suggesting these variables are tapping into a very similar underlying concept and that these groups are clustered in similar counties.
- Cuban Residents with Foreign-Born Residents (.80) and with “Other than English at Home” Residents (.73) intimating these variables are tapping into a very similar underlying concept and that these groups are clustered in similar counties. The correlation between Cuban and non-Cuban Hispanics is more modest (.41) and consistent with the observation that different Hispanic subgroups tend to spread out in different parts of Florida (Cubans in southern counties, Puerto Ricans in the central region and Mexicans in the Panhandle).
- Poverty with Median Household Income (-.85) and with Whites with Less than High School Education (.74) indicating the inverse relationship between high poverty and high income counties and the fact that counties with greater numbers of White residents with low education levels are likely to experience higher rates of poverty.
- White Residents with non-Cuban Hispanic (-.60), Black (-.68), Foreign-Born (-.67) and “Other than English at Home” Residents (-.72) demonstrating a strong negative relationship between “White” and these other variables and reflecting Florida’s actual settlement patterns where diverse population groups remain somewhat segregated and not spread evenly among its 67 counties.

Based on this statistical information, previous research, and on the theories and hypotheses deemed most critical to exploring the variance in the 2016 Florida county vote for Trump, the “best” multi-variate regression model excludes the following five independent variables: Median Household Income, Poverty, White, Foreign-Born and “Other than English at Home” Residents. Two demographic variables of long-standing interest in Florida politics and considered crucial to past and future elections stay in the model: Cuban and non-Hispanic Cuban residents. While the model excludes the overall percentage of White residents, two other subgroups of White voters crucial to the Trump coalition remain: White seniors and Whites lacking a high school diploma. Finally, while the model now excludes two economic variables, it still includes unemployment rate and income growth: both thought to be extremely important to voter decision-making.

Table 5 displays the “best” multiple regression model containing 10 independent variables that help to explain variance in the 2016 vote for President Trump in Florida counties. The model explains 89% of the variance and seven out of 10 variables are statistically significant. Unlike the full model, this one does not exhibit signs of multi-collinearity. The highest VIF for any variable is just 3.3 and the other nine VIF values are all less than 3.0. Out of 90 possible correlations between the 10 independent variables, only one is greater than .6 (percentage female has a -.69 correlation with the percentage of Whites with less than a high school education, indicating that Florida counties with more women have smaller percentages of Whites who failed to graduate from high school).

**Table 5:  
Explaining the 2016 Florida County Vote for President Trump: Best Model**

Independent Variable	B	Standard Error	Beta	VIF	Hypothesized Direction?
Constant	88.495***	12.694			
Unemployment rate	1.896*	1.043	.124	2.363	Yes
Income growth	-.825**	.347	-.125	1.404	Yes
Percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents	-.645***	.096	-.467	2.484	Yes
Percentage of Cuban-American residents	-.180	.156	-.060	1.379	No
Percentage of African-American voters	-.811***	.090	-.546	1.870	Yes
Percentage of female residents	-.504**	.252	-.139	2.452	Yes
Percentage of White residents 65/older	-.209	.128	-.120	2.776	No
Percentage of White residents with less than a high school education	.866***	.213	.326	3.295	Yes
Number of Trump visits	.167	.345	.030	1.905	Yes
Population density	-.004**	.001	-.155	1.799	Yes

Statistical Significance Level: \* = .10      \*\* = .05      \*\*\* = .01  
 R-Square = .890      Adj. R-Square = .871      F = 45.454\*\*\*      DW = 1.925

Seven independent variables attain statistical significance and all seven operate in the hypothesized direction. Counties with high unemployment rates and high percentages of White residents with less than a high school diploma were more likely to vote for Trump. Counties with better income growth, more people per square mile, and higher percentages of non-Cuban Hispanics, Blacks and women gave Trump a lower share of the vote. According to the standardized regression coefficient (Beta) the African-American variable had the largest impact with each 1-percent increase in a county’s Black voters leading to a .81 decrease in the percentage of vote for Trump. The percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic population in a county had the second highest effect, with a one percent increase resulting in -.65 decrease in vote share for the President. Among variables with a positive statistically significant relationship, a 1% increase in White residents with less than a high school education correlated with a .87% increase in support for Trump (the third largest impact of all variables).

Three variables did not achieve statistical significance. Counties with higher percentages of Cuban voters were no more or less likely to cast a ballot for Trump. Although exit polls indicate that the President won a majority of the Cuban vote at the individual level, the coefficient in this county-level model is negative. Similarly, the percentage of White seniors in a county did not attain statistical significance. Again, the direction was opposite from expected as exit polls suggested that Whites over the age of 65 were more likely to vote for Trump. Finally, the number of Trump visits to a county had a positive but statistically insignificant effect on voting for Trump. This does not mean these campaign rallies were ineffective, but only that their impact was no greater on the host counties than on any other county in the state in terms of vote margin.

**Table 6:  
Explaining the 2016 Florida County Vote for Senator Rubio: Bivariate Regressions**

Independent Variable	B	Standard Error	Beta (R)	R-square	Hypothesized Direction?
Unemployment rate	-.327	1.625	-.025	.001	No
Income growth	-1.127	.687	-.199	.040	Yes
Median household income (\$1000s)	-.142	.173	-.101	.010	No
Percentage of residents in poverty	.262	.266	.121	.000	Yes
Percentage of White voters	.607***	.063	.768	.590	Yes
Percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents	-.476***	.134	-.403	.163	Yes
Percentage of Cuban-American residents	-.786**	.302	-.308	.095	No
Percentage of Black voters	-.711***	.130	-.560	.314	Yes
Percentage of female residents	-1.484***	.339	-.478	.228	Yes
Percentage of White residents 65/older	.386**	.178	.259	.067	Yes
Percentage of White residents with less than a high school diploma	1.240***	.236	.546	.299	Yes
Number of Trump campaign visits	-1.637***	.563	-.339	.115	No
Percentage of foreign-born residents	-.754***	.144	-.544	.296	Yes
Percentage of residents who speak a language other than English at home	-.469***	.097	-.513	.263	Yes
Population density	-.011***	.002	-.504	.254	Yes

Switching gears from the 2016 Presidential race to the Florida Senate race, Table 6 displays the results from a series of 15 bivariate regressions seeking to explain the variance in the 2016 Florida county level vote for Republican Senator Marco Rubio.

Statistical Significance Level: \* = .10    \*\* = .05    \*\*\* = .01

Eleven independent variables are statistically significant at .10 or better. Of these, nine variables are in the expected direction. Population density, number of campaign visits by President Trump and percentage of Cuban residents, non-Cuban Hispanic residents, Black voters, female residents, foreign-born residents and residents who speak another language at home other than English, all have a negative association with the Rubio vote. Counties with large numbers people from groups that generally support the Democratic Party, including Blacks, women and non-Cuban Hispanics, all tended to give Rubio smaller shares of the vote.

Two variables had an impact opposite of their hypothesized direction. Traditional campaign strategy suggests that the number of Trump visits to a county should increase votes for Rubio in those counties. This counter-intuitive result may stem from the high number of Trump visits to large urban Democratic counties indicating an association between visits and Democrat vote share rather than campaign visits actually causing

a decline in vote share. Of course, it is also possible that there was a backlash on candidates associated with Trump and the Republican Party, due to Trump’s harsh rhetoric. In addition, Cuban population had a negative impact on the Rubio vote rather than a positive effect. At the individual level, exit polls indicate Cubans did support Rubio whose parents were both born in Cuba. However, many Cuban residents live in counties that are more Democrat overall, which may be the reason for the negative results at the county level.

Three variables associated with white Floridians had a statistically significant positive effect on the county level vote for Rubio. The overall percentage of White residents in a county had the strongest effect of any single variable tested, explaining nearly 60% of the variance in the county level Rubio vote. In addition, the percentage of White seniors and less-educated Whites also had a statistically significant positive effect on a county’s support for Rubio. Interestingly, none of the economic variables achieved statistical significance in these bivariate regressions. County unemployment rate, income growth, median household income and poverty rate seemingly had no meaningful correlation with the Rubio vote. Both the unemployment rate and household income had coefficient signs opposite of expectations.

An examination of a full model (not displayed here) explaining the Rubio county level vote including all 15 independent variables resulted in the same multi-collinearity problems found in the Trump full model regression. The same nine variables that had high VIF scores in the Trump model had high VIF scores in the Rubio model and the same sets of variables again displayed high levels of correlation with each other. This result is not surprising given the exact same independent variables were entered into the full Rubio model with only the dependent variable different. The same solution applies to both models.

**Table 7:  
Explaining the 2016 Florida County Vote for Senator Rubio: Best Model**

Independent Variable	B	Standard Error	Beta	VIF	Hypothesized Direction?
Constant	86.362***	15.993			
Unemployment rate	1.131	1.315	.086	2.363	Yes
Income growth	-.588	.437	-.104	1.404	Yes
Percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents	-.483***	.122	-.409	2.484	Yes
Percentage of Cuban-American residents	-.098	.196	-.038	1.379	No
Percentage of African-American voters	-.761***	.113	-.600	1.870	Yes
Percentage of female residents	-.344	.317	-.111	2.452	Yes
Percentage of White residents 65/older	-.234	.162	-.157	2.776	No
Percentage of White residents with less than a high school education	.536*	.269	.236	3.295	Yes
Number of Trump visits	.100	.434	.021	1.905	Yes
Population density	-.004**	.002	-.191	1.799	Yes

Statistical Significance Level: \* = .10      \*\* = .05      \*\*\* = .01

R-Square = .761

Adj. R-Square = .719

F = 17.879\*\*\*

DW = 2.086

The best model explaining the county level Rubio vote excludes the same five variables as before: Median Household Income, Poverty and White, Foreign-Born and “Other than English at Home” Residents. The remaining 10 independent variables comprise the multi-variate model are displayed in Table 7 above.

The multi-variate model explains 76% of the variance in the 2016 Florida county vote for Senator Rubio. Only one variable has a VIF slightly over 3 and the VIF scores for the other nine independent variables are less than 3.0 indicating that multi-collinearity is not an issue. Four variables achieve statistical significance and all four are in the expected direction. A higher percentage of non-Cuban Hispanics and Black voters in a county, and more people per square mile, associates with a lower vote total for Senator Rubio. The African-American variable has the strongest impact (Beta = -.60) and the non-Cuban Hispanic variable has the second largest (Beta = -.41). Conversely, a 1% increase in White residents without a college degree in a county correlates with a .54 increase in votes cast for Senator Rubio. Neither unemployment rate nor economic growth attain statistical significance although both have the predicted direction. The percentage of female residents and the number of Trump visits to a county had no statistically significant relationship with the county vote for Rubio although both variables were in the expected direction. Finally, the percentage of Cuban residents and older white Floridians also did not achieve statistical significance and neither of these coefficients operated in the hypothesized direction (both were negative).

Table 8 compares the regression results for the best multi-variate models for President Trump and Senator Rubio. Four of the variables affected both Trump and Rubio’s respective levels of support similarly (same direction and showing statistical significance): percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents, percentage of African-American voters, percentage of White residents with less than a high school diploma, and population density. While the percentage of non-Cuban residents had a negative effect on the level of support for both Republican candidates, the effect was more pronounced in Trump’s case, with a B value of -.645 for Trump and -.483 for Rubio. In addition, while the percentage of White residents with less than a high school education had a positive effect on the level of support for both candidates, this positive relationship was stronger with Trump’s level of support (B value of .866 for Trump compared to a B value of .536 for Rubio).

Three variables were not statistically significant in both models, but had the same direction: the percentage of Cuban-American residents, the percentage of White residents aged 65 and older and the number of Trump visits. Finally, three variables showed statistical significance in one model, but not the other. Two economic variables – unemployment rate and income growth – were statistically significant in Trump’s model, but not in Rubio’s (the direction of the relationship was the same in both models). A possible explanation might be that economic matters might be more salient in national races than in Congressional races, given that members of the U.S. Congress can work towards re-election through means like case-work in an attempt to build closer relationships with constituents, even in state-wide offices like that of Senator.

Finally, the percentage of female residents was statistically significant in Trump’s model, but not in Rubio’s one.

**Table 8: Comparing Multi-variate Regression Results:  
2016 Florida County Vote for Trump and Rubio**

Independent Variable	Trump Model B Values	Rubio Model B Values
Constant	88.495***	86.362***
Unemployment rate	1.896*	1.131
Income growth	-.825**	-.588
Percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents	-.645***	-.483***
Percentage of Cuban-American residents	-.180	-.098
Percentage of African-American voters	-.811***	-.761***
Percentage of female residents	-.504**	-.344
Percentage of White residents 65 and older	-.209	-.234
Percentage of White residents with less than a high school education	.866***	.536*
Number of Trump visits	.167	.100
Population density	-.004**	-.004**
R-Square	.890	.761

Statistical Significance Level: \* = .10      \*\* = .05      \*\*\* = .01

Table 9 below shows the bivariate regression results for the model that seeks to explain the difference between the Rubio and Trump vote. As a reminder, the dependent variable is the Rubio percentage in each county minus the Trump percentage in each county. Thus, there is a positive number for counties where Rubio gained more votes than Trump and a negative number when Trump outperformed Rubio. Six of the eight variables are statistically significant at .10 or better. Of these, five variables show the expected direction. The percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic, Cuban-American and female residents and the percentage of voters registered with no party affiliation or a minor party, have a positive effect on the difference in support between Trump and Rubio, as we hypothesized. Conversely, the percentage of White residents with less than a high school diploma and the percentage of residents who make \$50,000 or less had a negative relationship with the difference in support for the candidates. Counties with a high percentage of households earning less than \$50,000 were more likely to vote for Trump than Rubio, contrary to our hypothesis. Neither economic variables achieved statistical significance.

The percentage of White voters with less than a high school diploma has the biggest effect among all of the variables included in the model, as it explains about 45% of the variance in the Florida county vote difference between President Trump and Senator Rubio. For every 1-point increase of these residents in a county, Trump would do better than Rubio by .503%. The percentage of voters registered with no party affiliation or with a minor party has the largest positive impact on the difference in support between Trump and Rubio, explaining about 31% of the variance. For every 1-point increase in the registration of these types of voters, Rubio would outperform Trump by .314%.

**Table 9: Explaining the 2016 Florida County Vote Difference between President Trump and Senator Rubio: Bivariate Regressions**  
 (Dependent Variable = Rubio percentage – Trump percentage)

Independent Variable	B	Standard Error	Beta (R)	R-square	Hypothesized Direction?
Unemployment Rate	-.785	.527	-.182	.033	Yes
Income Growth	.319	.228	.171	.029	Yes
Percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents	.170***	.043	.437	.191	Yes
Percentage of Cuban-American residents	.324***	.097	.384	.148	Yes
Percentage of Female Residents	.509***	.110	.497	.247	Yes
Percentage of White residents with less than a high school diploma	-.503***	.069	-.672	.452	Yes
Percentage of households with income less than \$50,000 a year	-.265***	.046	-.580	.336	No
Percentage of voters registering with no party affiliation or minor party	.314***	.058	.559	.312	Yes

Statistical Significance Level: \* = .10      \*\* = .05      \*\*\* = .01

Table 10 below displays the multivariate regression results for the model explaining the difference in the Florida 2016 county level vote between Senator Rubio and President Trump. As a reminder, the dependent variable is the Rubio percentage in each county minus the Trump percentage in each county. Thus, there is a positive number for counties where Rubio gained more votes than Trump and a negative number when Trump outperformed Rubio. The model displays little evidence of multi-collinearity as all VIFs, but one are less than 5.0. The only variable above, whites with less than a high school education, has a VIF of just 5.3 and its high correlation (.78) with household incomes under \$50,000 does not seem to have an adverse statistical effect on the results. The variables in the model explain 69.9% of the variation in the difference in support between Trump and Rubio. Seven of the eight variables achieved statistical significance: income growth, percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic, Cuban and female residents, the percentage of Whites with less than a high school education, percentage of households with less than \$50,000 in income and percentage of voters registered with no party affiliation or a minor party. Unemployment did not attain statistical significance but did have a negative sign as expected.

The model showed a positive relationship between the difference in support for Trump and Rubio and the percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents and this variable had the most impact (the highest unstandardized regression coefficient .591). The fact that Rubio performed better than Trump among members of this voting bloc is not surprising given Trump’s comments concerning Hispanic illegal immigrants. Rubio also did better in counties with higher percentages of female residents indicating that Trump’s crude comments about women also hurt him among these voters. As predicted, given Rubio’s Cuban ethnicity, he also did better in counties with higher percentages of Cuban voters.

The model showed a negative relationship between the difference in support for Trump and Rubio and the percentage of Whites with a high school education or less, households making less than \$50,000 and voters not registered with a major party. Trump’s rhetoric aimed at mobilizing working class Whites helped him with Florida voters at the county level. Trump also did better in counties with higher



percentages of households making less than \$50,000. This result, opposite the hypothesized direction based on exit polls, suggests that again Trump’s specific appeal to lower income voters worked better than Rubio’s traditional campaign. Although it is possible that the county level unit of analysis simply presents a different result than would be found at the individual level of analysis (an ecological fallacy).

In addition, the model showed a negative relationship between the difference in support for Trump and Rubio and the percentage of voters registered with no party affiliation or with a minor party. This was contrary to our hypothesis and opposite the findings of the exit polls where Rubio did slightly better than Trump among self-identified independents. One possible explanation is that self-identification as independent in an exit poll does not correspond exactly with registration with no party or a minor party. It could also be that Trump’s unorthodox campaign, unusual stance on some issues and position as an “outsider” candidate attracted more independents than Rubio’s more conventional Republican conservative candidacy.

**Table 10: Explaining 2016 Florida County Vote Difference between President Trump and Senator Rubio: Multi-variate Regression**  
(Dependent Variable = Rubio percentage – Trump percentage)

Independent Variables	B	Standard Error	Beta	VIF	Hypothesized Direction?
Constant	-1.496	5.921			
Unemployment Rate	-.671	.423	-.155	1.841	Yes
Income Growth	.415***	.148	.223	1.221	Yes
Percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic residents	.230***	.041	.591	2.160	Yes
Percentage of Cuban-American residents	.118*	.069	.141	1.282	Yes
Percentage of Female Residents	.355***	.129	.346	3.059	Yes
Percentage of White residents with less than a high school diploma	-.253**	.124	-.338	5.308	Yes
Percentage of households with income less than \$50,000 a year	-.134**	.060	-.294	3.344	No
Percentage of voters registering with no party affiliation or minor party	-.252***	.084	-.448	4.298	Yes

Statistical Significance Level: \* = .10                      \*\* = .05                      \*\*\* = .01  
R-Square = .699                      Adj. R-Square =.657                      F = 16.804\*\*\*                      DW = 2.172

In addition to the multi-variate model shown, another version was estimated that included a dummy variable for Miami Dade County in order to see if Rubio’s home county had an independent effect on the results (Rubio outpolled Trump heavily in Miami Dade). However, adding the Miami Dade dummy variable resulted in multi-collinearity. The Miami Dade dummy variable was not statistically significant (.612), had a high VIF (7.1) and was highly correlated (.90) with Cuban population percentage. It also increased the VIF of the Cuban variable to unacceptably high levels (8.2) and increased the probability value so that Cuban population was no longer statistically significant (.835). The Miami Dade variable does achieve statistical significance in a model where it replaced the Cuban population variable. All of this evidence suggests that the effect of Miami Dade on the election results largely occurred because of the large Cuban population that resides there, rather than a simple “hometown” advantage for Rubio (although impossible to know for sure given the small sample size of 67 counties). Thus, multi-variate model excludes the Miami Dade dummy variable and retains the Cuban percentage of population.

## Conclusion

First, bivariate regression was used to examine the relationship between the level of support for Trump and Rubio respectively, and the variables that were detailed in the methodology section. The bivariate regression models for both candidates were quite similar. In most cases, the direction of the relationships was as hypothesized, except for unemployment rate in the Rubio model, which was not statistically significant. In some instances, the effect of some variables was stronger on Trump's model, notably the percentage of White residents with less than a high school education or the percentage of White residents aged 65 and older. Conversely, some of the variables that had a negative effect on the levels of support of both candidates did not have as negative an effect on Rubio's model – for example, a 1-point increase in the percentage of non-Cuban residents in a county would lead to a decrease of Trump's level of support by 0.647% compared to a decrease in support for Rubio of 0.476%. Even then, that difference is not as large as we could have expected.

Both multi-variate regression models were affected by multi-collinearity. To reduce errors that might stem from this problem, five independent variables were dropped from Trump's multivariate regression model. Of the remaining 10 independent variables, 7 showed statistical significance and the direction of their relationship with the dependent variable was as hypothesized. The same solution was applied to Rubio's multivariate regression model. Four variables showed statistical significance and in the expected direction. It is interesting to note that the variables in the best model for Trump accounted for 89% of the variance in his level of support, while the same variables accounted for 76.1% of variance in the level of support for Rubio.

Next, we examined the actual difference in support between Trump and Rubio (understood as Rubio support minus Trump support). In the case of the multi-variate regression, seven variables showed statistical significance: income growth, the percentage of non-Cuban Hispanic, Cuban and female residents, the percentage of Whites with less than a high school education, the percentage of households with less than \$50,000 in income and the percentage of voters registered with no party affiliation or a minor party.

Rubio did better than Trump in counties with larger percentages of non-Cuban, Cuban and female residents. Trump out-pollled Rubio in counties with higher percentages of Whites without a high school diploma, households making less than \$50,000, and voters registered with no major party affiliation. Trump won Florida and won the U.S. Presidency but did not enlarge the Republican base in terms of ethnicity or gender. The harsh rhetoric Trump used to describe illegal immigrants from Latin Americans hurt him with Hispanic voters. Trump's crass description of women did nothing to shrink the gender gap that often appears in partisan elections.

President Trump was able to win by enlarging his share of the White vote, particularly working-class Whites. In addition, other factors such as Democratic fatigue after President Obama's 8 years in the White House along with other elements outside of the control of both campaigns could have led to Trump's victory in Florida and in other key states.

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## The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: the Case of The United States

by ex-FPSA President Leah Hutton Blumenfeld, Ph.D. (Barry University, Miami, Florida)

**Abstract:** This essay is a research project reconsidering Professor Juan Linz's seminal work with Dr. Alfred Stepan on comparative and Latin American politics focusing on the erosion of democracy and eventual breakdown of democratic regimes in the book, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration* (1978). Working from his discussion of the elements and process of breakdown, this essay posits that the United States (U.S.), while not a true case of a breakdown of regime *per se*, does indeed exhibit some of the characteristics of states struggling in a democratic crisis. In this context, we can move past the idea of "American exceptionalism" because the U.S. is much more like its neighbors in the Western Hemisphere when it comes to a variety of socio-economic metrics and in the political realm, too. Thus, it is worth examining where and how the stability of U.S. democracy may be at risk of democratic backsliding, which however does not always lead to a breakdown in examining contentious Presidential politics in 2015-2022. At the moment, this essay concludes that the recent democratic backsliding in the U.S. did not lead to any major political breakdown, although the need remains for continuing to study, observe and participate in democracy at the polls and in all levels of governmental institutions.

### Introduction

For the past decade, at the end of every semester I have shown to my U.S. Government classes a film, *The Second Civil War*. Made in 1997, the film depicts a future where U.S. politicians are distracted by their re-election goals or personal foibles, the media competes for viewers' attention with sensationalism, and the people are divided over immigration and "American" identity. A stand-off between a state Governor and the President over a group of refugee children entering the country escalates to state and federal troops fighting one another. While calm and order are eventually restored, the story raises questions about the strength of our democratic principles and institutions, as well as the general public's devotion to them.

During this same decade (give or take) I have also noted how many of the issues pertinent to democratic fragility that I studied in graduate school or discussed in my Dissertation – especially those regarding executive power, Police conduct, or the curtailment of civil liberties – have begun to crop up also in the current U.S. political context. If these issues indicate a pattern, or an early sign of the erosion of democratic norms in a supposedly solid and stable system, then the Trump Presidency as a distinct period seems to have pushed them over the edge.

So this research project stems from reconsidering Professor Juan Linz's seminal work in comparative politics on the erosion of democracy and the eventual breakdown of democratic regimes. His work with Dr. Alfred Stepan was required reading for most students of Latin American politics. For this paper, I draw primarily from the first volume in the series, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration* (1978). Working from his discussion of the elements and process of breakdown, I posit that the U.S., while not a true case of a breakdown of regime *per se*, does indeed exhibit some of the characteristics of states struggling in a democratic crisis. In this context, we can move past the idea of "American exceptionalism" because the United States is much more like its neighbors in the Western Hemisphere when it comes to metrics as a variety of socio-economic metrics coexisting; and it is worthy of

comparison in the political realm, too. Thus, it is worth examining where and how the stability of U.S. democracy may be at risk.

### **Defining Democracy and Signs of Crisis**

What are the key criteria for democracy? They include:

“the legal freedom to formulate and advocate political alternatives with the concomitant rights to free association, free speech and other basic freedoms of person; free and non-violent competition among leaders with periodic validation of their claim to rule; inclusion of all effective political offices; and provision for the participation of all members of the political community, whatever their preferences” (Linz, 1978, p.5).

In other words, the generally-recognized hallmarks of democracy are civil and political rights, and liberties of citizens. As a starting point then, the United States fits the definition with its constitutionally-protected rights to assembly, petition, speech and vote; as well as with its practice of elected leadership, free and fair elections, universal suffrage, and lack of prohibitions on particular political parties, or their ideologies, or political opponents.

The U.S., like other countries, exhibits a history of strong ideological commitment to liberal democracy and a population where large majorities favor a legal, rational and democratic legitimacy formula (Linz, p.9). Not all cases of breakdown occur where democracy is new or not well-ingrained, nor where there had been widespread hostility to its ideology before the crisis. In many cases the crisis, or attack is not about, or against democracy itself.

For the U.S. as a case-study it is dissatisfaction with a change in government (administrations), rather than the regime that captures our attention here. The January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021 uprising is more of an attack against a process of the regime than against the regime itself. But it may be an early warning sign of waning belief in those democratic processes. It is not the death knell of democratic rule, but could be a first step onto a scary path.

The emphasis in Linz’s work is on the breakdown of democracy, or democratic practices, rather than on other forms of crisis in democratic societies. Breakdown is different from failure of consolidation, which in my estimation is what makes the U.S. case interesting. Linz’s study included some European cases and Chile for this same reason – they had longer histories of democratic norms and institutions yet still faced crisis and breakdown. Even though “stability breeds stability” and “the belief in the legitimacy of democratic institutions [is] a factor increasing the likelihood of stability” (Linz, p.8), there are no absolute guarantees. This is why it is important to note the erosion of confidence in U.S. institutions over time. Congress has seen declining approval ratings over the past few decades, but others like the press, courts, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), intelligence agencies and the electoral process itself have also declined dramatically, and specifically been the targets of negative rhetoric aimed at undermining their credibility.

Another key feature is the “legal equal opportunity for the expression of all opinions and protection by the state against arbitrary and above all, violent interference with that right” (Linz, 1978, p.6). Our concern may be less about economic inequality or perceived cancel culture, for example, and more the denial of election results, voter suppression and intimidation, or wide acceptance of extra-legal means to achieve or maintain power – all of which are elements that have entered the scene in recent years, and were amplified by the 2020 election and its aftermath.

“The way Linz discusses the current events of his time is different than the way scholars reflect on these same exact events in historical perspective” (Kempf, 2020). It was published in a time where there was a certain optimism about democracy in its “third wave”, yet “there is a pessimism within the subject matter” (Kempf, 2020). Still, Linz has had a huge influence over contemporary scholarship; his ideas are not just part of the conversation but provide the framework (Kempf, 2020).

### Legitimacy, Actors and Identity

The legitimacy of governing institutions and adherence to rules of the game, by both citizens and officials is key to stability. In the U.S. we have seen a President, Donald Trump, actively contributing to undermining legitimate institutions. Faith in parties, individuals and administrations is often taken as a metric of support for the regime itself. Loss of support for all political actors, or even some, erodes legitimacy (Kempf, p.17). While Trump and the Republican Party (GOP) fed into undermining faith in the electoral system and the outcome of the 2020 election, for some time a sentiment has been brewing for many that all those in government are bad and there are no differences between the parties. Voters lament the lack of choices and frustration explodes into suggestions to get rid of everyone in office. This is one reason the slogan “Drain the Swamp” resonated as it did with many in the electorate.

“Crisis arises in democracies from any range of internal and external causes. The legitimacy of a democratic regime rests in its ability to deliver stability and perform despite these crises. Democratic breakdown begins not from the crisis itself but from a loss of political legitimacy in the democratic regime” (Kempf, 2020). Linz (1978) also notes the importance of individual actions within the constraints of the legitimate structure. We cannot ignore the idea that democracy is a means to an end in some cases or points of view. “Democratic institutions are valued only insofar as they produce policies satisfactory to their supporters” (Linz, p.11). But “once people realize their goals cannot be achieved through democratic institutions, the democratic system will be discarded” (Linz, p.11). By this logic we can argue that for some in the U.S. today, the system works so long as it serves to uphold their power, or as long as their interests are served, and they will continue to benefit from the system by not having to share power. “Those taking this position generally have in mind a certain socio-economic order” or cultural or religious order, which in my estimation is what we have been seeing in the rhetoric about ‘real Americans,’ the ‘war on Christmas,’ and ‘taking our country back’ that has risen (Linz, p.11). White Christian nationalism also manifests in subtler forms like restrictive voter ID laws, as well as violent confrontations like in Charlottesville in 2016.

“Political actors who are highly indignant about the injustice of the social order are often ready to risk the stability of democracy” (Linz, p.13). This may apply to protesters who speak of the destruction of the White man’s house and those who would burn it all down – which scares and spurs a reaction from the other side. Or it may apply to those who perceive an injustice in the unexpected loss of an election, especially where previously disenfranchised voters turn out at record rates and flip states like Georgia from one traditional party control to the opposite one.

“The personal charisma of democratic leaders committed to the regime tends to reinforce its institutions” (Linz, p.18). By extension, the charisma of leaders who rail against those same institutions serves to undermine them. Linz notes a greater propensity toward breakdown in Presidential regimes compared to Parliamentary ones. “‘But why not in the United States?’ one might ask?” (Linz, p.73). Linz suggests the power division under federalism, the strong institution of the Supreme Court, and the prestige of the Senate are part of the reason the U.S. has been an exception. But more so is the level of bipartisanship in the recruitment of many government officials and in the formulation of policy, which means “to a large extent, American government is not party government” (Linz, p.73). Of course we must remember that at the time of his writing – in the late-1970s – this may have been true, but a lot has changed in the last 45 years. The structure of our system that guides processes toward the centrism and compromise has been slowly taken over by gridlock and obstruction as the rules have changed and parties become more dominant. The current context of heightened polarization is quite different, and highlights a major shift from moderation to extremism, and with it we move from stability and equilibrium towards volatility in ways we have never seen before.

Linz's work also includes a lot of discussion of nationalism – or multi-nationalism – as a source of cleavage in the process of breakdown. I would argue the U.S. case is different in that we do not have many (if any) true and armed separatist groups, and few marginalized groups that are geographically separate from others. This is not to suggest that the role of nationalism is not still salient in a multicultural state; indeed, identity is very much relevant to the U.S. case as well.

“The principle of nationality – cultural and linguistic nationalism... particularly [in states] with a dominant national culture and identity and without a clear territorial separation of the different communities – is not likely to lead to stable democracy” (Linz, p. 62). The U.S. may still have *de facto* segregation by neighborhood by neighborhood, but our population as a whole continues to grow more diverse. A narrower view of U.S. national culture and identity – as White, Christian and English-speaking – has reasserted itself among a portion of the population. Confronted with an ever-integrated diversity, they fear becoming the minority – and losing power or even “White replacement”.

It is “no accident... that few multinational states have been stable democracies” (Linz, p.65). In the U.S., perhaps, our longer stable existence has rested on the assumption of a civic nationalism that unites and cuts across all other markers of identity. But since the time of the founding there has been much expansion of our identity and the definition of citizen. These shifts have not been without challenges, to say the least. In our own history, the U.S. Civil War shows that stability is not a given in perpetuity.

The U.S. is divided on whether racial and ethnic discrimination is a serious problem. About two-thirds on the Left agree it is, compared to just 19% on the Right (Schaeffer, 2022). This affects how people view or perceive increased voter suppression, gerrymandering, court-packing and minority rule in representative bodies across the country. This has been further compounded by changes in media and technology that transmit messages and conspiracy theories from voter fraud to “White replacement”.

Linz argues that it is democracy that allows for to the social order; ideally majority grants legitimacy to the state's institutions and the resulting changes that occur within them over time. That is, when the order is seen as just, or the changes are not seen as a threat to those privileged by it (Linz, p.12). So we can see in the U.S. case on one hand increasing calls for justice since the time of the Civil Rights Movement being further amplified by social media since the early-2000s. On the other hand, after the election of Democratic Party President Barack Obama – as the first President of color – “birtherism”, Charlottesville and other forms of backlash may be evidence of the fear produced by change in the social order. The counter-rhetoric of Trump's Presidency plays into this – especially his words about the “carnage in the country” wrought by the previous Obama administration and the opposing Democratic party as representatives of those previously excluded from the traditional order and power therein. What was once the unthinkable, became a reality with the violent riot of January 6, 2021 to protest the certification of the Presidential elections lost by Trump.

### **Party and Partisan Polarization**

Linz asserts a correlation between two-party systems and democratic stability – except in cases of “maximal ideological distance” (Linz, p.24). Polarization undermines stability, but this may lead to a major change in the parties, or a civil war at worst, and not necessarily to the breakdown of the regime itself. His work places more focus on those cases of breakdown with proportional representation and multi-party systems with more avenues for fragmentation. Certainly there are more available cases for examination, for one, but I would suggest the current context of the U.S. is still too much a work in progress to be properly evaluated. One conclusion that can be reached from Linz's analysis is that the party system alone is not deterministic, and yet “the outcome of the breakdown of democratic regimes generally seems to be the victory of political forces identified as rightists” (Linz, p.15). Bilateral ideological rivalries may drive more polarization, which in turn undermines stability.

Fragmentation and polarization mean electoral law does not reward cooperation, but instead favors competition among parties (Linz, p.67). The history of U.S. politics has tended toward centrism and consensus; this has broken down in recent years and been replaced by more conflictual processes. “We know that extreme polarization (along with racial conflict, economic inequality and excessive executive power) has historically played a key role in stoking and prolonging democratic crises in the United States, and the Trump era was no exception; in fact, we are living through an extremely dangerous period in American history when, for the first time, all four of these threats to democracy prevail at once” (Lieberman, 2023). Meanwhile, “people who place themselves on the right of the political spectrum...are more likely to support alternatives to democratic governance. For example, 27% of Americans who identified as conservative thought autocracy would be a good way to govern” (Pew, 2021).

Polarization “draws the public into the conspiracy against democracy” itself (Kempf, 2020). As polarization continues, the more voters come to accept undemocratic behavior from politicians and eventually voters will not just tolerate undemocratic behavior, but encourage it in their leaders. The 2022 Mid-Term Election was the third national election in a row where the MAGA wing (Trump’s “Make America Great Again” Republicans) performed poorly, so many supporters of democracy have felt relieved, but Lieberman (2023) suggests this is premature. He argues the extreme Right has been emboldened rather than chastened by these losses, as well as the fight to choose a House speaker. Moderate Republicans do not have the numbers they need to vote as a block without consideration for those farthest to the Right who dominate. This power only encourages them to move away from the Center even more, and so polarization remains alive – and flourishing. Making a deal with these “renegade members” only “puts the country back on the road not to just extreme polarization, but also very likely to chaos.”

Lieberman also reminds us that while the 2022 Mid-Term Elections’ Republican “Red Wave” did not happen, those Republicans who lost were more often in competitive purple districts, while those who survived were more to the extreme Right. A few dissenting key figures in the Republican Party (Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger), who stood up to some of the party excesses were expelled from their caucus: their ousting sends a message to others who might stray from the party line or question a leader’s actions.

### **Polarization and the Role of the Opposition**

The degrading erosion of democratic legitimacy is enhanced by political polarization among parties and the demonization of the Opposition, as shown in these statements: “Blanket attacks on the political system, rather than on particular parties or actors” is typical of “disloyal oppositions” (Lieberman, p.31) – those who are less willing to play by the established rules of the game. “Strife between parties, efforts to discredit opponents, and the characterization of other parties as representatives of narrow interests in conflict with the public interest are normal, natural and legitimate actions within the democratic process” (p.31). But “disloyal oppositions picture their opponents collectively as instruments of outside secret and conspiratorial groups” and seek to discredit “not only the leaders”, but “the whole system” (p.31). Again, the need to “drain the swamp”.

I would argue that the Tea Party Movement and then MAGA Republicans are somewhere in between a loyal and disloyal Opposition. They have raised the level of strife in politics, sought to discredit not just individuals, but the whole party on the other side of the aisle, promoted numerous conspiracy theories and substituted their own narrow interests for the public interest, all while seeking to gain political office and power for themselves. Their political message is an “*ademocratic* defense of democracy” (p.32) in that they rail against a large, corrupt and dysfunctional system, while asking constituents to elect them to serve in it anyway.

The loyal opposition is that which still works within the rules and frame of the system. Linz identifies a list of characteristics of a loyal Opposition; in my estimation some of these apply to those we would consider mainstream Republicans, but not the extreme Right (whether in government or among



the general population). These include: a commitment to the achievement of power only by electoral means, an uncompromising rejection of the use of violent means to seize or maintain power, “an unambiguous rejection of the rhetoric of violence to mobilize supporters in order to achieve power,” a commitment to participate in the political process and guarantee civil liberties, a willingness to join with opponents in spite of ideological differences to maintain the political order, a rejection of secret contacts with the disloyal opposition, and a commitment to the neutral power role of institutions, like the Presidency or judiciary (p.36-37).

Some of this perhaps can only be gauged or measured informally, such as when candidates use images of placing their opponent in the crosshairs (like CNN’s controversial 16 May 2018 photo of President Donald Trump under a sniper’s gun crosshairs), or refrain from condemning a potentially deadly attack on the spouse of leader (like the 28 October 2022 hammer attack against Paul Pelosi, the husband of then Democrat Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi).

Linz asserts it would not be easy for any system to achieve all the characteristics identified (and there are many beyond those noted here), but they are a working goal in any democratic society. He further contends that semi-loyalty is just as dangerous or threatening to democratic stability as open disloyalty. Though he does not say it so many words, any appeasement or concession to deviations from democratic norms is a slippery slope. “The presence of a loyal opposition [is] essential for democratic legitimacy” and “the presence of a disloyal or semi-loyal opposition...becomes a source of instability because its presence works to undermine the stability and performance of democracy” (Kempf, 2020).

Neither party is innocent when it comes to crossing the line to undermine the performance of government for their own gain. “American politicians implicitly believe there is a distinction between governance and democracy. They fail to realize poor governance undermines the public’ faith in democracy” (Kempf, 2020). So while one party works to tarnish the reputation of the other by obstructing the process or enhancing their own electoral gains, in reality they both are damaging the system overall.

### **Political Violence**

“Political violence is both an important indicator and a contributing cause of breakdown” (Linz, 1978, p.14). As acts of violence for political gain become more tolerated or accepted based on who are what the target is, the guarantee of basic rights and freedoms inherent in democratic societies becomes vulnerable. We should be concerned about the rhetoric of violence toward the opposition as voiced by individual leaders, actual acts of violence at political rallies and the number of elected officials who dismiss or downplay attacks on government itself. “A low threshold for violence” (Linz, p.15) indicates an opening for more to follow to the detriment of citizens and democracy. Violent groups may exhibit a “readiness to curtail the civil liberties of the...supporters” (Linz, p.30) of the Opposition or those parties attempting to guarantee participation by so-called newcomers to the order.

Violence is but one factor in a complex process of “decay” in any existing regime – even a relatively stable one (Linz, p.39). Incumbents or individuals and their actions matter, especially the rejection of temptation to use undemocratic means. “What is important is that when the violation of the laws and violence is intended for political purposes, is condoned by a leadership with considerable following, and is not condemned by large sectors of society ...a regime ...must respond (Linz, p.58).

It is extremely important then how authorities respond to the first instances of violence. Were there really good people on all sides at Charlottesville? Did the president properly use security forces to remove violent protesters near the White House for his church front photo? Are party leaders downplaying the seriousness of January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021? And how do we contend with competing media narratives of all these and more in shaping public perceptions of the efficacy of our system? This is a variable that adds a new layer and challenge to this analysis and democracy in general in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Measures/Discussion/Conclusions**

“If the loyal parties agree on the desirability of the system’s continuity, a democratic regime can survive” (Linz, p.50). The U.S. is not yet at a point where the system is entirely incapable of resolving its problems on its own and the disloyal Opposition seems the only solution. There is not yet an “absolute imbalance” between our needs and our resources (Linz, p.51). But the less and less we see bipartisan action and the partisan divide observed in the January 6<sup>th</sup> Commission proceedings may be a case in point, less likely we are to see a united front in favor of continuity and against further erosion of democratic processes.

“More-established, once self-assured democracies have stumbled, exposing long-simmering weaknesses in their social fabrics” (Pew, 2021). Recent survey data show “democracy is not delivering; people like democracy, but their commitment to it is often not strong; political and social divisions are amplifying the challenges of contemporary democracy; and people want a stronger voice” (Pew, 2021).

The vast majority of those surveyed in the U.S. agreed that the system needs major changes (43%) or complete reform (42%) (Pew, 2021; Schaeffer, 2022). We should interpret this as a desire for changes within the system, rather than a complete change of regime. Alongside this, there is “widespread skepticism about the prospect for change” (Pew, 2021). In spite of the criticisms or fears, recent survey results “also show that people haven’t given up on democracy – in fact, instead of turning away from it, many want *more* democracy” (Pew, 2021). People want a bigger voice and more involvement in policy making, especially as they believe less and less that the state is being run in the interest of everyone. While, “a majority of Americans are dissatisfied with the way democracy is working in the country (58% in fact), both Republicans and Democrats have some confidence in the future of the country, at 62% and 74% respectively, though Democrats are more hopeful (63%) than Republicans (37%) since the 2020 election (Schaeffer, 2022). This still shows reason for concern as it reflects Linz’s argument about party polarization, especially during a contentious presidential election cycle.

Looking to 2024, Democrats have shifted from praising the Biden Administration’s economic record to demonizing Trump’s bid for a second term as an attack on democracy. Republicans on the other hand are united in condemning “Bidenomics” and point to rising crime, illegal immigration and the “weaponization” of the court system against their preferred candidate. The multiple cases pending against Trump and the move to bar him from the ballot in some states may serve as wedges that further divide the electorate and undermine faith in democratic institutions. These data and our examination of recent events fit into the framework of Linz and open the door to more evaluation. There is indeed a lot more to dig into and details that are not covered here yet. It may be fruitful to move beyond Linz and review the broader literature on democratic crisis and backsliding that has been produced since his work was published and has been inspired by it. Linz’s work was an effort to push back (or beyond) the “theoretically ambitious but empirically weak cross-national studies of the 1960s”, but in the process he and Stepan “lowered their sights” to produce “a series of middle-level generalizations” (Wynia, 1980, p.162). Consisting of 12 European and Latin American case-studies, it focused primarily on the relationship between legitimacy, efficacy and stability in politics, and remains innovative in the way Linz moved away from structuralism to highlight the behavior of political leaders and their choices (Wynia, 1980). The sample size and the fact that the case-studies diverged in many ways, weakens their comparability and in the end leaves the reader and scholars “more aware of the complexity of the phenomena under study than their essential features” (Wynia, 1980, p.163). Perhaps for these reasons it has limited political applicability as a starting point for understanding the United States’ own complex issues and controversies. The book is not entirely theoretical so that we may ask the question “of what is this an instance?” At the same time, we can apply the elements. By a Linzian frame, the U.S. is showing signs of crisis more than breakdown, at least in the short-run.

Democracy deconsolidates when the people want policies and laws that will limit the influence of the opposition altogether. In this way, while Linz looked to leaders, Kempf (2020) suggests that democracies in

the end are “shaped more by their people than their institutions.” He further asserts, “liberal democracy was largely a construction of elites. But the preservation of democracy depends on the virtue and commitment of its people. Without the support of the people, institutions and norms will be undermined.” This seems to be the case with the extreme Right, which has been shepherd first by the Tea Party movement and galvanized by MAGA Trumpism. Rather than undermine his legitimacy or discredit his candidacy, the impeachments and criminal charges against him have enhanced his public image among supporters, strengthening his claims of persecution by the Left. Kempf suggests we ought to fear the power of people who want a leader like Trump who would undermine democratic principles to protect their own interests, their principles and their ideological priorities. We should fear “the people who will use democracy to bring Despite the dark clouds that are gathering ahead of the 2024 Election, the 2022 Mid-Term Election may be a perplexing sign that democracy is not in as much of a crisis as some have suggested; the Red Wave that some anticipated did not happen. Election deniers on the Right tended to perform poorly, while those who accepted the 2020 results fared better. “The takeaway for many is voters stood up for democracy. They punished Republicans who many saw as threats to democracy...[and] rewarded Republicans who showed a commitment to democracy” (Kempf 2022). While “partisanship trumped civic duty” for some, the process still reigned and results were upheld (Kempf 2022). This is further demonstrated and strengthened by the state level responses to the Supreme Court decision in Dobbs, which spurred increased voter registration and mobilized voters even in more conservative states to exercise their Right to vote to preserve abortion access and push for more moderate policy (Paris & Cohn 2022; Center for Reproductive Justice).

“Aspiring autocrats find it difficult to consolidate power in countries long-standing democratic traditions” (Kempf 2022). Democratic backsliding does not always lead to breakdown. There are a few genuine threats and more troubling moments than we might like, but we need not overreact. “When we convince ourselves democracy is lost, we become the threat to democracy” (Kempf 2022). We are better off continuing to study, observe, and most of all participate in our own democracy.

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## “Italy vs. Balkans and East Mediterranean: from Lost Imperialism to Advocacy of Regional NATO-E.U. Integration, 1861-2020s”

by Marco Rimanelli, Ph.D. (Saint Leo University & 2013-14 Fulbright Chair College of Europe-Bruges)

**ABSTRACT:** Italy's policies towards the Balkans and East Mediterranean have long been conditioned by her weak national image as the "Least of the Powers" in Europe since her 1860-70 National Unification. Thus, Italy pursued four phases of limited imperialist penetration in the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean, with only limited regional influence and brief periods of dominance through the Triple Alliance, World War I, Fascism's imperialism and Axis alliance, and World War II. Military defeat in 1943-45 saw Italy's collapse and loss of all wartime annexations, Istria and colonies, while frozen-out of the Soviet-occupied Balkans and Eastern Europe in the fifth phase of the Cold War bipolar division of Europe (1946-90). This was followed in both the Cold War and post-Cold War by a reversal of diplomatic approach: as Italy became a pro-U.S./Western democratic state, she also was a key NATO front-line defensive Ally and key European Community/Union (E.U.) liaison in the Balkans, alongside Germany. Regardless, Italy in both organizations pursued passive, non-imperialist security and economic policies in the Cold War under the U.S.-led NATO and E.U., while limiting her diplomatic approach to the Balkans and Eastern Europe to economic cooperation with anti-Soviet communist Yugoslavia and supporting pro-Euro-Atlantic Greece and Turkey in 1970-90, as well as limited trade relations with Soviet communist enemies (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria). Finally, the current the Post-Cold War sixth phase saw the collapse of communism and Soviet control of East Europe and Balkans, while Italy's own domestic political collapse under the corruption scandal of "Open Hands" left the country bereft of any leadership and initiative to either annex independent Slovenia or play a dominant political role in the 1990s five Yugoslav Civil Wars, beyond her critical logistical and military base for NATO peacekeeping in the region. Nevertheless, a politically and economically weak Italy remained just a passive Western "facilitator" in the new Balkans and East Mediterranean, with a minimalist diplomatic role in the Post-Cold War just to support the gradual integration of new Balkan democracies in Europe's regional NATO-E.U. dual-Enlargements (Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Montenegro and North Macedonia). But today's post-imperialist, democratic and Euro-Atlantic Italy since 1946 remains self-marginalized by her inner politico-economic fragility and economic decline (1946-55, 1970s, 2000-2024) as a declining "courtesy" G-7/G-8 medium Power compared to U.S.-German regional dominance, and thus unable and unwilling to exercise any past dreams of Balkans/East Mediterranean influence within the NATO-E.U. dual regional system of democratic economico-security integration, or leading peacekeeping missions abroad for regional stability, or even being central to build regional energy cooperation efforts to build gas-pipelines against Turkey as a spoiler and diplomatically mediate all regional tensions. Balkans security remains vulnerable to Russia's anti-Western strategy to undermine NATO's integration (opposing Alliance Enlargements in 1999-2020s, fostering Serbia's resentment on Kosovo, destabilizing Montenegro and Bosnia, opposing NATO's Missile Defense in Romania and Poland) and East Mediterranean (Russia's ambiguous ties with an ambivalent Turkey, penetration in Syria, naval drills with China and security cooperation with Islamic Iran), especially after Russia's 2022-24 disastrous invasion of Ukraine seeking to reunify most ex-Soviet states (Belarus', Ukraine, CSTO) in a neo-Russian Slavic empire against the West fully aligned in trade, security and dictatorship with Syria, Islamic Iran (destabilizing the Middle East) and Communist China (herself threatening to invade Taiwan). But Russia's failure in 2022 to quickly conquer Ukraine, or split Europe and NATO with her botched energy-blackmails, and her horrendous war-crimes in Ukraine has sparked instead broad U.S.-Western sanctions and coordinated escalating military aid to Ukraine, plus new NATO enlargements (Sweden and Finland), beefed-up NATO military defenses of its previously lightly armed

“Eastern Flank” and Scandinavia, while decoupling Europe’s energy dependency from Russia, and promising future NATO-E.U. memberships for Ukraine and Georgia. In all these dramatic changes, Italy under new Premier and former post-Fascist leader Giorgia Meloni has positively shocked all observers by strongly siding the U.S., NATO and E.U. against Russia and China, while completely stomping previous pro-Putin and pro-China support among her junior Right-wing coalition partners (late-Senator Silvio Berlusconi’s *Forza Italia* and Matteo Salvini’s League).

### **Introduction: Italy’s Uneven Expansion in the Balkans and East Mediterranean**

Italy emerged as a weak young nation-state only by 1859-1870 through “six” Italian Unification Wars and multiple revolutions, which cobbled her together as the new the Savoy Kingdom of Italy after 1,250 years of territorial fragmentation since the collapse of the Ancient Roman Empire in 600 A.D. Such late start left her far behind other European Great Powers in terms of diplomatic influence, military power, industrial growth and geo-strategic aims. Liberal Italy still remained the “Least of the Powers”, and thus militarily unable to ever recapture the lost glories of Ancient Rome, against which all other Powers compared her quite unfavourably, while always being painfully aware of the risks of ultimate national collapse. Consequently, Italy strove to survive through defensive alliances the odds of total warfare among stronger Great Powers vs. long-term patient empire-building via diplomatic cunning and calculated strategic alliance positioning on the winning sides in wartime. However, both World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945) saw Italy’s international reputation and hard-won slow territorial expansions irreparably tarred by having infamously switched sides four-times from the initial dominant expansionist alliance-systems (Germany’s Triple Alliance in 1881-1914 and Nazi Germany’s Axis in 1936-1943) to ambiguous temporary neutralities (1914-1915 vs. 1939-1940) and final alliance-reversal by joining the opposite winning rival Allies (on-time in 1915-1920s vs. too-late in 1943-1945). During this long period both Liberal Italy (1861-23) and Fascist Italy (1923-45) pursued four phases of diplomatico-security penetration of the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean to expand the country’s international image as a Great Power and territorial ambitions in the *Irredenta* and new colonial concessions.

After Italy’s collapse in World War II, the loss of empire was followed in both the Cold War and post-Cold War by two more phases with a reversal of diplomatic approaches: as Italy became a pro-U.S./Western democratic state, she also was a key NATO front-line defensive border-state and key European Community/Union (E.U.). Regardless, Italy in both organizations pursued passive, non-imperialist security and economic policies in the Cold War under the U.S.-led NATO and E.U., while limiting her diplomatic approach to the Balkans and Eastern Europe to economic cooperation with anti-Soviet communist Yugoslavia and backing pro-Euro-Atlantic Greece and Turkey in 1970-90, as well as limited trade relations with Soviet communist enemies (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria). Finally, the current the Post-Cold War sixth phase saw the collapse of communism and Soviet control of East Europe and Balkans, while Italy’s own domestic political collapse under the 1990s corruption scandal “Open Hands” left the country bereft of any leadership, until the 1990s Yugoslav Civil Wars expanded Rome’s diplomatico-security role to critical logistical and military base for NATO peacekeeping the ex-Yugoslavia and minimalist Italian support of the new Balkan democracies by gradually advocating the dual NATO and E.U. Enlargements to Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Northern Macedonia (as well as in the E.U. also Malta and Cyprus), plus limited cooperation with Bosnia, Serbia and Turkey.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marco Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe and Mediterranean: Diplomacy and Naval Strategy from Unity to NATO, 1800s-2000* (New York: P. Lang, 1997), p.1,100, see: Parts I, II & III.

Liberal Italy's Irredentist & Imperial Expansion into Balkans and East Mediterranean, 1861-1922



a. 1882-1914 Triple Alliance vs. Entente; b. 1914-1915 Allied Italy & World War I; c. Allied Italy's war-gains 1915-17 (Blue) vs. losses 1917-1918 (Red); d. Italy conquers Fall 1918; d-e-f. 1916-1923 Sykes-Picot and Partition Plans Ottoman Empire (in Red Great Britain; in Blue France; in Violet Czarist Russia; in Green Italy; in Yellow-Greece and in Pale Green Turkey)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partition\\_of\\_the\\_Ottoman\\_Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partition_of_the_Ottoman_Empire) & <https://fanack.com/international-affairs-of-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/sykes-picot-agreement/>

Largely unknown today to contemporary observers globally and in Italy too, is the country's politically-forgotten slow diplomatico-security quest from 1866 to World War II (both as democratic Liberal kingdom in 1861-1922, or as dictatorial Fascist empire in 1922-45) to elbow-in as a regional Power within the Adriatic/Balkans and East Mediterranean in competition (1860s-1916) and then temporary partial replacement (1917-39, 1940-44) of declining long-established rivals (Austria-Hungary, Russia, Ottoman-Turkey, Germany, France). After Italy's military collapse late in World War II (1943-45), today's new democratic Italy has assiduously accepted her new permanently halved international role as a democratic regional Medium Power (just like all European Powers after their respective collapses in Two World Wars and Cold War) and traded her lost past dreams of irredentism and imperial domination for contemporary diplomacies of friendly cooperation and support as a marginal regional "facilitator" to integrate fragile East Europe/Balkans and Mediterranean states in both the U.S.-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance and European Union (E.U.) economic powerhouse.

Italy's long contrasted national unification (*Risorgimento*, 1820-70) was waged through cyclical insurrections (1830s-60s) by Liberal-nationalist revolutionary groups (Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi), 6 wars (1820, 1848-49, 1859, 1860-61, 1866, 1870) and Piedmont's vital military-diplomatic expansionist policies under Premier Camillo di Cavour, who secured support from key European Great Powers (France and Great Britain) for such united nation-state to emerge in 1861-70. The new Liberal Italy constitutional monarchy under Piedmont's Savoy strove since Unification to build the new country against four long-term parallel challenges:

- 1) complete the national unification quest by annexing Austria's remaining Italian-speaking provinces (*Irredenta*);
- 2) fight secessionist insurgency/banditry and poverty in Southern Italy;
- 3) build an integrated state and national economy through industrialization and mass emigration from poor regions;
- 4) carefully re-emerge internationally as a new military Great Power and colonial empire to both guarantee national security and reclaim in time the inheritance of Ancient Rome and Venetian Republic in the Adriatic/ West Balkans and Mediterranean basin. The unfulfilled tensions between these parallel domestic and diplomatico-military priorities vs. limited resources of a late-

Industrialized state (post-1880) dogged until the XX<sup>th</sup> Century Italy's national and international image as the "Least of the Powers" globally.<sup>1</sup>

During the 1861-1914 first period of nation-building and imperialist expansion abroad, Liberal Italy focused primarily until the onset of World War I onto alliance-building with the most important Great Powers of the time to reverse the new nation's weak diplomatic influence, military power, industrial growth and confused geo-strategic aims. The 1870 collapse of France and emergence of a new national German state under Prussian Premier Otto von Bismarck as a new massive military-industrial hegemony over Europe upset its centuries-old Balance of Power (just as the parallel emergence of weaker Liberal Italy). Thus, for decades German growing pre-eminence was shrouded through ever-expanding diplomatic alliances to bind all Great Powers to Berlin in a peaceful Bismarckian Balance of Power to keep a revengeful France isolated and unable to craft any counter-alliance, while leveraging all other rival Great Powers (Austria-Hungary, Russia, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Ottoman-Turkey) to support Germany's alliance-systems and avoid any possible European total war until 1914.<sup>2</sup>

As France had been both instrumental and yet too often ambivalent in helping Piedmont's quest during the 1820-70 *Risorgimento's* era of revolutions and Italian Wars of Independence to secure national unity by 1861-70, the new weak Italian nation was forced since her birth to always leverage politico-military alignment with whichever was the hegemonic land-Power in Europe (France in 1848-70 vs. Germany in 1870-1914) and economico-military alignment with the long-term hegemonic sea-Power in the Mediterranean (Great Britain), all the while trying to avoid becoming a French or German "protectorate". Thus, Liberal Italy first pursued pro-German neutralist alignment (1870s) and official alliance (1882-1914 Triple Alliance) alongside an unofficial one with Great Britain (1848-1907, 1915-36), but always at the vital cost of subordinating regional loyalty to the hegemonic Powers' "consent" (Germany in Europe and Great Britain in the Mediterranean) to Italy's own key national security interests:

- a) defense against the historical enemy Austria-Hungary and new rival France;
- b) annexation of Austria-Hungary's Italian-speaking *Irredenta* lands (Trentino, Friuli with Trieste, Istria and Dalmatian coast);
- c) Italian colonial expansionist aims (another key symbol of international prestige at the time) in the Balkans (Albania), Central-East Mediterranean (Tunisia, Libya) and East Africa (Horn of Africa: Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia).<sup>3</sup>

Italy's penetration in the Balkans was slowly sparked by the parallel historical quest for her *Italia irredenta* ("Unredeemed Italy" which domestic irredentists saw as Italians under foreign rule) as a key nationalist unification movement influencing foreign policy aims since the disappointing 1866 Third Independence War against Austria-Hungary by seeking annexation also of Vienna's remaining ethnic Italian provinces (Trentino and Trieste) and substantial Italian-speaking majorities (Venezia Giulia/Istria, Gorizia city, Fiume city and Dalmazia's coast and islands vs. local Slovene and Croat ethnics) or even smaller Italian minorities (questionably Dalmazia's hinterland and Cattaro vs. local Croats, or Greece's Ionian Islands, or even Süd Tirol vs. local Germans after World War I). Dalmazia always remained most controversial because its Italian population declined from 30% in 1790s under the Italian Republic of Venice to 25% by 1814-15 under Napoleonic France's Empire, to 22% by 1818 under Austria (or 70,000 Italians vs. 231,000 Croats out of a total of 301,000), to 17% by 1857 under Austria (or 45,000 Italians vs. 369,310 Croats out of a total of 414,310 people) with Italians dominating the cities of Zara/Zadar, Sebenico/Šibenik and Spalato/Split, plus

<sup>1</sup> Marco Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO and International Security Organizations* (Plymouth, G.B.: Scarecrow/ Rowman & Littlefield, January 2009, p.980); M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, idem, Parts I & II.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994); A.J.P. Taylor, *Bismarck: the Man and Statesman* (New York: Vintage, 1967, reprinted 1975); Ludwig Dehio, *The Precarious Balance: Four Centuries of the European Power Struggle* (New York: Vintage, 1948); Richard Rosecrance, *Action & Reaction in World Politics* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part I, idem; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, idem, p.450-600; Taylor, *Bismarck: Man & Statesman*, idem, p.200-280; Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, idem, p.137-200.



many Dalmatian islands (Cherso/Cres, Lussino/Lošini, Lagosta/Lastovo, Lissa/Vis, Arbe/Rab, Veglia/Krk, Lesina/Hvar, Curzola/Korcula and small ones).<sup>1</sup>

To these, also other non-Austrian, but historical irredentist Italian areas were added (Corsica and Nizza annexed by France in 1768-69 and 1859; Malta annexed by Great Britain in 1798; Canton Ticino from Switzerland) and Italian-speaking majority areas (Canton Grigioni from Switzerland), or substantial Italian minorities (Italy's Royal House of Savoy's domain annexed by France in 1859; Canton Valais from Switzerland; Tunisia heavily populated by Italian immigrants yet annexed by France in 1881). The liberation of the *Italia irredenta* was alternatively tolerated or contained by subsequent Italian governments in 1866-1914 for fear of unleashing losing wars against powerful neighbours: Austria-Hungary, France or Great Britain. Thus, the loss of Tunisia and Germany's refusal to defend Italy against France unless her irredentist contrast with Austria-Hungary be solved peacefully became the twin drivers for Liberal Italy's joining the anti-French 1882 Triple Alliance (with Germany and Austria-Hungary) and pursuing until 1915 only a peaceful diplomatic annexation of the *Irredenta*.

At the international level, when von Bismarck had restructured the European Balance of Power to Berlin's bidding with the 1873-78 First *Dreikaiserbund*/Three Emperors' League (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia) against France, this pact was bolstered by bilateral, unwritten military friendship with both Great Britain and Italy, due to their own parallel colonial rivalries against Paris in the Mediterranean and Africa. But, neither Great Britain nor Italy officially joined the *Dreikaiserbund*: London privileged her "Splendid Isolation" doctrine and Royal Navy's sea-power hegemony; while Rome's stronger desire to align with Germany against France's colonial rivalry in the Mediterranean (Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Egypt) was hampered by Germany's refusal to support again Italy in war to annex Vienna's last Italian-speaking *Irredenta* provinces, with Berlin demanding instead that the two rivals settle diplomatically their animosity.<sup>2</sup>

In 1861-1878, the new Italian Kingdom had no interests in Turkish Albania, economic or strategic, despite local Italian diplomats stressing in vain the area's strategic importance just across Italy's Adriatic Sea. Consul Bernardo Berio in Scutari was the first to send a detailed plan to Rome suggesting exploiting the local anti-Turkish revolts of 1873 to turn that feudal area into an independent pro-Italian state against invasions from Greece and from local Slavs, while preventing any future union of the Southern Slavs, Serbia and Bulgaria into a rival powerful state. All European Great Powers supported the Balkans *status quo* with Ottoman-Turkish rule over the backward and combative Albanians, who were split in rival tribes and three religious communities (Catholics in the north, Muslims in the centre and Orthodox in the south), but agreed in despising Turks, Slavs, Greeks and any foreigner seeking to control the country. Thus, Rome's first Unitarian governments in the 1860s-70s with the influential Foreign Minister Marquis Emilio Visconti-Venosta, focused only on seeking the *Irredenta* and avoided any new regional turmoil by rejecting also interference in Albania to create a unitary state for fear of clashing with the Turkish overlords, as well as with Austria-Hungary, the two dominant Powers in the Balkans. After a second regional Christian insurrection in Bosnia in 1875, Berio's Second Plan aimed to penetrate into the Balkans region through the creation of an autonomous Albanian under the Ottoman-Turkish Empire to help Albanians in mixed areas with Slavs isolate Slavic rebellions, while Italy too would benefit from friendly and trade relations with that new nation that had shared ancient trade ties without risking any clash with either the Ottoman-Turks or Austro-Hungarian rivals. Yet, Visconti-Venosta refused any diplomatic involvement, and this policy continued under the governments of Prime Minister Agostino Depretis since 1876.

Then the 1876 Bulgarian and Serbo-Montenegrine revolts were suddenly internationalized by Czarist Russia's pan-Slavic intervention in the Russo-Turkish War. Unbeknownst to all, Germany had mediated the secret January 1877 Budapest Accords partitioning the Turkish Balkans between Russia (Romania and

<sup>1</sup> "Italian Irredentism" in *Wikipedia*, see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_irredentism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_irredentism); Luciano Monzali, *Italiani di Dalmazia dal Risorgimento alla Grande Guerra* (Firenze: 2004).

<sup>2</sup> "Italian Irredentism", *idem*; Luigi Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza* (Milano: 1939).

“Greater Bulgaria” inclusive of Trace and Macedonia) and Austria-Hungary (Western Balkans and Adriatic coast from Bosnia to Serbia and Albania) who wanted to prevent a Southern Slavs state. Once Russia defeated the Turks and pushed them back to their capital Constantinople, also the Budapest partition accord became known and both events shocked Rome into realizing the extreme danger of having neutral Austria-Hungary extend her control from Trieste and Istria to Bosnia and then Albania, which would force Italy into economic ruin to build military fortifications along the entire Adriatic coast, or instead become a “protectorate” of Vienna according to then Foreign Minister Luigi Melegari. Thus, Italy had to develop a long-term Adriatic security policy to contrast both Vienna’s regional hegemony, and any excessive Slavic expansion. Instead, initially, Rome sought to enlist other Great Powers to force Vienna to cede Italian irredentist lands (Trentino), as once offered in 1870 by Austrian Foreign Minister Friedrich von Beust to prevent the impending Franco-German War and induce Italy to join Austria-Hungary and France in an aborted Tripartite Alliance against Prussia. Premier Depretis sent on a secret diplomatic tour of European capitals the Speaker of the House Francesco Crispi, but no Great Power agreed to support Italy’s *Irredenta* claims, while both influential German Chancellor Prince Otto von Bismarck and British Foreign Minister Count Derby, vaguely proposed that should Austria-Hungary annex Bosnia, then Italy should seize Albania instead. This strategic solution (initially rejected by Depretis and Crispi irredentist government), would still give Rome vital control of the Otranto Channel to the Adriatic Sea and prevent Austria-Hungary from seizing control of the entire Adriatic/West Balkans from Bosnia to Albania and so be able to threaten Italy with surprise amphibious invasions along the entire undefended Peninsula. But the Anglo-German vague suggestions to “take” Albania, did not mean actual annexation (which would cause clashes regionally with Vienna), but some form of Italian control or “protectorate” or preserving the *status quo*, as a way to replace the old European opposition to partitioning the Ottoman-Turkish Empire, while rebalancing Russia’s penetration into the Balkans.<sup>1</sup>

These initial balancing of Balkan politics were shattered by Russia’s 1878 victory on the Ottoman-Turks and Treaty of Santo Stefano (March 1878), which annexed Bessarabia, Kars, Batum and Ardahan; secured the independence as pro-Russian states of Romania, Serbia, Montenegro and a “Greater Bulgaria” (from the Black and Aegean Seas to Macedonia and Albania) under Russian military control for two years; and gave to Vienna only the administration of Bosnia. To reverse Russia’s land gains and politico-military domination of the Balkans, while avoiding tense escalation into a wider European War (with Great Britain and Austria-Hungary deceived out of the more advantageous Budapest partition, siding with the Ottoman-Turks), von Bismarck called on June-July 1878 a Congress in Berlin to mediate the crisis. The new Italian government of irredentist Premier Benedetto Cairoli was strongly split between seeking Trentino as Austro-Hungarian concession in-exchange for Vienna’s annexation of Bosnia vs. Foreign Minister Count Luigi Corti who as ex-Ambassador to Constantinople followed his predecessor Visconti-Venosta strict abstentionist line because they saw a weak and neutralist Italy as unready to undertake any such controversial commitment either on Trentino or Albania. But after the Berlin Conference both Italian leaders were pillored at home for gaining nothing (neither Trentino, nor Italian occupation of Albania as long as Vienna held Bosnia, or blocking Vienna’s control of the Adriatic and threats to Albania), compared to: Great Britain’s annexation of Cyprus (a strategic Greek island once belonging to the Venetian Republic and conquered by the Turks in 1500s, from where London dominated the East Mediterranean); Austria-Hungary’s administration of Bosnia and maritime control of the Adriatic and Montenegro coast through lower Dalmazia to Cattaro; Russia’s loss of a reduced Bulgaria into a shell as vassal to Ottoman-Turkish rule; the independence of Serbia, Montenegro and Romania; Greece’s annexation of Thessaly and Epirus, south of Albania. Yet Crispi agreed that at the Berlin Congress, all decisions reflected previous secret accords among the Great Powers and none had openly discussed taking Albania away from Turkey. Historians’ and few savvy contemporaries’ criticize Italy’s early

<sup>1</sup> A. Sette, “L’Albania nella Strategia Diplomatica Italiana, 1871-1915” in *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 102 (I) (2018): p.321-378; R. Petrigiani, *Neutralità e Alleanza. Le Scelte di Politica Estera dell’Italia dopo l’Unità* (Bologna: Mulino, 1987).

diplomatic failures on securing “protectorates” over Albania and Tunisia as the result not of a lack of technical skills among Italian diplomats, but as symbol of both a total lack of political will and geo-strategic foresight in a neutralist Italian foreign policy under Visconti Venosta to Depretis and Corti, where Italy was marginalized as a weak “Least of the Powers”. The resulting shock to national opinion and decision-making options, conditioned negatively Rome’s politicians until World War I by fixing in their mindset three fears: that Albania would be overtaken by Austria-Hungary, giving her hegemony over the Adriatic; that the *Irredenta* will never be recovered diplomatically or in combat as long as Italy was threatened over the colonies and in the Mediterranean by France (her ex-“protector” during the *Risorgimento*), while her new “protector” Germany manipulated Italy for his own secret plans to isolate France, while demanding since the 1860s-70s an end to any border clash between Rome and Vienna as price for a Triple Alliance vital for Italian security.<sup>1</sup>

Italian Premier Depretis now realized that by not securing Albania as an internationally-recognized state any local revolt or ethnic clash would destabilize the Balkans and eventually allow Vienna to seize Albania (as she had just done in Bosnia) during the 1879 Greek-Turkish-Albanian Crisis over defining the actual new borders agreed by the 1878 Berlin Congress: the Albanian Prizren League (1878) demanded independence and opposed with arms any loss of ethnic Albanian lands to Serbia (Kosovo), Greece (Epirus with Janina) and Montenegro (north Scutari area), while Turkey manipulated this to reduce her land cessions in Thessaly to Greece.<sup>2</sup> Depretis also opposed Greece’s expansion all the way Valona/Vlorë and Durazzo/Durrës (which his predecessors had supported instead). Depretis promoted Italian mediation for a Greek-Turkish border accord along ethnic lines (“More Thessaly, less Epirus”), which however was rejected by both Greece and Ottoman-Turks, while Rome diplomatic efforts failed to get Anglo-French support for Rome’s mediation once it emerged that Paris was secretly pro-Greek (and supported likewise by Vienna, Berlin and St. Petersburg) vs. London pro-Turkish. An Anglo-Italian joint position was voided by the collapse of the Depretis government replaced by the pro-Greek Cairoli one which feared that Paris instead would be the one to control Greece, while von Bismarck quietly pitted Rome vs. Paris by secretly encouraging Italy to seek compensations in Albania in 1879, just as he had secretly proposed in 1877. Italy’s new equidistant Maffei Plan was similar to the old Berio Plan favouring an autonomous Albanian province (as asked by the Albanian League of Prizren) under Turkey and guaranteed by the Great Powers. Had this been adopted, Italy’s equidistant diplomacy would have received the “gratitude” of Athens, Constantinople and Albania, while isolating Vienna from the Otranto Channel. But in the end, both an international mediation based on the Italian Maffei Plan, or a bilateral Greek-Turkish agreement collapsed in 1879-80, while von Bismarck diplomatically refused to back Rome, because unknown to all Powers on 7 October 1879 Germany and Austria-Hungary had formed their secret Dual Alliance (defensively against Russia), and Berlin refused to cross Vienna.

Worst, unbeknownst to Rome, France secretly secured from von Bismarck and London their consent to annex soon Tunisia, where Paris and Rome were locked in a fight over control of the local railway line and Italy was preparing to establish her own colonial “protectorate”. Von Bismarck ably and secretly manipulated France and Italy into a permanent Italo-French rivalry over Mediterranean colonies in hope of distracting Paris from her anti-German claims over “lost” Alsace-Lorraine, while pushing Rome to finally join an anti-French alliance with Berlin and Vienna (Maffei offer of alliance of August 1880 allowed von Bismarck to forge the Triple Alliance of 1882-1914) by renouncing to the *Irredenta* and securing Vienna’s January 1881 pledge not to seize the South Balkans, Thessalonika or Adriatic/Albanian coast, plus support for Italian claims in Tunisia and Libya. Thus, the May 1881 Constantinople Convention pushed by Berlin and Vienna, stabilized

<sup>1</sup> Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, idem; Sette, “Albania nella Strategia Diplomatica Italiana, 1871-1915”, idem, p.321-378; Petrianni, *Neutralità e Alleanza*, idem; Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part I.

<sup>2</sup> In Summer 1878 the Prizren League declared “We do not want to be Turkish. And thus we shall fight with all our might against those who want to turn us into Slavs, Austrians or Greeks. We just want to be Albanians.” Quote on Prizren League Declaration from: Sette, “Albania e Strategia Diplomatica Italiana, 1871-1915”, idem, p.330 (note 32).

the new Turkish-Greek-Albanian borders applying Depretis' 1879 Maffei Plan also accepted by London (dashing Greek war-preparations to seize the disputed areas believing in earlier support from France and Germany, but once Paris got manipulated into a Tunisian colonial crisis against Italy under instigation by von Bismarck and secured Turkish acceptance to seize Tunisia, then both Paris and Berlin safely dumped Athens). But despite adoption of the Maffei Plan was a Balkan success for Premier Cairoli, he had to resign on 29 May over the loss of Tunisia to France (12 May 1881) and the ensuing futile war-crisis. Back in power, Premier Depretis joined the Triple Alliance (20 May 1882: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy) as the only shield for Rome's interests in the Mediterranean and Balkans against a possible French invasion, while silent on Italian aims in Albania or Balkans.<sup>1</sup>

Rome had been forced to choose between ethnic Irredentism vs. Great Powers colonialism also because unable to rely on British support to prevent France from expanding her Algerian colony by annexing neighbouring Tunisia in 1881 against Italy's aborted colonial protectorate (and similar looming threats also on Morocco and Libya). Thereafter, the fear of an imminent Franco-Italian war became the dominant Italian security threat in 1881-1914 of a dual French offensive by land through the Alps and an unopposed naval invasion on the defenseless Ligurian-Tuscan coasts to reach the Po' Valley and destroy Italy's Army from the rear. Only then Rome did finally agreed to temporally clamp-down her *Irredenta* claims and accept a Berlin mediated agreement with Vienna to settle bilateral ethno-border animosities and both join the 1882-1914 defensive Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy) replacing the First *Dreikaiserbund* against France. With this first Triple Alliance treaty (renewable after 10-years intervals), Vienna and Rome agreed that should Austria-Hungary in the future extend her dominance from the Adriatic coast and North-West Balkans to other parts of the Balkans (Bosnia, Serbia, North Macedonia), Liberal Italy kept self-deluding herself that in a successful alliance war against France she might receive either Austria's Italian-speaking *Irredenta* provinces (strategic control of the North-Central Adriatic Sea) or Albania (strategic control of the Otranto Channel's access to the Adriatic Sea across from Southern Italy as proven later in both World Wars).<sup>2</sup>

Thus, Rome's initial involvement in the Balkans and East Mediterranean before World War I remained limited to future dreams of peacefully annexing the *Irredenta* from Vienna and possibly Albania, while being forced to implicitly expand Italian national security commitments throughout the entire region on behalf of her new allies' deterrence strategies: on one hand, helping protect Austria-Hungary in the Balkans against Russia's rival pan-Slavic expansionism, and on the other helping Germany's alliance-system isolate France both in Europe and in any rival colonial expansion in the Mediterranean, even at the risk that such alliance commitments might drag Liberal Italy into an international war for mastery of Europe (but apparently not for Italy's narrower interests). At the same time, despite London's continued refusal to join Germany in the Triple Alliance (against both France and Russia), von Bismarck was able to unofficially achieve the same strategic aims by implicitly tying both London and Madrid into the parallel 1887 Mediterranean Accords (Italy, Austria-Hungary, Great Britain and Spain) to hold the regional naval *status quo* in the Mediterranean basin and Orient against any threats from either France or Russia.

Indeed, despite Germany's recreating a Second *Dreikaiserbund* in 1882-88 (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia), once the 1888 Balkan Crisis over Bulgaria's independence shattered Russia's hope to influence the Southern Balkans, it also destroyed the Second *Dreikaiserbund* leaving Russia and Austria-Hungary split as enemies, and precipitated an international war-crisis with all Great Powers of both the Triple Alliance and Mediterranean Accords jointly set against France and Russia. Had such an early European major war happened, the Triple Alliance would have most likely absorbed the Mediterranean Accords with Great Britain and Spain in a collective alliance to defeat Russia and keep rival France totally isolated into a humiliating neutrality. But it was Germany's Premier von Bismarck who alone did stop such

<sup>1</sup> Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, idem; Sette, "Albania nella Strategia Diplomatica Italiana, 1871-1915", idem, p.321-378; Petrigiani, *Neutralità e Alleanza*, idem; Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part I.

<sup>2</sup> "Italian Irredentism", idem; M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part I, idem.

collective rush to global war in 1888. But once the risk of imminent war-crises from either Russian or French faded (as Germany briefly boxed Russia's volatility into their secret 1888-92 Reinsurance Treaty, while Italy's fast-growing and technologically-innovative warships emerged in 1885-1900 as the world's third most-powerful navy vs. a weakened French fleet refocused mostly towards colonial expansionism in distant Africa-Pacific areas), the Mediterranean Accords later dissolved as Great Britain and Spain drifted back to neutrality. An isolated London later briefly regretted during the Anglo-French 1896 Fashoda War-crisis over Paris trying to seize Sudan, and should this crisis have escalated into outright war it likely would have brought-in also Italy and Germany to support Great Britain and so tie her permanently to the Mediterranean Accords merged into the Triple Alliance (such war-based radical strategic Mediterranean changes would have prevented a decade later London's drifting under new King Edward VII into the alliance-reversal 1904 Franco-British *Entente Cordiale* and 1907 Franco-Russo-British *Entente* leading to World War I with Italy's own brief choice of forced neutrality, while Madrid was left hopelessly isolated in the 1898 Spanish-Cuban-American War (and into neutrality by World War I). Italy instead, refocused her expanding geo-strategic aims in the shadow of London's friendly consent into the difficult strategic Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia) helping forestall any rival French regional push by surrounding Paris' Djubouti naval base.<sup>1</sup>

Italy's Premier Depretis new Foreign Minister, Count Carlo di Robilant, who had negotiated the first Triple Alliance strove to strengthen the original weaker Italian position in the second Triple Alliance renewal (Berlin, 20 February 1887): to the original pact two new bilateral ones were added:

- a) an Italo-German compelling Rome and Berlin to jointly preserve the Mediterranean *status quo* over "Ottoman coasts and islands in the Adriatic and Aegean Seas" in the East Mediterranean, as well as German support for Italy in case of French aggression in Libya or Morocco;
- b) an Italo-Austrian one to jointly preserve the *status quo* over Turkey's Near East (Balkans), Adriatic islands and Aegean Islands in the East Mediterranean against any territorial change that would undermine the interests of Triple Alliance Powers, but if this could not be preserved in either the Balkans or Turkish East Mediterranean islands, then Austria-Hungary or Italy should undertake temporary/permanent occupations after previous consent within the Triple Alliance on the principle of reciprocal "compensations" for territorial gains.

Thus, Di Robilant sought to prevent Great Powers' claims (from Italo-Austrian-Greek rivalries) on Turkish Albania and make this a new key pillar of the Triple Alliance, and on Turkish Thessalonika's strategic harbour on the Aegean Sea (from Austro-Greek-Bulgarian rivalries), and the Ottoman capital Constantinople with its strategic Turkish Straits (with London, Vienna and Rome opposed to Russia's seizing both). Thus, von Bismarck informed Vienna that Rome supported Austrian-occupied Bosnia as within the *status quo*, while her annexation of Bosnia or Thessalonika or Novi Bazar near Montenegro would alter the Balkans' *status quo* to her advantage and require compensations to Liberal Italy, but no longer in the *Irredenta*, given Vienna's strong past refusals. Thus, Rome's demands for "compensations" could only mean Albania. Although at the time, Italy was not interested in any such annexation, Di Robilant's diplomatic manouvers really meant using the threat of a future Italian "compensatory" control of Albania and Otranto Channel as a strategic choke-hold deterrent against any Austrian *faits accomplis* annexations in the Balkans. In the end, von Bismarck's needs to renew the Triple Alliance forced Austria-Hungary's Emperor Franz-Josef to accept the detested able Italian compromise of Di Robilant: no *Irredenta* in exchange for equal political status between Vienna and Rome on future Adriatic/Balkans land changes. Yet, Liberal Italy immediately lost Di Robilant's diplomatic balance once he was forced to resign over national public anger at a parallel colonial defeat of Dogali in Eritrea (January 1887) after Ethiopian forces had wiped out a column of 500 Italian soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Parts I & II, idem; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, idem, p.450-600; Taylor, *Bismarck: Man & Statesman*, idem, p.200-280; Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, idem, p.137-200.

<sup>2</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part I, idem; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, idem, p.450-600; Sette, "Albania nella Strategia Diplomatica Italiana, 1871-1915", idem, p.347-352; Alberto Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale*, 4 vols. (Milan: Mondadori, 1992), 4<sup>th</sup> vol., Chapters X-XI.

Yet, this first temporary Austro-Italian cooperation on Albania was soon negated by Vienna's 1887-1897 diplomatic deals that reveal a hidden wide design over time to eliminate Albania as a "compensation" by the Triple Alliance to Italy, both from outside (exploiting the Mediterranean Accords on regional *status quo* to force Italy to accept non-interference in Albania, and also eliciting Russia to support Austria-Hungary against her ally Italy) and from within (cornering Italy to accept limiting clauses in the 1888 Triple Alliance's Military Convention and 1897 Italo-Austrian Accord on Albania) in these four cases:

- 1) from within, the rise to power of long-serving Italian Premier Francesco Crispi, a driven old Garibaldinian revolutionary, admirer of von Bismarck and Germany, dismantled Di Robilant's diplomatic balancing compromises over "compensations" by stressing instead during his state visit to von Bismarck (Berlin, September 1887) that he would only preserve the Ottoman Balkans *status quo* in the short-run, while supporting in the future the eventual self-determination of Balkan peoples in independent states. Thus, in the short-run, under von Bismarck's instigation Crispi joined the First Mediterranean Accord (February-March 1887: Great Britain, Italy, Austria-Hungary) to preserve non-interventionist regional *status quo* in the Mediterranean, Adriatic, Aegean and Black Seas, with Italy backing Great Britain in Egypt in exchange of British support of Italy on Libya and North Africa against French interference in both areas. The Second Mediterranean Accord (December 1887: Great Britain, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Spain) protected regional *status quo* against naval interference from France or Russia, preserved the Ottoman-Turkish Empire (to prevent Russia from seizing the capital Constantinople and strategic Turkish Straits), excluded "compensations" and this last point was used as justification by Vienna to force Italy not to "interfere" in Albania.
- 2) From within, the 1888 Triple Alliance's Military Convention for the first time compelled Rome to send in wartime 100,000 Italian troops to the Franco-German Front to help German forces in case of a future war against France (paradoxically in World War I Italy refused to do the reverse for the Allies by first focusing all war-efforts only against Austria-Hungary until 1917 when finally 100,000 Italian troops were sent to France by 1918 to help the Allies on the Western Front, as "political compensation" for the Anglo-French-U.S. reinforcements sent since to Italy after her disastrous 1917 Caporetto Rout). But Vienna used that new treaty to firmly reject any hypothesis of a future possible occupation of Albania by Italy, as reported to Rome by the Italian military negotiator Lieutenant-Colonel Giovanni Goiran who stressed that Vienna distrusted Rome and fully understood that if Italy held Albania she could block Austria-Hungary's rival local political expansionism either at a future Triple Alliance victorious peace treaty, or even by breaking away from the Triple Alliance to join the enemy (as happened in 1915).<sup>1</sup>
- 3) From without, in January 1897 the Crete Revolt escalated into a new Greek-Turkish War (January-May 1897), while Austria-Hungary after the end of the Mediterranean Accords, bypassed the Triple Alliance to reach-out to Russia with a bilateral pact during the 27-29 April 1897 visit of Emperor Franz-Josef with Czar Nicholas II, agreeing that only Austro-Russian cooperation would preserve Balkan *status quo* and non-intervention principle, or if impossible in case of future disintegration of the Ottoman-Turkish Empire they would develop together future borders in an equitable partition of the Balkans in various small states, and also promote Albania as an independent state to exclude any "foreign domination" (code-word for Italy).
- 4) From within, at the 6-7 November 1897 Milan meeting between Austria-Hungary's and Italy's Foreign Ministers Count Agenor Goluchowski and Emilio Visconti-Venosta, both stressed that neither would control Albania and jointly they would support the Balkans *status quo*, while if the Ottoman-Turkish Empire eventually collapsed both Vienna and Rome would jointly support an independent Albania. This bilateral accord (similar to the 1897 Austro-Russian one) completed Vienna's diplomatic long-game to box Italy into jettisoning Albania as possible compensation in the Triple Alliance, in exchange for close cooperation with Austria-Hungary in the Balkans as stressed by Visconti-Venosta's address

<sup>1</sup> Sette, "Albania nella Strategia Diplomatica Italiana, 1871-1915", idem, p.356 (note 114).

to Parliament in December 1900 (not as his own initiative to counter the previous 1897 Austro-Russian Accord as erroneously interpreted by respected historian Pietro Pastorelli). Yet this backfired once Rome reasserted and expanded her autonomous interests anywhere in the South Balkans by asking Vienna's "support" for possible compensations should also Austria-Hungary expand territorially in the Balkans as based on the Triple Alliance and new 1897 Austro-Italian Accord?<sup>1</sup>

This second temporary Austro-Italian regional cooperation on Albania soon collapsed over Vienna's rising "soft-power" religious-cultural and transportation influence that excluded Italy, while the 1900 terrorist assassination by an anarchist of pro-German authoritarian King Umberto I altered national foreign policy under the diminutive Francophone King Vittorio-Emanuele III who demanded Italian autonomy within the Triple Alliance and equal influence with Austria-Hungary and Russia in the Balkans, as first Italian ruler to understand the region (his queen being a Montenegrin princess). Likewise, political dislike for Berlin and Vienna, promoted his decision that now Italy must wrestle Albania from Austrian influence at all costs to prevent Vienna from ever seizing Valona/Vlorë's vital strategic control of the Otranto Channel closing the Adriatic Sea, or Italy would be doomed. Thus, Italy's new Premier became the irredentist Giuseppe Zanardelli whose government gradually widened Rome's options, and consequently, when Vienna sent a warship to Valona in May 1901 to show-the-flag as symbolical counter-balance to Italy's expansion of her consulate, Rome used the separate issue of Turkish mistreatment of Italian subjects locally as excuse to send in June-July 1901 an entire Italian Naval Division in "training" maneuvers off Turkish-controlled Corfú and then having it double-back to visit in Albania both Valona/Vlorë and Durazzo/Dürres, leaving Vienna in complete shock. Rome minimized the incident, reconfirming support of the Balkans *status quo* and offered that the 1897 Austro-Italian Accord be added to the Third Triple Alliance renewal in 1902, while expanding Italy's own "soft-power" counter-penetration in Albania, which Vienna instead took as an additional threat. Finally, Vienna took as a worse international insult that in Summer 1902 King Vittorio-Emanuele III's first state visits abroad avoided Vienna altogether, while going to Berlin (reconfirming loyalty to the Triple Alliance) and then to rival St. Petersburg (but here the Czarist government only agreed to basic cooperation to maintain the Balkans *status quo* reflecting the parallel 1897 Austro-Russian and Austro-Italian Accords). As Rome also secured a new Mediterranean Accord with London and a mutual neutrality pledge with Paris (which in spirit skirted the anti-French defensive Triple Alliance), German Chancellor Bernhard von Bulow criticized Rome's autonomous "Waltz diplomacy", while Italo-Austrian relations worsened (Vienna considered Albania as purview only of bilateral Austro-Italian interests, while refusing to involve Rome in Macedonia's and other South Balkans crises as they reflected European Great Powers' interest in the Turkish Near East).<sup>2</sup>

However, in the Great Powers' grand scheme of secret diplomatic and geo-strategic games for mutual balance, Italy's remained internationally marginalized and her rising geo-strategic aims got constantly side-swiped by all other Powers when convenient to them:

- 1) in the 1870s as Italy refused to join von Bismarck's First *Dreikaiserbund* alliance, she was excluded from his later mediated secret 1876 Austro-Russian Budapest Treaty to evenly split East-West the Balkans among themselves without any thought of concessions to Italy in Albania (under Vienna's future sphere of influence), until it collapsed over the 1877 Balkan War between Russia and Turkey, followed by the German-mediated 1878 Congress of Berlin where von Bismarck isolated Russia, while leaving both France and Italy unsatisfied in the background; although von Bismarck secured Italy's military joining in 1882 the Triple Alliance which protected Rome from Paris, he also strongly opposed in 1882 Italy from joining Great Britain and France in the naval blockade of Egypt to protect their European residents from local xenophobic revolts (and Italy had the largest number of foreign

<sup>1</sup> Sette, "Albania nella Strategia Diplomatica Italiana, 1871-1915", idem, p.356-358.

<sup>2</sup> Sette, "Albania nella Strategia Diplomatica Italiana, 1871-1915", idem, p.359-362.

- residents) and such constant German opposition kept Italy from landing colonial troops in support of the subsequent British invasion and her conquest of geo-strategic Egypt;
- 2) twice again in 1878 when Austria-Hungary first received political control of ex-Turkish Bosnia at the 1878 Berlin Conference and in 1908 when Vienna annexed her, Rome found herself diplomatically isolated in her requests for “compensations” in either the *Irredenta* or Albania (left instead under Ottoman-Turkish rule until Italy seized it in 1914-20);
  - 3) in 1881 Great Britain although a friend of Liberal Italy, refused to intervene to stop France’s rapid annexation of Tunisia (where Italy had the largest number of foreign residents and had just agreed to become instead an Italian protectorate) because London although opposed rival France’s growing colonial influence in the Mediterranean, was also unwilling to let pro-British Italy control both sides of the strategic Sicilian Channel bisecting the Mediterranean Sea and dangerously surround the main British naval base of Malta (another Italian *Irredenta* claim as ethnically-Italian);
  - 4) likewise in 1907 and 1911 during the Two Moroccan Crises, London only accepted France’s “protectorate” over Morocco (which risked threatening the main British naval base of Gibraltar) once all Great Powers agreed that the shorter North Moroccan coast (*Riff*) facing Gibraltar would be given to weak neutral Spain (an ex-Power since the U.S. defeated her in the 1898 Spanish-Cuban-American War that ended her empire), instead of France (thus contradicting the earlier rationale of Tunisia vs. Malta of 1881) in a way that contradicted her position in 1881 over Italy’s claims on Tunisia, thus forcing Rome to actively protect her last option for colonial expansion across the Mediterranean by securing secret bilateral guarantees with all Great Powers that they would not oppose Italy’s future annexation of Turkish Libya;<sup>1</sup>
  - 5) within this context, Liberal Italy also skillfully used Great Powers diplomatic cooperation and loyal military subordination to join the first two international peacekeeping operations in the 1897-98 Greco-Turkish War and International Naval control of Crete (Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, France and Russia) and 1900 International Military Expedition to crush the Boxer Revolution in China (Russia, Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, France, U.S.A.). Italy’s goals as always were to quietly build a degree of global diplomatic consent at least towards Rome’s own growing geo-strategic aspirations in the Turkish East Mediterranean (Albania, Libya and Levant) once her East African empire was forced to a 40-years standstill with the humiliating 1896 defeat at Aduwa in Ethiopia;<sup>2</sup>
  - 6) when the 1911-12 Italo-Turkish War saw Rome finally come open to cash her secret treaties to annex Turkish Libya after France had just been allowed to annex Morocco, then all the Great Powers, including her allies Germany and Austria-Hungary reversed themselves and openly opposed Liberal Italy for fear that such regional war would escalate into an international war among them over the spoils of the Ottoman-Turkish Empire. In the end, Liberal Italy went against all international oppositions to conquer Libya’s entire coast with 34,000 troops followed by 85,000 reinforcements against 8,000 Turkish troops and 32,000 Turkish-Libyan irregulars in a long guerrilla warfare in the Libyan Desert) and massive Italian naval raids against Beirut in Turkish Lebanon and the Ottoman Greek-speaking Dodecanese Islands with a final strike into the strategic Turkish Straits, thus allowing Italy to annex both Libya and Dodecanese.<sup>3</sup>

Thereafter, in 1912-13 the weakened Ottoman-Turkish Empire also lost the Balkans in two anti-Turkish wars by the pro-Russian Balkan League (Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania), while the Great Powers finally slid in World War I (1914-18). Liberal Italy reversed her alliances by switching from the German-led Triple Alliance to the French-led ex-enemy *Entente/Allies* after twice negotiating the terms to join the Great War over the unsolved *Irredenta* nationalist issue:

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, idem, p.450-600; Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, idem, p.137-200; M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Parts I & II, idem.

<sup>2</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Parts I & II, idem; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, idem, p.450-600; Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, idem, p.137-200; “Europe 1898: Britain’s Splendid Isolation” in OMNIATLAS, see: <https://omniatlas.com/maps/europe/18980919/>; “Asia-Pacific 1900: Boxer Rebellion” in OMNIATLAS, see: <https://omniatlas.com/maps/asia-pacific/19000616/>

<sup>3</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part II, idem; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery in Europe*, idem, p.450-600; Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, idem, p.137-200; “Europe 1912: Italo-Turkish War” in OMNIATLAS, see: <https://omniatlas.com/maps/europe/19120517/>



- 1) in 1914 Rome unsuccessfully sought to exchange fighting alongside the Triple Alliance in the Great War as part of her 1882 Italo-Austrian unofficial agreement (with Berlin unsuccessfully supporting Rome against Vienna's obstinate veto);
- 2) Rome quickly sought to capitalize her pivotal neutral position between the two warring alliances (*Entente/Allies* vs. German-led Central Powers) to finally attain Liberal Italy's long-term 1870s to 1912 expansionist policies with the secret April 1915 Pact of London (Italy, France, Great Britain and Czarist Russia) alliance-reversal to quit the Triple Alliance and join the enemy *Entente/Allies* in war against Austria-Hungary and Germany by 23 May 1915, in exchange for annexing after victory all her *Irredenta* land claims (Trentino, strategic German-speaking Süd Tirol, Venezia Giulia, Istria, Zara, north Dalmazia and strategic Valona/Vlorë in Albania, but not Fiume and south Dalmazia from Spalato/Split to Cattaro/Kotor), plus future colonial concessions if the Ottoman-Turkish Empire collapsed, which the weakened Allies happily promised Rome to exchange for her major wartime military contribution.<sup>1</sup>

Italy's 1914-15 pro-Allies neutrality and 1915 alliance-reversal helped the Allies in three ways: a) in 1914-15 France could secretly shift her southern armies from the Italo-French Alpine borders to the Western Front where they helped barely contain the 1914 first German offensives just outside Paris; b) later in 1915-18 this allowed the Allies to keep large Austro-German armies pinned-down on the Italo-Austrian Alpine Front instead of shifting their defensive military weight to either the Western and Balkan Fronts against France, Great Britain and Greece; c) then this saved the depleted Anglo-French armies from having to scramble scarce forces to the Franco-Italian Alpine border should Italy have completely collapsed (like Romania in 1916) after the Fall 1917 Caporetto Rout (275,000 POWs) and lost total control of the entire Veneto and Po' Valleys from the Italo-Austrian Front near Udine to the Italo-French Alpine borders from Aosta-to-Ventimiglia, forcing Rome into a separate armistice. Regardless, both Allies and Italy crafted their initial wartime and post-war plans on the shared belief in 1914-17 (and Rome until 1918) that their eventual future victory would still leave a relatively intact European Balance of Power with a much weaker, but still surviving German, Austria-Hungary and Russian Empires, while most of Italy's first territorial claims (1914-15 Salandra-Sonnino Plan and 1915 London Pact) to be first in regional border areas (*Irredenta* in Trentino, Trieste/Istria and north Dalmazia) and second as vague colonial cessions on the Turkish-Ottoman Middle East, all with initial unanimous Italian domestic political support.

The first vital 1914-15 irredentist cessions (Salandra-Sonnino Plan and London Pact) would enhance Italy's border security by controlling all strategic north-east Alps and east Adriatic coasts against any relatively-strong post-war Germany and Austria-Hungary. Then in 1916-20s a second batch of semi-irredentist claims (Fiume, south Dalmazia and all Albania) indicated a greater confidence in Italy's future role by boldly reviving historical Venetian and Italian expansionist claims also in the south Adriatic/Balkans. Additionally, the parallel broadening as a distinct third set of Italian colonial claims in the 1915 London Pact to South-West Turkey (Smyrne to Adalia) reflected extending the historical Venetian-Genovese maritime claims to the East Mediterranean (Ottoman-Turkish Empire partition) once in late-1916 Rome became incensed that the *Entente* Powers (Czarist Russia, Great Britain and France) had since 1915-16 secretly conspired behind her back to partition only among themselves most of the Ottoman-Turkish Empire in the 1915 Russo-Anglo-French Accord (Czarist Russia seeking Constantinople, Turkish Straits, Turkish Armenia and most of Kurdistan; Great Britain seeking Mesopotamia/Iraq and a TransJordan link to British Egypt; France seeking a "Greater Syria") and the Anglo-French 1916 Sykes-Picot Plan revised by the 1918 Lloyd-

<sup>1</sup> Salvatorelli, *La Triplice Alleanza*, idem; "Italian Irredentism", idem; Luigi Albertini, *Le Origini della Guerra del 1914*, 3 vols. (Milano: 1942-45); Rosario Milano & Luciano Monzali, *Della Ricerca dell'Equilibrio al Sogno dell'Egemonia: Appunti sulla Politica Estera Italiana nello Spazio Mediterraneo fra le Due Guerre Mondiali* in *ACADEMIA*, p.103-172: [https://www.academia.edu/10248092/Dalla\\_ricerca\\_dell\\_equilibrio\\_al\\_sogno\\_dell\\_egemonia\\_Appunti\\_sulla\\_politica\\_estera\\_italiana\\_nello\\_spazio\\_mediterraneo\\_fra\\_le\\_due\\_guerre\\_mondiali](https://www.academia.edu/10248092/Dalla_ricerca_dell_equilibrio_al_sogno_dell_egemonia_Appunti_sulla_politica_estera_italiana_nello_spazio_mediterraneo_fra_le_due_guerre_mondiali); Monzali, *Soano d'Eaemonia: Italia, Juaoslavia e l'Europa Centrale, 1918-41*, idem, p.8-9 & 13; "Province of Cattaro" in *Wikipedia*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province\\_of\\_Cattaro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Province_of_Cattaro); "Partition of Ottoman Empire" in *Wikipedia*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partition\\_of\\_the\\_Ottoman\\_Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partition_of_the_Ottoman_Empire)

George-Clemenceau Accord (Great Britain to annex as colonies Mesopotamia/Iraq and TransJordan, plus supporting an independent Arabia-Hejaz, revised in 1918 to take-over both also Iraqi-Kurdistan and an initially internationalized Palestine as Jewish homeland in the 1918 Balfour Plan; France to annex as colonies "Greater Syria" with Lebanon and Iraqi-Kurdistan, plus South-East Turkey with Adana, revised to turn-over Iraqi-Kurdistan to British Mesopotamia; an Anglo-French-dominated new Allied International Military Zone on Constantinople and Turkish Straits, plus Turkish Armenia and Turkish Kurdistan taken away from collapsed Czarist Russia). Liberal Italy's diplomatic protests in late-1916 against such exclusion led to the April-August 1917 Anglo-Franco-Italian St. Jean de Maurienne Accords delimiting an Italian Zone on all South-West Turkish Anatolia (Smirne to Adalia), again modified at the 1919 Versailles Conference by British pressures on an incensed Rome to turn-over to Athens the Greek-speaking Smyrna Zone to which the Allies added most of Greek-speaking Turkish Thrace from the Allied International Military Straits Zone.<sup>1</sup>

During the Great War, Italy's military efforts under Supreme Commander Luigi Cadorna focused his 875,000-strong military to overwhelm Austria-Hungary's fortified trenches in 12 bloody land offensives on the Isonzo Line bottlenecks (1915-17), which slowly conquered marginal areas and finally Gorizia in 1917, in a strategy to either pivot south to surround local enemy forces and take Vienna's main international port of Trieste (vital for all regional logistics and supplies) and continue further south into Istria, or move forward east into Slovenia towards its provincial capital and Ljubljana Gap to force a generalized enemy retreat (like Napoleon in his 1796-97 First Italian Campaign), while other Italian forces vainly fought along the mountainous and broken Alpine Trentino Salient Front seeking to reach Trento and Bolzano/Bozen. Despite limited land gains, Liberal Italy's was bogged-down in semi-static fighting along Austria's 500-Km.-long Alpine border and Isonzo River, which were the worst unsuitable mountain combat theatre with no room for maneuver. Further, despite the Italian Navy's success in blockading in port the Austrian capital Navy and controlling the Adriatic Sea and Otranto Canal Line, General Cadorna only allowed the limited regional conquest of Albania since 1915 to link with the Allies' Salonika/Greek Front, but refused to launch any further localized offensives in the Balkans or a secondary amphibious invasion of Dalmazia, for fear of whittling away the vital mass of Infantry/artillery forces planned for a "final offensive" and break-through against the enemy along the Isonzo River.

Dalmazia was indeed a strategic region to control the Adriatic Sea and penetrate into the Western Balkans (later renamed Yugoslavia) that both Italy and Serbia planned to seize from Austria-Hungary, but as Serbia was crushed by Austria-Hungary in 1915, Italy's wartime military strategy in 1915-17 focused exclusively on overwhelming land offensives to conquer the Isonzo River, Gorizia and Trieste, while the Italian Army since the 1890s feared that seizing insular and continental Dalmazia required at least 100,000 troops isolated there and always threatened by any strong Austro-German offensive). Also the Italian Navy after losing warships to enemy submarines and seeing the abysmal failure of the 1915 Allied first amphibious landings of Gallipoli in the Turkish Straits was reluctant to be bogged-down in clearing minefields in the jagged Dalmatian coast and islands during its own amphibious landings, with the risk of drawing-out the powerful Austro-Hungarian Navy from her fortified harbours (Trieste, Pola, Fiume, Zara, Spalato, Ragusa, Cattaro) behind mine barriers and lurking submarines, to attack the Italian Navy and landing transports.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Albertini, *Origini della Guerra 1914*, idem; Monzali, *Italiani di Dalmazia dal Risorgimento alla Grande Guerra*, idem; Monzali, *Sogno d'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e l'Europa Centrale, 1918-41*, idem, p.8-9 & 13; M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Parts I & II, idem; Milano & Monzali, *Ricerca d'Equilibrio al Sogno d'Egemonia: Politica Estera Italiana nel Mediterraneo fra Due Guerre Mondiali*, idem, p.102-113; "Partition Ottoman Empire", idem; "Partition Ottoman Empire", idem; "Agreement of St. Jean-de-Maurienne" in *Wikipedia*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agreement\\_of\\_Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne#:~:text=%2DJean%2Dde%2DMaurienne%2Dwas,18%20%E2%80%93%20September%2026%2C%201917](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agreement_of_Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne#:~:text=%2DJean%2Dde%2DMaurienne%2Dwas,18%20%E2%80%93%20September%2026%2C%201917); Paul C. Helmreich, "Italy and Anglo-French Repudiation of the 1917 St. Jean de Maurienne Agreement" in *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 48, N. 2 (June 1976): p.99-139; Ekrem Buğra Ekinci, "Sykes-Picot: the Western Agreement that Sealed the Middle East's Doom" in *Daily Sabah* (10 July 2015): <https://www.dailysabah.com/feature/2015/07/10/sykes-picot-the-western-agreement-that-sealed-the-middle-east-doom>; "Sykes-Picot Agreement" in *Fanak.com* (13 March 2017): <https://fanack.com/international-affairs-of-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/sykes-picot-agreement/>

<sup>2</sup> Piero Melograni, *Storia Politica della Grande Guerra, 1915-1918* (Milan: Mondadori, 1998); "Italian Irredentism" in *Wikipedia*, see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_irredentism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_irredentism); M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part II, idem; Philippe Rostan, *L'Europa in Pericolo: Caporetto, 1917* (Milan: Club degli Editori, 1969); John Keegan, *The First World War* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1998); Keith Robbins, *La Prima Guerra Mondiale*, 1984 (Milan: Mondadori, 1998); "Luigi

During World War I, Liberal Italy lost to the Allied cause 900,000 dead and 2 million wounded, but Supreme Allied Commander General Ferdinand Foch opposed British Premier Lord Asquith's request to support Cadorna with 300 cannons and Anglo-French forces. After the Fall 1917 Caporetto Rout, France and Great Britain pushed for General Cadorna's dismissal (9 November 1917) in exchange for sending 11 divisions to reinforce the new Italian front at the Monte Grappa-Piave River-Venice Line, but Allied troops played no role in stopping the advancing Germans and Austro-Hungarians, because they were deployed 100 Km. further back on the Mincio River as Anglo-French strategists did not believe the Piave Line could be held. Under new Supreme Commander Armando Diaz, Italy's military was revamped and finally succeeded three times in defeating the Austro-Hungarian forces in December 1917 at the Monte Grappa massif Battles, the June 1918 Piave Offensive and October-November 1918 Vittorio-Veneto Offensive where 1,4 million Italian troops liberated both the lost Veneto areas and again took Gorizia by 5-6 November 1918, while Italian warships finally landed forces in Trieste and Dalmazia (Lissa/Vis, Lagosta/Lastovo, Sebenico/Šibenik and smaller islands). By 11 November as Austria-Hungary surrendered, the Italian military quickly seized control of most of the *Irredenta* in follow-up combat and post-war lightning occupations: the entire Dalmazia area guaranteed to Italy by the London Pact, and then by 17 November also Istria and Fiume, followed in December 1918 by the occupation of Trentino and Admiral Enrico Millo's flottilla seizing Zara with him as Italy's Governor of Dalmazia.<sup>1</sup>

As long-term geo-strategic follow-up to her dramatic 1915 alliance-reversal and entry into the Great War (1914-18) alongside the Allies, plus her brilliant Fall 1918 Vittorio-Veneto Offensive defeating Vienna, Rome sought to capitalize this in the InterWars Era (1919-39) through a new politico-diplomatico-military strategy to elevate Italy from marginal "Least of the Powers" to the post-war dominant politico-economic Great Power in the Balkans/East Europe and as equal colonial competitor against the Anglo-French in the East Mediterranean. By the end of the Great War Italy had swiftly seized militarily all her historical *Irredenta* claims (either by conquest or military occupation), while veteran/international poet Gabriele D'Annunzio later marched his irredentist volunteer "Legionaries" to seize the still hotly contested Dalmatian city of Fiume and neighbouring islands (Carnaro Regency, 1919-21). At the same time, at the 1919 Versailles Treaty diplomatic table, Rome sought to annex all of Dalmazia, Albania, Süd Tirol and her promised colonial concessions in South Turkey, but was opposed by the Allies' "Big Three" (U.S.A., France, Great Britain) who instead turned to support her regional rivals Yugoslavia and Greece as regional barriers against Italy and Germany.<sup>2</sup>

In these fast-evolving 1916-23 years, Italy radically expanded her geo-strategic vision of her international role in the First Post-War focused on exploiting the unexpected vacuum of Power after World War I by the collapse of rival Czarist Russian, Austro-Hungarian, German and Ottoman-Turkish Empires to strengthen a military revamped Liberal Italy (after her 1917 near-collapse during the Caporetto Rout). In the Adriatic, Balkans/East Europe and East Mediterranean, Liberal and Fascist Italy sought to exploit the changed regional geo-strategic situation in five ways:

- 1) Liberal Italy's long-standing nationalist claims on the historic Italian-speaking *Irredenta* lands under Austria-Hungary now led Rome to militarily seize them all in November-December 1918 and seek to annex most at the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference (despite irredentist Italians living next to mix-Slav populations in Istria and Dalmazia or Germans in Süd Tirol);
- 2) Italy's desire to penetrate politico-economically the Adriatic/Western Slavic Balkans once controlled by Austria-Hungary (Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Serbia), plus Albania;

Cadorna" in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luigi\\_Cadorna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luigi_Cadorna); Monzali, *Italiani di Dalmazia dal Risorgimento alla Grande Guerra*, idem.

<sup>1</sup> Melograni, *Storia Politica della Grande Guerra, 1915-18*, idem; M. Rimaneli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part II, idem; Rostan, *Europa in Pericolo: Caporetto 1917*, idem; "Luigi Cadorna", idem; "Ferdinand Foch" in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand\\_Foch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_Foch); "Armando Diaz" in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armando\\_Diaz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armando_Diaz); "Italian Irredentism", idem; Monzali, *Italiani di Dalmazia dal Risorgimento alla Grande Guerra*, idem; Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e l'Europa Centrale, 1918-1941*, idem, p.13.

<sup>2</sup> Ferdinando Gerra, *L'Impresa di Fiume*, 2 vols. (Milan: Longanesi, 1974); Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e Europa Centrale, 1918-1941*, idem.

- 3) secondarily but vital, Rome hoped to replace the historical regional politico-economic-cultural hegemony of Germany and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans/East Europe (leaving a reduced defeated and independent Austria; a reduced defeated and independent Hungary; a reduced Bulgaria; an independent Albania), as well as rival Czarist Russia in ethnic Slavic areas (Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania) to create a vast regional network of pro-Italian “protectorates” and dependent trade-markets with raw-materials to bolster Italy’s expanding industrial and new political ambitions;
- 4) secondarily but equally vital, Liberal Italy’s desire to consolidate and strengthen her new geo-strategic penetration of the East Mediterranean (started with the Venetian and Genovese Republics, followed by Piedmont’s participation in the 1853-56 Crimean War and consolidated by the 1911-12 Italo-Turkish War and World War I Italian Navy operations) by subjugating Libya’s interior guerrilla, adding as Mandates the ex-Ottoman South Turkey (Adalia) and Armenia potentially, while trying to turn Greece into a “protectorate”.<sup>1</sup>

All these four major diplomatico-military paths for future geo-strategic expansion were pursued in parallel by Liberal Italy in 1915-23 as “just rewards” (the first three at least) for Rome’s internationally criticized reversal-of-alliances. But Rome’s demands were eventually stalled sequentially in 1919-20 at the Versailles Peace Conference and in 1923, due to Italy’s comparative military-economic weakness as opposed by a united anti-Italian diplomatic front of the Allies’ “Big Three” (U.S.A., France, Great Britain) supporting instead Yugoslavia and Greece. Liberal Italy’s slow domestic political collapse after her Versailles “humiliation”, brought to power the anti-Western Fascist dictatorship of ultra-nationalist Benito Mussolini, who thereafter pursued more or less successfully all of Liberal Italy’s international Power geo-strategic and colonial goals, plus Irredentism’s last claims, until the country’s entry in World War II and ultimate 1940-1943 brief success, followed by total collapse and civil war in 1943-1945.<sup>2</sup>

Liberal Italy’s irredentist and new geo-strategic ambitious plans were first countered since late-1918 by several rival local Slavic nationalist aims (Serbia and Croatia), which eventually merged into a broader anti-Italian regional Yugoslav Kingdom (1919-1941), and since 1915 equally so by all dominant “Big-Three” Allies: France staged a massive diplomatico-financial penetration of Serbia/Yugoslavia, Albania, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, ex-Ottoman Middle East (“Greater Syria”), Turkish Adana regions and Constantinople/Turkish Straits Zone; Great Britain in Greece, ex-Ottoman Middle East (“Greater Palestine”, Mesopotamia/Iraq, “Greater Arabia”) and Constantinople/Turkish Straits Zone; while the U.S.A. actively sabotaged all Allied Powers rival inroads in Turkey and Constantinople/Turkish Straits Zone (Great Britain, France, Italy and Greece), as well as Armenia and Kurdistan, after it had been sidelined into accepting Anglo-French and Dominions’ semi-colonial Mandates under an ephemeral League of Nations authority; and finally the new Communist Soviet Union’s sabotage of Western influence in Turkey, Middle East and Iran by supporting nationalist Turkey’s rival claims in exchange for consolidating power on the ex-Czarist independent Caucasus and threatening with invasion a weak anti-Western Iran after the Allies’ post-war withdrawal.<sup>3</sup>

Already between late-1916 and the end of the bloody World War I, Rome was forced to re-evaluate her national strategic aims within the context of growing regional ethno-nationalist contrasts (between Italians, Austro-Germans, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and Albanians) and the need to expand Italy’s future geo-political role in the Balkans/East Mediterranean once it became clear that Russia, Austria-Hungary and Ottoman-Turkey were disintegrating in a collapsing East European/Balkans international order. On

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part II, idem; Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, idem; Monzali, *Sogno d’Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e l’Europa Centrale, 1918-41*, idem, p.8-13; Milano & Monzali, *Ricerca d’Equilibrio al Sogno d’Egemonia: Politica Estera Italiana nel Mediterraneo fra Due Guerre Mondiali*, idem, p.102-113; “Partition Ottoman Empire”, idem; “Agreement of St. Jean-de-Maurienne”, idem; Helmreich, “Italy & Anglo-French Repudiation of 1917 St. Jean de Maurienne Agreement”, idem, p.99-139.

<sup>2</sup> Monzali, *Sogno dell’Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e l’Europa Centrale, 1918-1941*, idem, p.3-10.

<sup>3</sup> Monzali, *Sogno dell’Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e l’Europa Centrale, 1918-1941*, idem, p.3-4 & 4-10.

one hand, Liberal Italy's diplomacy under Foreign Minister Sidney Sonnino (1914-19) with conservative Liberal and Catholic political forces promoted a cautious minorities autonomy (not ethno-secessionism) approach to the contentious East European/Balkan Nationalities, while supporting the preservation of a reduced Austro-Hungarian Empire (but not any separate Austro-Italian peace treaty) as a bastion against both Russia's and Germany's regional territorial expansionisms. Sonnino strongly opposed any collapse of a defeated Austria-Hungary, which would lead to Berlin's annexation of German-speaking Austria and Sudetenland with the ultimate strengthening of Germany. Likewise in the Adriatic/Balkans, Sonnino supported in 1915 a limited enlargement of Serbia to Bosnia and south-central Dalmazia, but firmly rejected Serb-advocacy of a wider Yugoslav federation from North Macedonia to Slovenia, which Rome feared would have replaced the historical Austro-Hungarian threat with a new Serbo-Yugoslav threat as a possible ally for Russia and/or France against Italy's aims to control the entire Adriatic area should Austria-Hungary disintegrate (by 1917-18 with this case becoming likely, Rome preferred instead the emergence of a group of rival Balkan states: Hungary, an enlarged Serbia, independent Croatia and independent Montenegro, while Slovenia should either remain part of Austria or annexed to Croatia).<sup>1</sup>

On the other, Sonnino's foreign policy aims were criticized by several influential domestic political opponents (historian Gaetano Salvemini and Socialist Leonida Bissolati) who since 1913 already advocated revamping the internationalist democratic-revolutionary programs of old *Risorgimento* hero Giuseppe Mazzini in support of full secessionism and independence for all East European/Balkan nationalities to undermine Austria-Hungary's political cohesion and military effectiveness, while finally securing at least by default Italy's victory over her historical mortal enemy. Salvemini especially saw a "Greater Serbia" as a natural ally of Italy against Austria-Hungary, and by 1917-18 once Russia collapsed in revolution and Austria-Hungary's disintegration seemed possible both he and Conservative Senator Luigi Albertini (Director of the influential daily *Corriere della Sera*) advocated for a strong Serb-dominated Yugoslav federation of 12 millions as a less dangerous neighbour for Italy and a likely regional friend against future risks of an expanding German hegemony into the Adriatic/Balkans. The price of such anti-German Italo-Yugoslav regional cooperation was for Rome to limit her *Irredenta* territorial claims to Trentino, Trieste/Istria, Zara and some Dalmatian islands, while leaving to Yugoslavia the majority of Dalmazia and northern Albania as well. After Italy's Fall 1917 Caporetto Rout and pull-back of the Italo-Austrian Front to the Venice-Piave Line, a weakened nationalist Italy faced months of agony over the strong risk of impending defeat, unless the Allies quickly sent substantive reinforcements, while the April 1917 entry into the Great War of the United States enhanced President Woodrow Wilson's Fall 1917 "Fourteen Points" post-war advocacy for independent ethnic states. Italy's new government of Vittorio-Emanuele Orlando adopted the Salvemini-Albertini policy-advocacy and started official talks with the ethno-nationalist exiled Yugoslav politicians (March 1918 Torre-Trumbić Accord), and unveiled the April 1918 Rome Congress of the Oppressed Peoples, whose propaganda endorsement of the independence of all Austro-Hungarian ethnic minorities also lifted Italy's collapsed international diplomatic profile out of the 1917 military rout of Caporetto.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, Premier Orlando's policy-reversal (strengthened by his sidelining of Foreign Minister Sonnino and his previous anti-Yugoslav policy) to support a post-war Yugoslav federal state (Salvemini-Albertini Theses) and work together to craft a new Adriatic/Balkans order soon revealed itself as a dead-end. On one hand, Orlando's new nationalities propaganda was quite ambiguous as he used it to both undermine the morale of the enemy Austro-Hungarian military, while secretly hedging its bets by promoting under Vatican mediation new bilateral talks with Vienna for a separate peace treaty advantageous to Rome's claims (yet dumping the still-powerful Germany and Ottoman-Turkey exclusively on the Allies' lap). On the other, even the most moderate Italian post-war territorial ethnic claims on new Adriatic borders were rejected in-turn

<sup>1</sup> Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e l'Europa Centrale, 1918-1941*, idem, p.9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e l'Europa Centrale, 1918-1941*, idem, p.10-12; Luciano Tosi, *La Propaganda Italiana all'Estero nella Prima Guerra Mondiale: Rivendicazioni Territoriali e Politica delle Nazionalità* (Udine: 1977); M. Rimaneli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part II, idem.

by each Yugoslav ethnic group (Serbs, Croats, Bosniacs and Slovenes) as unacceptable vs. their own extreme counter-claims over the same lands, once each ethnic group finally accepted the initially unpopular Serb advocacy of a unitarian Yugoslav state over them all to replace Vienna's rule (29 October 1918 independence proclamation in Zagreb and 1 December 1918 London declaration of Independence of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). At the same time, the rapid disaggregation in Fall 1918 of the Austro-Hungarian Empire surprised Rome and the Allies forcing France, U.S.A. and Great Britain to openly endorse an independent Yugoslav state, and in so doing also contain Italy's local power-grab as the strongest emerging military in the Adriatic/Balkans with her impressive October-November 1918 Vittorio-Veneto Offensive that destroyed the Austro-Hungarian Army and brought Italian troops into Trento, Trieste and Istria.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, since Spring 1918 Rome already strongly signaled to U.S. President Wilson that her *Irredentist* claims were not abandoned, but only slightly modified in the wake of joint Allied support of the U.S. "Fourteen Points" including its Principle of Self-Determination for enemy "Oppressed Nationalities": in April 1918 Admiral Paolo Thaon di Revel, Commander-in-Chief of the Italian Navy published an "open letter to the American Nation" appealing the Italo-American electorate and U.S. government to support Italian territorial claims over Trento, Trieste, Istria, Dalmazia and the Adriatic.<sup>2</sup> The Allies at the 1919 Versailles Conference and Treaty of Saint Germain finally agreed to most of Italy's *Irredenta* claims (confirming her annexation of Trentino, Trieste, Gorizia, Venezia Giulia/Istria, plus the controversial German-majority Süd Tirol), and Premier Orlando secured one of the five permanent memberships of Italy in the League of Nations' Security Council, plus the transfer to Italy of British Jubaland in Somalia and the promise of France's Aozou Strip bordering French Chad with Libya, which was postponed by Paris until 1935. However, the "Big Three" (France, Great Britain and U.S.A.) also secretly sought to contain Liberal Italy's military influence in the Adriatic/West Balkans by supporting nationalist counter-claims from Yugoslavia and Greece against Italy's remaining *Irredenta* claims and colonial Mandate in Southern Turkey.

The parallel 1919-22 domestic political weakening of Liberal Italy's revolving-door governments (Orlando, Nitti, Giolitti, Bonomi) besieged by the political rise of Catholics and Socialists-Communists forced Rome to pursue at the Versailles peace conference short-term diplomatic gains for domestic consumption (annexing the *Irredenta*, contrasts on Dalmazia and Fiume, a South Anatolia Mandate), although long-term foreign policy strategy was undermined by the lack of any role in shaping the Allies' opposition to the Communist Soviet Union threat and crafting at Versailles of newly-independent nationalist Central-East European states. Rome's diplomacy at Versailles alternated between opposing the new states' excessive annexations of ethnic minorities (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania) for fear they would destabilize all Eastern Europe in the near-future, and supporting instead geo-strategic factors to shape their new borders, all of which only left Italy diplomatically isolated in her main clash with Yugoslavia (now claiming Trieste, Gorizia, Istria, Fiume, Dalmazia and North Albania) and Greece (claiming South Albania and Italy's Dodecanese Islands). Rome found herself diplomatically isolated: it had hoped to influence Paris by supporting her anti-German exaggerate land claims on behalf of pro-French Poland and Czechoslovakia, as well as her colonial Mandates in Syria and South Turkey, while also supporting London in the Turkish Straits and Middle East Mandates, trying to isolate Yugoslavia by openly defending the rival ethnic claims by Austria, Romania and Albania against Yugoslavia and Greece. In the end, Romania abandoned Italy in favour of France, while Wilson and the Anglo-French supported Yugoslav ethnic counter-claims over most of Dalmazia, Fiume/Rijeka and 35% of East Istria ("Wilson Line"), which Italy's military occupation forces totally disregarded. Rome could annex only small Italian-majority Dalmatian areas (Zara and islands of Cherso, Lussino and Lagosta), but not the Italian-majority city of

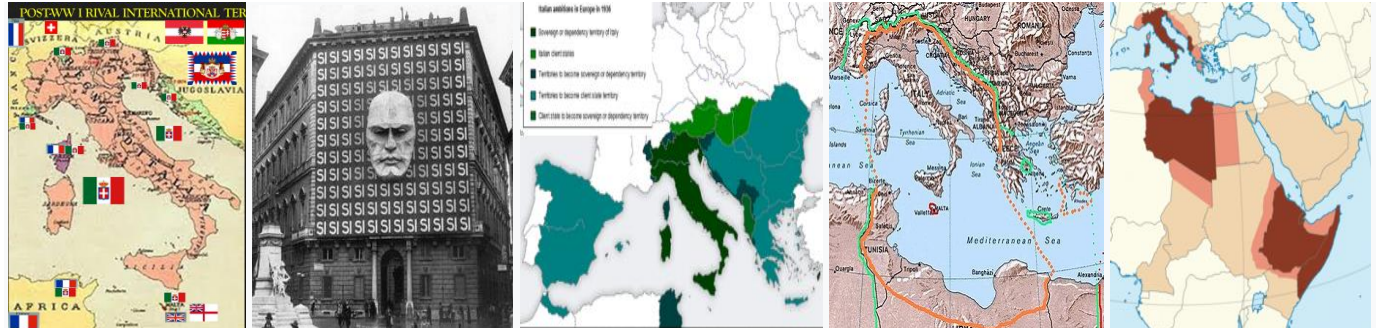
<sup>1</sup> Melograni, *Storia Politica della Grande Guerra, 1915-18*, idem; Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e l'Europa Centrale, 1918-1941*, idem, p.13-14; Milano & Monzali, *Ricerca d'Equilibrio al Sogno d'Egemonia: Politica Estera Italiana nel Mediterraneo fra Due Guerre Mondiali*, idem, p.102-113; Frédéric Le Moal, *La France et l'Italie dans les Balkans, 1914-1919: le Contentieux Adriatique* (Paris: 2006); Victor H. Rothwell, *British War Aims and Peace Diplomacy, 1914-1918* (Oxford: 1971); Victor S. Mamatey, *The United States and East-Central Europe, 1914-1918* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957).

<sup>2</sup> "Italian Irredentism", idem; Monzali, *Italiani di Dalmazia dal Risorgimento alla Grande Guerra*, idem.

Fiume (not originally part of the 1915 London Pact), while London forced the cession to Greece of one-fourth of Italy's future Mandate over South Turkey (the Greek-populated western section with Smyrna). U.S. economic sanctions to force Liberal Italy to comply were met by Premier Orlando's clamorous futile walk-out from the Versailles Conference, symbolically undermining the legitimacy of the Allies' post-war *diktat*.<sup>1</sup>

Liberal Italy's nationalist sense of humiliation by the Allies ("*vittoria mutilata*" or mutilated victory) over losing the remaining *Irredenta* (Fiume, Dalmazia's coast and islands) and colonial Mandates (South Turkey and Armenia) accelerated the country's domestic political collapse into semi-anarchy with constant clashes between Leftist revolutionaries (Communists, Socialists and rural Catholics) vs. conservatives, nationalists, Right-wing Fascists and many returning veterans. At the same time, embarrassing for all Allies, Italian irredentist Right-wing veterans and armed *Legionari* led by internationally-famous poet-veteran D'Annunzio sought to spur the country into a nationalist revival through his armed occupation of his 1919-21 Carnaro Regency (Fiume and Northern Dalmatian islands of Veglia and Arbe), while denouncing both Yugoslavia's excessive rival land claims and Italy's Premier Giovanni Giolitti's political corrupt-system. With the armed irredentist *Legionari* volunteers in the thousands of volunteers with hundreds also of Italian Army and Navy deserters and some warships joining D'Annunzio's rebellion, the Allies forced Rome to impose the very unpopular evacuation of this contested territory: Italian Army General Enrico Caviglia bombed on 21-28 December 1920 Fiume, but faced local combats with the *Legionari* until by 4-13 January 1921 all *Legionari* and D'Annunzio were allowed disarmed to return free to Italy (only in 1924 Mussolini annexed Fiume to Italy). Domestic turmoil and chaos also undermined Liberal Italy's military efforts to hold even to Albania (occupied in 1914 and forced to evacuate by 1920, due to local Albanian revolts at Durazzo/Durrës and Valona/Vlorë, and in Italy by Socialist *agit-prop* to discourage Italian reinforcements being shipped over) and South Turkey (occupied in 1919 and finally forced to evacuate by 1922 once the French left their own Turkish area and forced also the Anglo-Italians to leave Constantinople and the Turkish Straits).<sup>2</sup>

**Fascist Italy's Imperial Expansionism: from *Empire of the Adriatic* to *Grande Italia* to Regaining the *Mare Nostrum*, 1923-1945**



a. 1919 *Italia Irredenta* (annexed and claimed areas); b. Italy Fascist Party HQs, Palazzo Braschi in Rome 1934 (Mussolini stone head in *Si/Yes* box); c. Fascist Italy 1936-43 Aims in Balkans/Mediterranean: *Grande Italia*/*Greater Italy* (Black) + client-states (Green) and planned (Teal Blue); d. *Grande Italia*/*Greater Italy* 1940-1943 (Albania, France, Dalmazia and Italian Switzerland); e. Fascist Italy Colonial aims 1940-43 (colonial empire Brown; annexed areas Red; aspirational areas Light Brown) "*Italian Irredentism*", Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_irredentism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_irredentism); <https://www.tekportal.net/italia-irredenta/>; [https://www.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Italian\\_Fascist\\_Empire\\_Globe.png](https://www.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Italian_Fascist_Empire_Globe.png)

Liberal Italy's 1880s-1913 Mediterranean expansionism had reflected four intertwined elements:

- a) the country's growing state-of-arts technological Navy (3<sup>rd</sup>-to-6<sup>th</sup> world largest) backed by rapid industrialization as a new Great Power;

<sup>1</sup> Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, idem; Jörn Leonhard, *Der Überforderte Frieden: Versailles und die Welt, 1918–1923* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2018); Arthur S. Link, *Wilson the Diplomatist* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1957); "Treaty of Versailles" in *Wikipedia*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty\\_of\\_Versailles#/media/File:Sprachenkarte\\_Mitteeuropas\\_\(1937\).png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Versailles#/media/File:Sprachenkarte_Mitteeuropas_(1937).png); Milano & Monzali, *Ricerca d'Equilibrio al Sogno d'Egemonia: Politica Estera Italiana nel Mediterraneo fra Due Guerre Mondiali*, idem, p.102-113; Monzali, *Sogno d'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e Europa Centrale, 1918-1941*, idem, p.17-21.

<sup>2</sup> Gerra, *L'Impresa di Fiume*, 2 vols., idem; "Italian Irredentism", idem; M. Rimaneli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part III, idem; Monzali, *Sogno d'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e Europa Centrale, 1918-1941*, idem, p.17-21.

- b) the growing domestic political influence of liberal-nationalist irredentists against both Austria-Hungary and rival Balkan Slavic nationalism;
- c) ideological search for international identity as the “Least of the Powers” and modern inheritor of Ancient Rome’s “civilizing mission” in the “*Mare Nostrum*”;
- d) continued by Venice Republic in the Orient (also Genova’s Maritime Republic had rival trade colonies in East Mediterranean and Black Sea) as early “clash of civilizations” between Ancient Rome-Venice-Christianity vs. Orient-Islam.

Thus, in the decades from National Unity (1861-1870) to the Italo-Turkish War (1911-1912), Liberal Italy strove to emerge in the Mediterranean and Balkans as a respected “equal” Great Power vs. her rivals (Austria-Hungary, France, Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Ottoman-Turks). Since 1912 and World War I (1914-1918) Rome had finally emerged with sufficient naval-diplomatic strength as a “legitimate” naval Power to carve her own economico-politico-territorial “vital space” left from the Ottoman-Turks collapse (South Balkans, East Mediterranean, Middle East), Czarist Russia (Black Sea, Balkans) and Austria-Hungarian Empires (Adriatic, Balkans) until brief success of Fascist Italy’s 1926 “Mediterranean and Venetian Identity” by World War II (1939-1945).

But Liberal Italy’s anger at the Allies’ Versailles system and her domestic political collapse, led veteran and irredentist-nationalist leader Benito Mussolini to found in March 1919, the grass-roots, pro-veterans, anti-Western and ultra-nationalist Fascist Movement (*Fasci di Combattimento*), which grew massively in 1920-1923 through its violent paramilitary “punitive” Black Shirts *squadre d’azione* (combat-squads of 30-50 *squadristi* led by veteran ex-Army officers) relentlessly attacking and suppressing in Northern Italy’s rural areas and cities all Leftist forces (Socialist, Communist, trade unions and activist Catholics). Fascism’s violent *Squadristo* enjoyed large covert support among veterans, military, law-enforcement, local and national leaders who helped “legitimize” their political violence and let the Black Shirts Fascist *Squadristi* establish political control over most of Northern Italy by their autonomous Fascist regional political leaders (*‘Ras’*, nicknamed from Ethiopian tribe leaders: Cesare Balbo, Dino Grandi, Roberto Farinacci, etc.) who were rivals to Mussolini. Unable to fully discipline the *squadristi*’s violence he reorganized them at the November 1921 National Congress in Rome as the Fascist National Party (*Partito Nazionale Fascista*), extolling order, discipline, hierarchy and loyalty to Mussolini as *Duce* (Supreme Leader). Then in late-October 1922 he rallied in Naples 60,000 *Squadristi* Black Shirts and launched them in a “March on Rome” insurgency to topple the government; King Victor-Emanuel III for fear of a civil war refused any military repression against the 30,000 armed *Squadristi* who reached Rome and instead appointed Mussolini as Premier with the support of most of the military, business class and political Right. This ushered Italy’s third phase under Mussolini’s Fascist dictatorship and 20-years-long quest to build a Neo-Roman Empire in the Balkans (opposing France, Yugoslavia and Greece, while supporting anti-Allied regional aims of Hungary, Bulgaria and Fascist Spain), East Mediterranean and colonies (1935-36 Italo-Ethiopian War), while forging the fateful 1936-45 Axis compact with Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan.<sup>1</sup>

After the global condemnation for the failed 1923 Corfú Incident, Mussolini adopted a conciliatory diplomatic attitude towards France and Great Britain, recalibrating politically the Fascist régime as a stable international actor, strongly anti-German and anti-Communist, which soon elicited strong popularity both in London and Paris, and ignored strong warnings by famous anti-Fascist intellectuals, like Gaetano Salvemini, of Mussolini’s violent aim to overthrow the Versailles settlement. Since 1922 Mussolini started expressing grandiose imperialist ambitions to his loyal *Ras* Fascist leaders, showing a consistent intellectual aim to transform the Mediterranean into a vast Italian sphere of influence free from the presence of the British Navy and reminiscent of the Ancient Roman Empire’s “*Mare Nostrum*” (extending from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, from Dalmazia/Balkans to North Africa to the Horn of Africa),

<sup>1</sup> “Squadristo” in *Wikipedia*: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squadristo>; “March on Rome” in *Wikipedia*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March\\_on\\_Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_on_Rome); Monzali, *Sogno dell’Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e Europa Centrale, 1918-41*, idem; M. Rimaneli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part III, idem.



seeking to transform Italy into a self-sufficient corporative economy and imperial Power, and redirecting her excess population to emigrate within her African colonies. Until 1939, Mussolini bemoaned that Italy remained prisoner in the Mediterranean of the Anglo-French Western democratic empires: "The bars of this prison are Corsica, Tunisia, Malta and Cyprus—its sentinels are Gibraltar and Suez."<sup>1</sup>

Mussolini's rhetorics on Fascist Italy's growing foreign aspirations evolved from the more limited and demands for "realist dignity as a Great Power within the Balance of Power" (1922) to "Italy's Mediterranean and Venetian Identity" (1926), and finally by 1934 into a nebulous grandiose regional hegemonic vision as a reborn neo-Roman Fascist Empire over the entire "*Mare Nostrum*" (the Ancient Roman name for the Mediterranean Sea basin). Yet all these Fascist aspirations as a significant Great Power represented a difficult geo-strategic and political merger in the 1920s of two distinct rival regional power-projection aims, which were only fully merged by 1934 into a single geo-political vision: on one hand, Irredentism's Roman and especially Venetian myths towards naval-ethnic expansion in the Adriatic Sea reimagined as the "Gulf of Venice" or "Empire of the Adriatic" vs. on the other, Fascist Italy's 1930s-1943 ideologico-politico-diplomatic re-appropriation of Ancient Rome's myth of a *Mare Nostrum* economic-political hegemony as power-projection blueprint for Italy to expand throughout the Mediterranean basin and Balkans/Danubian *Hinterland* as her own "Mediterranean New Order Vital Space". Fascist Italy sought to consolidate the old late-1800s view of Italy as a geo-strategic way-station across the Mediterranean to the international "trade routes to the Orient" and Balkans ("Near East") by annexing Albania as key gateway for future imperial power-projection towards Greece in the south and Yugoslavia in the north, despite the inner fragility of such "Mediterranean New Order" given Fascist Italy's limited financial and military means to coopt and control these hostile states as future satellites, while competing against the stronger influence of Great Britain at sea and of France and Germany in the Balkans. Thus, Fascist Italy never truly merged until 1934 these parallel ideological visions in a unitary propaganda and coherent national foreign policy, while Rome's main expansionism remained focused mainly on the Adriatic-Balkans-Danubian region in both terms of an irredentist-imperialist "Greater Italy"/*Grande Italia* (from Southern France to Albania and Tunisia) and economico-political imperial control over Croatia (as Axis ally and satellites), Greece (as satellite or if rebuffed as a military-occupied state), and in the near-future after a new successful European war also British Malta (to be annexed to Italy), British Egypt and British Cyprus (as future East Mediterranean protectorates), plus Turkey (as future East Mediterranean Satellite).<sup>2</sup>

Fascist Italy's early-1920s aspirations for hegemonic influence in both the Balkans and East Europe were pursued diplomatically, but remained mostly a pipe-dream, given first Italy's limited economico-financial power and mostly the rapid emergence in the region of France's rival influence, which sparked strong bilateral tensions politically and economically (since the 1880s rivalries over colonies and the Mediterranean/Balkans), followed by Nazi Germany since 1935 as the real hegemonic Power in Europe and by default also over Italy's Balkans/Mediterranean areas-of-influence. Since the early-1920s, Fascist irredentist/nationalist propaganda constantly depicted a "betrayed Italy" image once the country's war heroism, military efforts in World War I and high losses (among the highest per capita) were not rewarded fully at the Versailles Treaty by the Allies all it "deserved", and in this context irredentist and nationalist-imperial claims were expanded by Fascist Italy's desire to control the Balkans and Mediterranean basin through the overarching symbolism of Ancient Rome's *Mare Nostrum* (Latin for "Our Sea") as continuation since 1880s of Liberal Italy's own irredentist, navalist and colonial quest for national identity as a new Great Power.

Thus, after World War I, irredentist claims were aggressively pursued by Fascist Italy on Italian-speaking majority areas (Dalmazia's coast and islands from Yugoslavia; Malta from Great Britain; Nizza, Tunisia and Savoy from France; Cantons Ticino, Grigioni and Valais from Switzerland) and aggressively

<sup>1</sup> Quote from: *Perspectivesonafrica*, "A New Roman Empire: the Geopolitics of Fascist Italy in Africa, 1931-1941" in *Perspectivesonafrica* (20 June 2011): <https://perspectivesonafriawordpress.com/2011/06/20/a-new-roman-empire-the-geopolitics-of-fascist-italy-in-africa-1931-41/>

<sup>2</sup> Filippo-Maria Paladini, "Mare Nostrum" in *Il Ventennio Fascista* in *ACADEMIA* (2008): p.615-627, see: [https://www.academia.edu/41059693/Mare\\_nostrum?email\\_work\\_card=view-paper](https://www.academia.edu/41059693/Mare_nostrum?email_work_card=view-paper); *Perspectivesonafrica*, "A New Roman Empire: Geopolitics of Fascist Italy", idem.

extended to non-Italian neighbouring strategic areas (Greece's Ionian Islands in 1923 and 1940-43; Albania in 1938 with Kosovo in 1941-43; Montenegro, and Slovenia in 1941-43) to achieve Fascist Italy's vision of an ethnic *Grande Italia*/"Greater Italy" (crafted by Fascist leader and Governor of the Dodecanese Cesare-Maria De Vecchi in 1940 and Fascist leader, Air-Force Minister and Governor of Libya Italo Balbo). Fascist *Grande Italia* would control all Central and East Mediterranean (like Ancient Rome), plus Italian military occupation areas (French South/Alpine and Provence; Greece) and a larger Fascist Italian colonial Empire in North and East Africa, while an Axis victory and peace treaty would give her British Malta and Italian Switzerland, plus joint control with Nazi Germany of the strategic Suez Canal. This *Grande Italia* ethnic tally would be: Istria (270,000 Italians, with Slovene and Croats minorities being absorbed); Dalmazia (60,000, with Croat majority to be absorbed); Dodecanese (7,000, with majority Greeks being absorbed); Libya (150,000, with Arab rest to be absorbed); Tunisia (120,000, with French and Arab minorities to be absorbed); Nizza (9,000 Italians); Corsica (200,000); Savoy (no data, but to be absorbed); Italian Switzerland (430,000); Malta (200,000); "Greater Albania" (20,000, with rest to be absorbed); Corfú and Ionian Islands (2,000, with majority Greeks to be absorbed); Slovenia (no data, but to be absorbed); Pindo/N. Epirus Principality (no data, but to be absorbed); Crete and Chios (no data, but to be absorbed); Montenegro (no data, but to be absorbed); and Süd Tirol (annexed by Nazi Germany in 1943-45).<sup>1</sup>

Mussolini's 1934 plans (1935-36 Italo-Ethiopian War) and his 1938-39 detailed imperialist directives, merged all Fascist imperialist propaganda plans for an "Adriatic/Balkans Empire", *Grande Italia* and *Mare Nostrum* into a larger neo-Roman Fascist Italian Empire:

- a) in the Mediterranean, the ethnic *Grande Italia* directly annexed after a war against Greece in 1941 Corfú and Ionian Islands, North Epirus, plus Crete and Chios to establish direct geographic sea-connection to the Italian Dodecanese Islands (while establishing military occupation of most of Greece), as well as by Fall 1942 the "Fourth Coast" (both 20% of Libya along the entire coast and 80% of French Tunisia with its 120,000 Italians); a future war by 1942 against Great Britain to annex Malta, Cyprus, Egypt with the Suez Canal and Gibraltar so as to secure from both ends these two "keys to the Mediterranean" with all historical Royal Navy bases; and a possible future war against neutral pro-Axis Turkey;
- b) in a new Fascist Colonial Empire of Africa would include Libya's interior (80% of the colony) after a 20-years-long imperialist brutal war of reconquest of Libya's interior against the old pro-Turkish Senussi, with local "pacification" and deportation of thousands of Arabs to desert concentration camps, followed since 1934 by regular flows of Italian immigration and forced "Italianization" (continuing the same forced Fascist assimilation process in Istria, Dalmazia and Süd Tirol); thereafter, the new Fascist Colonial Empire of Africa would span to British Egypt and down to French Chad and British Sudan to reach the isolated Italian Horn of Africa, itself expanded in 1940-41 to British Somaliland, Kenya's Somali borderlands and French Djibouti (at a post-war peace treaty);
- c) in the Middle East, inspired by geopolitical writings of Karl Haushofer, his Italian colleagues of the journal *Geopolitica* advocated that Mussolini's vision of a new Italian Fascist Empire portray the ideological "*Mare Nostrum*" Mediterranean as a "peaceful" autonomous economic "living space" integrating to a *Grande Italia*/"Greater Italy" all the region's different ethnic groups as Italian citizens abroad, independent from the Nazi German ally; despite the brutal Libyan "example" of forced assimilation, Mussolini used this ideologico-economic integrationist Mediterranean vision for his virulent anti-Western propaganda against British and French imperialist colonial rule in Africa and Middle East/Gulf, while presenting Italy as a liberating Power friendly to local Muslim peoples' independence. During World War II, Fascist Italy pro-Arab propaganda promoted a future "March to the Indian Ocean" to evict the Anglo-French and establish a pro-Arab Italian "protectorate" over British Palestine and TransJordan, Saudi Arabia, British Aden/Yemen and Gulf Emirates to Kuwait; while the Germans and Italians would then help Muslim Nazi-régimes in Syria, Iraq and Iran; thus, when

<sup>1</sup> "Grande Italia" in Wikipedia: [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gran\\_Italia](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gran_Italia); Paladini, "Mare Nostrum", idem, p.615-627.

Germany's *Afrika Korps* reversed the Italian Army's 1940 defeats and invaded British Egypt, Mussolini flew to Libya in 1942 giving speeches advocating Mediterranean union and Arab independence until the Allies' victories in 1942-43 in North Africa;

- d) in Black Africa with a future "March to the Atlantic Ocean" for later aspirational colonies over French Central Africa and Gabon to reach the Gulf of Guinea. In all future new colonies, Fascist Italy would merge imperial conquest with economic exploitation and "coordinated corporative" integration to stimulate the economic growth of *Grande Italia*.<sup>1</sup>

In 1920s-30s, Mussolini started his diplomatico-propaganda offensive against the ex-Allies "Big Three", plus Yugoslavia, identified Dalmazia as a land of strong Italian cultural roots for many centuries since the Roman Empire and naval Republic of Venice, where both many local Italians and Italianized Southern Slavs had been driven out of Dalmazia into exile in Italy since 1919. Thus, Fascist Italy supported the return of all Italians and Italo-Slavs of Dalmatian heritage, while openly condemning the Allies' 1919 abrogation of part of the 1915 Treaty of London guaranteeing to Italy northern Dalmazia and most islands. First international act in power, Mussolini's early irredentist-nationalist act was to finally annex Fiume to Italy with the 1924 Italo-Yugoslav Treaty of Rome, while secretly undermining Serb-run Yugoslavia by continuing the post-1918 Italian military support and terrorist training of anti-Serb Fascist Croats (*Ustasha*) of Ante Pavelić seeking secession through terrorism (Croat sabotage and bombings of hundreds of trains, assassinations of hundreds of Yugoslav government officials). In 1923 to send a message to all Adriatic/Balkans states, Mussolini reacted violently to border delimitation contrasts between Albania and Greece, which left an Italian officer dead, and sent the Italian Navy with troops to occupy Greece's Corfú and Ionian Islands strategically facing Greece, Albania and South Italy, while using as irredentist claim the presence of minorities of Venetian Italians (or *Corfiot* Italians) in the Ionian islands of Greece. But hopes to secure their annexation from an already defeated Athens (after Turkey's ethnic-cleansing of Greek Smyrna and Greek minorities in Western Turkey) failed, given the international condemnation of Fascist Italy's first aggression, forcing the Italian evacuation. Similar open irredentist and covert support of local Italian minorities were also used against the historical British naval base of Malta with pro-Italian Maltese Italians, but such efforts remained more guarded, given Italy's long traditional history of playing off Great Britain vs. France.

Then, Mussolini's anti-Western Fascist diplomacy became entangled throughout the 1920s-30s against French-backed Yugoslavia engaged in reciprocal attempts to politico-economically control Albania in the 1920s-39, while secretly supporting Croat Fascist secessionist terrorists (*Ustasha*). At the same time, anti-Western Fascist Italy openly supported anti-Allied revisionist claims of Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria to both undermine the pro-French Little *Entente* (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania) and penetrate politico-economically in the Balkans/East Europe as the region's dominant Great Power during the void left by the collapse of Germany and Russia after World War I. As France's superior financial and economic presence grew in East Europe in the 1920s-35 as part of her *Alliances de Rèvers*/"Reverse Alliances" defensive system (Poland and Little *Entente*) against both Germany and the Soviet Union (USSR), so did Mussolini's alternative cyclical attempts to corner France by playing Great Powers' rivalries oscillating Italian diplomatic support between the Allies vs. Germany in the 1924-26 Ruhr Crisis and 1926 Locarno Treaty (with Great Britain and Fascist Italy jointly guaranteeing the Franco-German border against either aggression), in the colonies (with Great Britain and France agreeing to compensate Italy for the loss of South Turkey as they kept their Middle East Mandates by ceding large swaths of desert to rectify Libya's borders), and finally opposing the rival rise of Nazi Germany's Mitteleuropean influence over East Europe and Austria (1934 failed Nazi Coup and killing of Austrian Fascist Premier Engelbert Dolfuss a close friend of Mussolini), when only Fascist Italy mobilized troops on the Austrian border for intervention, but France

<sup>1</sup> Milano & Monzali, *Ricerca d'Equilibrio al Sogno d'Egemonia: Politica Estera Italiana nel Mediterraneo fra Due Guerre Mondiali*, idem, p.102-113; Monzali, *Sogno d'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia*, idem; Paladini, "Mare Nostrum", idem, p.615-627; *Perspectives on Africa*, "A New Roman Empire: Geopolitics of Fascist Italy", idem.

refused to jointly attack Nazi Germany and froze into cyclical military paralysis (already in 1933-34 twice France rejected secret Polish pressures for a joint attack disarmed Nazi Germany to forestall Adolf Hitler's regional aims, spurring Warsaw to abandon inept Paris and sign a fateful non-aggression pact with Berlin until the 1939 Nazi invasion).<sup>1</sup>

Mussolini and Yugoslavia King Alexander became arch-enemies as Italy saw the new Serb-led unitary Yugoslav state threatening Italy's quest for regional supremacy ("Empire of the Adriatic"), just as much as Austria-Hungary had done in the past. Mussolini also supported as client-states anti-Versailles "revisionist front" ethnic claims against Yugoslavia from Hungary (over South Slovakia's Hungarian minority and Yugoslavia's Hungarian-majority in Vojvodina), from Albania (over Yugoslavia's Albanian-majority in Kosovo and minorities in Montenegro and North Macedonia), from Bulgaria (since 1912 over Yugoslavia's North Macedonia Slavic cousins), and from Austria (Mariborg as German town in Slovenia). Fearing both Hungary and Germany, Alexander in 1921 joined the Little *Entente* with Czechoslovakia and Romania aligned to France's *Alliances de Rèvers*, and then fearing Fascist Italy and her support for both Albania and Croat secessionism he entered in a 1927 bilateral alliance with France. King Alexander opposed any federalism because he feared Croats and Bosniak Muslims would gang-up against Serbia, but while briefly debating jettisoning Croatia into independence in 1927 after the assassination of Croat politician Stjepan Radić, he then imposed in 1929 his own personal dictatorship only to become even more unpopular as symbol of oppressive Serb domination both nationally and among Croats after the 1929 Great Depression, which pitted against him since 1931 even his legendary Croat supporter Ante Trumbić who joined the secessionists if Belgrade rejected federalism and his "Zagreb Points" (copied by Hungarians, Slovenes and Bosniak minorities in a rush towards a future civil war). So France lost Yugoslavia just as the parallel rise of Nazi Germany undermined pro-Allied Balkan politics.<sup>2</sup>

To oppose Italy's Balkans client-states (Hungary, Albania, Bulgaria) and possibly also Nazi Germany, King Alexander proposed in 1933-34 a new regional Balkan Pact (Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania, Turkey), while advocating after the 1934 Bulgarian *coup d'état* a future merger of both Bulgaria and Albania in Yugoslavia to eliminate Macedonian pro-Bulgarian guerrilla, as well as reluctantly supporting Barthou's proposal of adding Communist USSR to both an Eastern Pact (France, USSR, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania) and possibly also with Fascist Italy to contain Nazi Germany. Barthou's ambitious plans for an Italo-French *rapprochement* against Nazi Germany and abandonment of Italian irredentist claims over Tunisia, would be stillborn without a parallel solution to the long Italo-Yugoslav disputes over Dalmazia, Albania and Croatia. In June 1934 Barthou visited Belgrade and promised a highly skeptical King that France would pressure Mussolini into a treaty to renounce her irredentist claims against Yugoslavia.

Mussolini believed that only King Alexander's dictatorship held Yugoslavia together and if the King were assassinated a multi-ethnic civil war would erupt against Serbia between pro-Italian secessionist Hungarians, Croats, Slovenes, Boniaks, North Macedonians and Kosovo Albanians, which would allow Fascist Italy to annex Dalmazia's coast and islands without fear of France's military involvement to protect Yugoslavia. Thus, King Alexander secretly warned the *Duce* (Leader) in November 1932 after a failed Croat insurrection that he would never back down unless Mussolini had him assassinated, and it was widely rumoured that indeed Mussolini had financed an unsuccessful *Ustasha* assassination attempt against him in December 1933. Fatefully, King Alexander's visit to Barthou in October 1934 at Marseilles to strengthen Franco-Yugoslav ties was cut down by the assassination of both leaders by a joint Macedonian-Croat terrorist attack, which was condemned internationally and in Yugoslavia pinned on Mussolini's orders, although later French investigations ambiguously revealed the terrorists' phone contacts were "only" with *Ustasha* leader Pavelić

<sup>1</sup> Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e Europa Centrale, 1918-1941*, idem; M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part III, idem; Milano & Monzali, *Ricerca dell'Equilibrio al Sogno d'Egemonia*, idem.

<sup>2</sup> Milano & Monzali, *Ricerca dell'Equilibrio al Sogno d'Egemonia*, idem; Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e Europa Centrale, 1918-1941*, idem; "Alexander I of Yugoslavia" in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_I\\_of\\_Yugoslavia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_I_of_Yugoslavia)

in Italy! Both France under new Foreign Minister Pierre Laval and Great Britain rushed to negotiate a regional pact with Fascist Italy against Nazi Germany (1935 Stresa Pact) and applauded Mussolini's Milan 1934 speech denying involvement in the assassination, while in private Laval let Belgrade know that the Anglo-French would never allow the *Duce* to be blamed and that Paris would never go to war to defend the honour of the weak Yugoslav ally! Thereafter, Yugo-French relations cooled and both the Little *Entente* and any new Balkan Pact fell apart once Romania and Bulgaria gradually became Fascists and moved into Germany's and secondarily Italy's areas-of-influence as Axis members since 1937. Yugoslavia remained neutral between Anglo-French and Axis until 1941 with virtually no reaction to Italy's 1939 annexation of Albania.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1925 Mussolini's foreign policy visions integrated his initial irredentism and Liberal Italy cautious imperialist diplomacy into a "militarist" neo-Roman Fascist Empire as heir to the Ancient Roman Empire and Venetian Republic to control the Mediterranean basin and Balkans (whose countries were economically weak and divided by rivalries), expanding on Liberal Italy's 1914-22 regional politico-economic penetrations. Both Liberal and Fascist Italy ideologically coveted Albania as a historical part of Italy since Ancient Rome, with three immediate geo-strategic advantages:

- 1) securing South Albania's port of Valona/Vlorë guaranteed complete control on the access to the Adriatic Sea across the Otranto Channel (just like Liberal Italy did in World War I);
- 2) more importantly, despite the country's backward transportation network, control of Albania provided a short-term strategic springboard for future Italian politico-military-economic penetration of the Western Balkans to undermine Yugoslavia and support local ethnic minorities seeking her dissolution (and later forge a "Greater Albania" by annexing from Belgrade Albanian-speaking Kosovo and West Macedonia);
- 3) Albania was also a long-term strategic springboard to dominate neighbouring Greece as a new "protectorate" and connect to the Italian Dodecanese Islands to control also the East Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, just like Italy's Maritime Republics of Venice and Genova did in the Middle Ages to Renaissance, followed by Piedmont as heir to Genova intervening alongside the Anglo-Franco-Turks during the 1853-56 Crimean War against Russia and continued by Liberal Italy as heir to Piedmont and Venice in striving to control after World War I Turkey's South Anatolia (Adana) region in 1919-23).<sup>2</sup>

Thus, Mussolini continued Liberal Italy's on-off attempts in 1913-20 to turn Albania into an Italian protectorate. But in 1924, Yugoslavia opposed Italy's presence by sponsoring the rise to power of Ahmet Zog (King since 1928), hoping to turn Albania into a pro-Yugoslav protectorate. Mussolini instead cultivated Zog's desire for national autonomy by giving him weapons and generous finances to help modernize that archaic and fragmented country, while marginalizing Yugoslav influence. Thus, since 1925 Fascist Italy turned Albania into an actual "client-state", economically absorbing her through a 5-years Treaty of Friendship and Security (Tirana Treaty 1, November 1926), guaranteeing Albania's politico-legal and territorial status and non-involvement in hostile alliances, which was followed by a 20-years defensive alliance in November 1927 (Tirana Treaty 2) giving Fascist Italy control and modernization of the Albanian Army. But by 1931, King Zog again reasserted his independence: he refused to renew the Tirana Treaty 1, rejected a customs union with Italy, closed Italian schools and expelled Italian military advisors. By 1934 the Italian Navy undertook military maneuvers off-Albania's coasts, but Mussolini could not extract any new concession, while King Zog signed trade treaties with his enemy neighbours, Greece and Yugoslavia. Only by March 1936 when Zog faced massive financial debt crisis he relented and signed a new economic

<sup>1</sup> Milano & Monzali, *Ricerca dell'Equilibrio al Sogno d'Egemonia*, idem; Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e Europa Centrale, 1918-41*, idem; "Alexander I of Yugoslavia", idem; Tibor Eckhardt, *Regicide at Marseilles* (New York: American-Hungarian Historical Society, 1964).

<sup>2</sup> "Crimean War" in *British National Army Museum* in <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/crimean-war>; Piero Pieri, *Storia Militare della Grande Guerra, 1915-1918* (Milan: Longanesi, 1988); M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, idem, Parts I & III; Milano & Monzali, *Ricerca d'Equilibrio al Sogno d'Egemonia*, idem; Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e Europa Centrale, 1918-41*, idem; Paladini, "Mare Nostrum", idem, p.615-627.

treaty with Fascist Italy, which wiped-out his debts, while granting to Fascist Italy oil and mineral concessions, the return of Italian military advisors to train the Albanian Army and civilian advisors in the bureaucracy, plus free-trade imports of Italian goods. With Albania's economy and military again under Rome's control there was no pressing need to annex the country, but the Fascist régime miscalculated Albania's latent wealth: on one hand, it believed it could exploit local agricultural lands to resettle millions of Italian colonists (and thus ethno-culturally cement the two countries), while on the other since 1933 Italian investments had developed petrol wells in Central Albania, exporting most of it to Italy (from 13,000 tons in 1934 to 134,000 tons in 1938), until only by 1939 King Zog reacted against such virtual protectorate by refusing to renew oil concessions exclusively for Italy.<sup>1</sup>

Against Paris, Fascist Italy used irredentism to claim French-held Corsica and Nizza/Nice (quoting both the father of Italian literature Petrarca and its local *Risorgimento* hero Giuseppe Garibaldi) as ethno-historico-linguistic seats of *Italianità* since the Middle-Ages, and French-speaking Savoy as the historical lands of Italy's Royal House of Savoy, as well as the Italian-majority (compared to French colons) in Tunisia. Mussolini initially pursued future annexation of Corsica through covert and open politico-diplomatic means, by first encouraging local existing autonomist tendencies in Corsica, then fostering the island's independence from France, to be followed by full annexation to Italy (a policy later successfully achieved by Russian dictator Vladimir Putin in 2014 in annexing Crimea from Ukraine). All this was put on ice once the rise of rival Nazi Germany and the dominant pull of German industry during the post-Great Depression undermined Mussolini's politico-economic influence in his client-states (Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania), as well as slowly replacing economically France also in Yugoslavia. After the failed 1934 Nazi *Anschluss* coup in Austria, Mussolini's accepted the 1935 Stresa Pact with France and Great Britain (to fight together in a future World War II against Nazi Germany) as the continuation of his earlier support for the 1926 Locarno Pact on stabilizing the Franco-German-Belgian borders to contain Germany in Europe and hopefully in the Balkans. Praised now as a vital international "peace-maker" since the 1935 Conference of Stresa, Mussolini also uncharacteristically agreed to gradually abandon by 1938 to full French control the Italian population in Tunisia, while securing Anglo-French acquiescence to Fascist Italy's "sole control" over backward Ethiopia (as a "protectorate" or new colony).

But once Mussolini launched the 1935-36 Second Italo-Ethiopian War, the stunned Anglo-French governments disingenuously claimed that at the 1935 Stresa Conference they only agreed to an Italian politico-economic "protectorate", but were stampeded into resigning by inside leaks that enraged their anti-Fascist public opinion to demand immediate League of Nations economic sanctions against Fascist Italy, but no war, while a military superior Fascist Italy both contained the British Royal Navy in the Mediterranean and quickly conquered Ethiopia. Mussolini still planned to use his new colonial Empire to force at least the chastised British back to negotiate with Italy on resuming the now dead Stresa Pact against a now rearmed Nazi Germany with more colonial concessions to Rome. However, the sudden collapse of neutral Spain into a bloody ideological coup and civil war in 1936-39 led Mussolini to resolutely support the Fascist coup of Spanish General Francisco Franco, and then become aligned with Nazi Germany on the side of the Spanish coup against the Anglo-French-Soviet support of the Spanish government of Madrid. The Italian air force ferried the Spanish Foreign Legion from Spanish Morocco to Spain and then sent also an expedition of 100,000 Italian "volunteer" troops and Italian warships to the Spanish Balearic Islands. Mussolini hoped for a quick victory which would extend his neo-Roman Empire from East Africa and the East Mediterranean to the West Mediterranean by turning Francoist Spain into a "protectorate" or client-state (like Albania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania), while squeezing out the Anglo-French. Instead, the long Spanish Civil War dragged until 1939 and General Franco successfully remained independent by playing Hitler against Mussolini and refusing Italian

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<sup>1</sup> Milano & Monzali, *Ricerca dell'Equilibrio al Sogno d'Egemonia*, idem; Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e Europa Centrale, 1918-41*, idem; M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part III, idem.

military control of the Balearic Islands, while during World War II Franco focused on long-term recovery and domestic repression as a friendly but neutral Axis state.<sup>1</sup>

Mussolini's 20-years Fascist militarist-irredentist and *Mare nostrum* ideological calls for a neo-Roman Fascist Empire was a major cause for the international disintegration of the League of Nations' First Post-War Collective Security system as a prelude to World War II through three crises: the imperialist-military interventions in the 1935-36 Italo-Ethiopian War and 1936-39 Spanish Civil War, plus the April 1939 annexation of Italian-dominated Albania with King Vittorio-Emanuele III elevated to Emperor by adding to his crown both the Ethiopian and Albanian crowns.<sup>2</sup> The Italo-Ethiopian War and Italian Fascist Empire represent the apex of the country's politico-ideological domestic "consensus" towards the Fascist régime and its expansionist policies. However, Fascist Italy remained diplomatico-military weak after all her military-economic resources spent in both the Italo-Ethiopian War and Spanish Civil War, which left her with serious losses (blood, *matériel*, tarred reputation) and gains limited mostly to the colonial arena, rather than also the Mediterranean where her "volunteer" Italian Fascist expeditionary force suffered serious inefficiencies and inability to quickly win the 1936-39 Spanish Civil War. The 1930s ominous return of Germany to international power under Nazism brought back Berlin's overwhelming politico-economic presence in both East Europe/Balkans and Italy, forcing Fascist Italy to abandon her earlier protectorate over Austria and guarantees for the independence of Austria and Czechoslovakia, while seeing her past uncertain influence in the Balkans/East Europe quickly shrink (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria) as they joined the German-led *Anti-Komintern* Pact and Axis, given the dearth of an autonomous diplomatico-international long-term realist vision by the Italian Fascist leadership beyond short-term opportunistic recycling of Liberal Italy's cautious past nationalist imperialism and its rigid ideological constraints to older Fascist policies advocating a neo-Roman Empire over the Mediterranean and East Africa. As Hitler annexed Austria in 1938 and dismantled Czechoslovakia in early-1939 (with an independent Slovakia in the Axis and annexation of a Czech Protectorate in March 1939), he violated the 1938 Munich Treaty (Mussolini's diplomatic masterpiece giving the irredentist Sudetenland to Germany), Consequently, Fascist Italy's influence in East Europe and Balkans shrunk (just as Suvich had warned Mussolini since 1936, with Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia gravitating towards Berlin's superior economic power) leaving Rome as an unofficial "junior" not "equal" partner in the Axis.

Out of these political factors, Mussolini decided to show the world and Hitler his "independence" from Nazi Germany with plans for a quick annexation of Albania and Greece, with a March 1939 ultimatum to Tirana demanding an Italian protectorate and entry of Italian troops in Albania. This was rejected by King Zog who called in vain for Western military aid, but the West and USSR only condemned Fascist Italy at the League of Nations (a moribund international organization for global peace since the failure of her economic sanctions against Fascist Italy's successful 1935-36 Second Italo-Ethiopian War). On 4-10 April 1939, a massive Italian invasion force attacked Albanian ports, while Italian advisors sabotaged local artillery, but the Italian invasion was so hasty and poorly planned that they could not take-over for some time the heavily-defended strategic Durazzo/Durrës (symbolical re-run of Liberal Italy's failed attempt to seize in 1919-20 Valona/Vlorë). Only Greece's own Fascist dictator General Ioannis Metaxas offered combat troops to stop the take-over of Albania by a large Italian force of 20 divisions seen as a smoke-screen for a follow-up invasion also of neutral Greece. But King Zog rejected Greek military support for fear that the Greeks would in-turn seize South Albania's long-disputed border and Agirocastro/Gjirokastër with its large Greek minority. With Nazi Germany officially supporting Mussolini in Albania, the filo-German Metaxas was left isolated against Fascist Italy's expansionism in the Balkans and East Mediterranean, and since 8 April 1939 he sought London for a military alliance and protection by the Royal Navy to help Greece fight Italy if invaded. On 13

<sup>1</sup> "Italian Irredentism", idem.

<sup>2</sup> "Military History of Italy during World War II" in Wikipedia:  
[https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Military\\_history\\_of\\_Italy\\_during\\_World\\_War\\_II#/East\\_Africa](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Military_history_of_Italy_during_World_War_II#/East_Africa)

April London announced a joint Anglo-French guarantee of Greece and Romania, while secretly asked Turkey to open military talks with Greece to come to Athens' aid if Italy invaded. In the end, Fascist Italy annexed Albania by 12-16 April 1939 with King Vittorio-Emanuele III adding also that crown (Fascist Italy's 4 Crowns 1936-43: Italy, Ethiopia, Albania and Montenegro), while Albanian guerrillas armed by Yugoslavia and Greece (both afraid that Mussolini would invade them next in his quest to control the Balkans) fought along mountainous southern border areas.<sup>1</sup>

With Europe spiraling towards World War II, Paris refused to intervene, hoping for Rome's conciliatory attitude in both Europe and France's control of North Africa and Mandates over Syria and Lebanon. However, Fascist Italy had been spewing anti-Western and anti-colonial propaganda in the Middle East, and in 1939 supported Turkey's nationalist control of the contested area of Alexandretta over land claims by French Syria (Mussolini unsuccessfully was seeking to draw neutral Turkey inside Italy's area-of-influence against Greece and the Anglo-French), while Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany signed in Spring 1939 the Pact of Steel military alliance against the West. At the same time, Fascist Italy's ossified politico-military leadership remained mired in complete casual indifference towards the vital geo-strategic needs to develop proper war-plans and resources to attain her long-held imperial claims. Instead, by World War II Rome was still politically, militarily and economically unprepared to her moment of war glory. Hitler and Mussolini had roughly split since 1938-39 their respective future areas of influence and military operations (Central, Eastern, Northern and Western Europe for Nazi Germany vs. Mediterranean, Balkans, North and East Africa for Fascist Italy) for an impending World War II that both had planned around 1943 after both countries had fully rearmed and the 1940 Olympics held in Rome. Yet this was mostly due to Hitler's cleverly disingenuousness in exploiting a gullible Mussolini on the timing of their joint plans for conquest ("1943" instead of the actual 1939 show-down over Poland):

- a) Hitler was spoiling for a rapid fight either in 1938 (over Czechoslovakia's German-speaking Sudetenland, which Mussolini's diplomatic sleight-of-hand as peace-maker in the 1938 Munich Treaty peacefully ceded the Sudetenland to Germany), or 1939 (Hitler violating the Munich Treaty to support an independent Fascist Slovakia and then annexing the Czech Protectorate; later against Poland over German-speaking West Prussia, while hoping to cover into submission the Allies with the 1939 German-Italian Pact of Steel and the 1939 German-Soviet Molotov-von Ribbentrop non-Aggression Pact) or 1940 (had the Allies remained neutral in 1939 during Poland's conquest, then he would have attacked them in both North and West Europe);
- b) the Fascist régime only by late-Summer 1939 realized it had been secretly tied-up to Hitler's accelerating war timetable by Mussolini's incompetent son-in-law Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano who in Spring 1939 happily delegated the Germans to draft unsupervised their fateful Pact of Steel which he signed into immediate effect without realizing that it was a defensive-offensive alliance (not a defensive-only pact as the historical Triple Alliance) compelling each side to help the other even if one had started war early;
- c) only by August 1939 Mussolini finally baled-out of a German-provoked impending Axis war against Poland and the Allies (Hitler had much earlier secretly assuaged Mussolini's fears by agreeing to jointly start World War II only by 1943) by spuriously claiming Rome's economico-militarily inability to support Hitler in the short-term (1939-43), unless Nazi Germany sent daily train-shipments of "vital" supplies and even the most rare raw materials (the controversial "Molybdene List" purposely crafted by the Italian Military to spook Nazi Germany).

Thereafter, during the first phase of World War II, Mussolini's reluctant "Fat Neutrality" (September 1939-June 1940) coupled with open pro-German support ("non-belligerency"), reflected the *Duce* and the Italian Military (just like Hitler) beliefs that the new global conflict would be long like the 1914-18 Great War

<sup>1</sup> Milano & Monzali, *Ricerca dell'Equilibrio al Sogno d'Egemonia*, idem; Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e Europa Centrale, 1918-41*, idem; M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part III, idem; "Ioannis Metaxas" in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ioannis\\_Metaxas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ioannis_Metaxas)



before Nazi Germany's superior technology and ideology could triumph over the weak Western "pluto-democracies". But Mussolini's incompetence as a military leader lulled him into passivity and clamorously failed to use this long respite to ratchet-up the country for the impending combat, even when by May 1940 the German armoured *Blitzkrieg* ("lightning war") had quickly conquered Scandinavia, Netherlands and Belgium, and Anglo-French forces were openly beaten and in retreat. With Hitler now repeatedly urging that Fascist Italy join the war to stall any Anglo-French counter-offensive, Mussolini still hesitated, nor did he order his passive Italian military to rapidly prepare competent invasion plans and discreetly deploy sufficient forces in key places to be able to quickly seize by surprise at the beginning of any hostilities the strategic islands of Corsica from France and Malta from Great Britain. Thus, only by early-June 1940 when German forces were defeating France and Hitler seemed poised to reap alone all the fruits of victory, the *Duce* rushed still unprepared to join a global war against Great Britain and France fearing that the conflict would be soon over, as he told his pliant Army Chief-of-Staff Marshal Pietro Badoglio: "I only need a few thousand dead so that I can sit at the peace conference as a man who has fought!"<sup>1</sup>

Mussolini as *Duce* (Supreme Leader) already combined both the offices of Premier and Foreign Affairs Minister (marginalizing as symbolical head of state King/Emperor Vittorio-Emanuele III) and now anointed himself Chief of Armed Forces, despite his limited World War I service as front-line Army Non-Commissioned Officer (just like Hitler) without vital higher officer staff training or strategic vision. Yet, despite 20 years of irredentist-nationalist land claims and aggressive propaganda, the Fascist Party, régime and military had lost all professional autonomies and were just reduced to the role of pliant "Yes men" for the Supreme Leader, the *Duce*, who trapped in his own hesitations utterly failed to boldly seize by surprise his long-sought geo-strategic aims, stressing instead on 29 May 1940 to his inept Military Command: "We shall hold the defensive" to minimize risks and costs in a war "already won" by his stronger German ally, while wasting both clear advantages and surprise.

Mussolini's jerky last-minute wartime orders to grasp as many territorial gains as possible without any effective intelligence and preliminary war strategy, was aggravated by an unimaginative Italian military leadership under the King Victor-Emanuel III's controversial crony Marshal Badoglio (the only key World War I Italian general responsible for the 1917 Caporetto Rout who was not sacked, but promoted to Deputy Chief-of-Staff in 1917-19 and later Chief-of-Staff supervising all military operations in World War II until the 1943 defeat, when Badoglio and the King had Mussolini arrested in late-July 1943 and secretly negotiated switching side to the Allies in a disastrous national unconditional surrender of 8 September 1943, after which they abandoned the entire Army without orders to dissolve in a country split under twin Allied vs. German invasions and long civil war in 1943-45, to escape to a disarmed Kingdom of the South as "putatively leaders" until Badoglio was finally cashiered in 1944 and the King in 1946).<sup>2</sup>

Thus, on 10 June 1940 Fascist Italy sudden entry into war against the Allies, revealed the régime's "lack of strategic orientation" and was committed without any good preliminary war-plans by Mussolini and the military, nor with any strategically-deployed forces to immediately pounce by surprise on her long-held irredentist strategic targets still left undefended by the enemy, as well as inability to fully apply its strong naval forces to attain an even wider sea-power dimension:

- a) no serious joint Italian Army-Navy invasion force was secretly pre-positioned since Summer 1939 from Tuscany and the Island of Sardinia with support from the Italian Navy's northern base of La Spezia to quickly conquer by surprise a lightly-defended Corsica;
- b) nor was another joint Army-Navy invasion forces readied at the southern naval base of Taranto to take by surprise the still undefended main British naval base of Malta and so secure complete control

<sup>1</sup> Quote from: "Military History of Italy during World War II", idem; Giorgio Bocca, *Storia d'Italia nella Guerra Fascista, 1940-1943* (Milan: Mondadori, 1996), p.133-165.

<sup>2</sup> Bocca, *Storia d'Italia nella Guerra Fascista, 1940-43*, idem; "Military History of Italy in World War II", idem.

of the Central Mediterranean to Libya, while then steaming south to continue diversionary attacks against the French naval base of Bizerte in Tunisia;

- c) nor was the Italian colonial garrison of Libya (evenly split at the borders with French Tunisia in the West and British Egypt in the East) strongly reinforced and launched in a diversionary attack against Tunisia to be later reinforced by the same Italian Army-Navy task-force to invade Malta and then continue to Tunisia to block the nearby French naval base of Bizerte;
- d) or even be crafty enough, after decades of secretly financing terrorism abroad, to plan a secret convoy of civilian cargo ships laden with construction materials and stones for Italian East Africa, but to be secretly sunk at the start of war during transit to block the vital British Suez Canal.<sup>1</sup>

Instead, Fascist Italy's military (Army's 75 divisions with 8 armoured/mechanized and 12 rifle motorized; Navy's 155 warships and 117 submarines; Air Force's 1,800 aircrafts) were dispersed along borders and in depth in the north without any clear strategic war-plan, while both his Deputy Badoglio convincing Mussolini to delay 5 more days any offensive on the French Alpine front, and the Navy still opposed combat operations against the feared superior Royal Navy in the Central Mediterranean, with the Air Force uselessly focused against potential inexistent threats from a pro-French neutral Yugoslavia. On 11 June 1940, Fascist Italy unsuccessfully attacked France's fortified Alpine defenses losing 1250 men and 4,780 wounded, but despite the humiliation of being militarily stalled by numerically inferior, but well entrenched French Alpine defense, Paris' surrender to Nazi Germany left Fascist Italy to occupy (and administratively annex) in 1940-to-42 her irredentist border areas with Nizza (and in the future also Corsica) along a thin Italian Occupation Zone along the Alpine borders. After the collapse of Vichy France in November 1942, Fascist Italy annexed Nizza, Corsica and Savoy (with possible plans over also Provence), while the Italian Occupation Zone was expanded to Provence and Rhône River from the naval base of Toulon to Geneva until September 1943 (with 142,000 men, plus 83,000 men in Corsica), plus Tunisia, while at Bordeaux on the Atlantic Italy's BETASOM naval command operated 32 submarines (plus 4 surviving ones escaped from Eritrea) against Allied convoys (11 submarines lost) sinking 109 Allied cargo ships and 18 warships.<sup>2</sup>

In the Mediterranean, despite Fascist Italy's covert attempts to influence Malta's local Italian population, when Mussolini entered into World War II in June 1940 these islands were never immediately invaded by Fascist Italy although being only lightly defended. Despite being heavily bombed by Italo-German air forces in 1940-43, the long-delayed 1942 Axis invasion plan of Malta was scrubbed at the last-minute, due to the legendary Commander of the *Afrika Korps* General Erwin Rommel's request of divert to North Africa the joint Axis forces and Italian paratroopers that had long prepared for the invasion of the island. Thereafter, the heavily fortified Malta was the main British naval base keeping open East-West British-Allies sea-routes from Gibraltar to Alexandria in Egypt, but was never able despite sinking most enemy oil-tankers to stop the Italian Navy's constant reinforcements to the Italian forces and German *Afrika Korps* fighting in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia until 1943. After the Allied 1943 invasion of Sicily which finally shielded Malta from Axis attacks, the 8 September 1943 unconditional surrender and collapse of Fascist Italy led her Navy to leave all ports and reassemble at Malta as part of the almost disarmed pro-Allied Kingdom of the South (under Military Premier Badoglio and King Vittorio-Emanuele III), from where it conducted much praised convoy-escorts for the Allies throughout the Mediterranean until being disbanded at war's end with the 1947 Treaty of Paris.<sup>3</sup>

In Libya, Italian forces sat idly at the border with French Tunisia until the fall of France in June, while the devastating loss by friendly fire of Governor and Air Force Marshall Italo Balbo (political heir apparent to

<sup>1</sup> Quote from: Bocca, *Storia d'Italia e Guerra Fascista, 1940-43*, idem, p.141; the bold intelligence idea of blocking the Suez Canal by sinking a secret convoy of Italian civilian cargo ships was never debated by Fascist Italy and is explored in the alternate history tragic-comedy of Lucio Ceva, *Asse Pigliatutto, 1937-1943!* (Milan: Mondadori, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> "Italian Occupation of France" in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_occupation\\_of\\_France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_occupation_of_France); "Italian Occupation of Corsica" in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_occupation\\_of\\_Corsica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_occupation_of_Corsica); Bocca, *Storia d'Italia nella Guerra Fascista, 1940-43*, idem.

<sup>3</sup> M. Rimaneli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part III, idem; Bocca, *Storia d'Italia e Guerra Fascista, 1940-43*, idem; "Military History of Italy in World War II", idem; "Teatro Mediterraneo e Seconda Guerra Mondiale", idem.

Mussolini), paralyzed preparations until Mussolini ordered his replacement General Rodolfo Graziani (ex-Viceroy of East Africa) to immediately attack British Egypt, despite the dearth of needed mechanized forces, trucks, armaments and supplies (both Balbo and Graziani complained that the Italian forces in Libya were equipped for World War I-style colonial warfare, while the British enemy was ready for modern European warfare). A strong Italian infantry invasion in September soon petered out at 100 Km. inside Egypt and entrenched in a series of World War I-style fortified sand strongholds at Sidi Barrani, but Graziani lacked intelligence, trucks and air-support, and was suddenly flanked and enveloped by smaller mobile British forces, which routed the Italians and captured in bulk 130,000 men while retreating along the coastal road 800 Km. to El Agheila losing all Eastern Libya (Cyrenaica). The British seemed poised to sweep the Italians out of Libya, but they too were bogged down by long supply problems, while Premier Winston Churchill halted the advance and rerouted the best forces to Greece to help counter a new Italian offensive from Albania. By February 1941 the Libyan front had stabilized with Italian and German reinforcements in the armoured *Afrika Korps* under General Erwin Rommel, who commandeered the two new Italian armoured divisions and left behind the Italian infantry in a surprise lightning *Blitzkrieg* that reconquered Cyrenaica in few months. But with extended supply lines and few tanks and petrol left (often sunk by British air-strikes from Malta) Rommel could not seize the vital Tobruk naval base, while under a new British offensive in November 1941 he rapidly retreated to El Agheila.

Soon resupplied, Marshall Rommel struck back again in January 1942, quickly forcing the British to retreat to their new fortified defensive Gazala Line, then by May 1942 in the Gazala Battle Rommel swung the Axis armour around and to the rear of the Allied lines where he brilliantly defeated British armoured divisions and while risking being caught in the middle he then pressed further into the rear his offensive all the way to capture Tobruk. The British were forced back deep into Egypt with Rommel at 140 Km. from Alexandria until stopped in a series of battles (First El Alamein in July 1942 and Alam el Halfa in September 1942) at the land bottleneck of El Alamein (2,500 Km. from Tripoli) heavily defended by the British. Unable to break Commonwealth defenses and lacking major tank reinforcements, petrol and supplies (often sunk by British air-strikes from Malta) Axis forces entrenched behind miles of sand fortifications and largest mine-fields. The Allies finally won the Second Battle of Alamein (October/November 1942) and split the Axis forces: the bulk of the large Italian Army lacking trucks retreated on foot but were mostly captured in tranches along the way by superior British armour, while the remaining armoured German-Italian *Afrika Korps* fought a 2,600 Km.-long retreat against the British all the way to the Libyan border with Tunisia, because in November 1942 U.S. air and amphibious forces seized Axis Vichy French colonies of Morocco and Algeria. By February 1943, Axis forces in Tunisia augmented by Rommel's retreating forces and massive reinforcements from Italy and Germany, defeated the U.S. at the Kasserine Pass Battle, but once surrounded were not withdrawn given Hitler's strategic ineptness and thus forced to surrender by May 1943 (250,000 men).<sup>1</sup>

In the distant Horn of Africa, Italian forces (70,000 soldiers and 180,000 native *Askari* troops) outnumbered the British, but were too far from the Italian mainland and totally cut-off with the Suez Canal and Egypt under British military control. Thus, Italian military operations in the Horn remained severely limited both at land and sea. Italy's petrol-starved small Red Sea Flotilla (7 destroyers and 8 submarines) at the port of Massawa in Eritrea, threatened British armed convoys traversing the Red Sea, but soon lost a destroyer and four submarines. Initial Italian land attacks in East Africa focused in the north into Sudan capturing Kassala and small border areas (yet unable to follow-up with any major offensive through Southern Sudan to reach French Chad and then link north with Italian Libya), in the south into Kenya (hoping to control the friendlier desert border areas inhabited by Somalis) and in the west in August 1940 into British Somaliland, forcing Anglo-Commonwealth forces to retreat by sea to nearby Aden British base.

<sup>1</sup> Bocca, *Storia d'Italia nella Guerra Fascista, 1940-43*, idem; "Military History of Italy in World War II", idem; "Teatro Mediterraneo nella Seconda Guerra Mondiale", idem.

With no parallel Italian offensive south from Libya, the Italian East Africa Army dug defensive positions in Sudan and Kenya against the inevitable British three-pronged counter-attacks of January 1941: Indian forces attacked in Southern Sudan and Eritrea (conquered by April-June 1941 and the loss in combat and scuttling of the Italian destroyers) and were paralleled by South African and British East African forces attacking in Kenya and Somalia (conquered by March 1941), while an amphibious landing from Aden led the British back into Somaliland (conquered by March). Ethiopia also fell by May 1941 after the surrender of the King's brother, Viceroy Amedeo, Duke of Aosta at the Amba-Alagi stronghold, while Italian guerrillans fought the British until Fall 1943.<sup>1</sup>

With these dual disasters in Libya and East Africa, Mussolini sought to rebalance his humiliating military losses by finally invading Greece and extending Italian power over the entire East Mediterranean, while seeking German reinforcements to later reconquer Cyrenaica as well. Although Greece's General Metaxas anti-communist right-wing dictatorship had adopted many Fascist institutions from Italy, by Fall 1940 relations between the two countries had collapsed. Metaxas saw Italy as the main possible enemy since Italy's support of Albania in 1919-20 and Mussolini's 1923 brief invasion of Corfú. Metaxas had sought to contain Mussolini's expansionism in the Balkans and East Mediterranean by balancing Greek neutrality between Great Britain and Nazi Germany as opposite counter-weights to Fascist Italy, while maintaining even relations with ex-enemy neutral Turkey. The 1936 "Rome-Berlin Axis" totally undermined Metaxas' foreign policy alignments, although until 1940 he still hoped that Hitler would restrain Mussolini in the Balkans, where by late-1930s Nazi Germany became the main trade partner for all Balkan states and Greece.

Thus, after Mussolini annexed Albania in 1939, Greece remained neutral, but pro-Western and refused to enter in World War II. Then in Fall 1940, after Mussolini's first defeat in Libya he also lost any remnant of his old Balkan political influence after Hitler's Two Arbitrations of Vienna redrew on near-ethnic lines the borders of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, followed by Romania and Bulgaria openly enlisting Nazi Germany's military protection with bases against the USSR, while neutral Yugoslavia and Turkey became quietly pro-German. The *Duce* reacted by suddenly deciding to consolidate at least his politico-military hold from the Adriatic to the East Mediterranean by threatening to invade weak Greece from Southern Albania with less than two-weeks preparation in October 1940 should Athens not accept instead an Italian "protectorate". The Italian High Command under General Badoglio was appalled given that just three weeks earlier Mussolini had ordered them to demobilize 600,000 men and that in Albania only 8 Italian divisions were deployed, while a Winter invasion of mountainous Greece needed 20 divisions and strengthening of the inadequate Albanian ports and primitive transport networks.

Nevertheless, as Metaxas refused to peacefully submit to Rome's *ultimatum*, the fateful invasion started. No country initially came to Athens' rescue, but instead of rapidly defeating Greece, Fascist Italy suffered humiliating defeats in her ill-prepared 1940-41 Winter invasion across jagged mountains against Athens. By March 1941 the Greek Army with Albanian guerrillans had pushed back two Italian offensives and seized also all of Greek-populated Southern Albania. Fascist Italy's humiliating 1940 twin defeats in Libya and Greece (17,600 dead, 50,000 sick and 102,000 casualties against 19,000 Greek dead, 90,000 casualties and countless sick) showed her military inability to sustain any independent Mediterranean and Balkan expansionist strategy, while emboldening British Premier Churchill to redeploy veteran units from Cyrenaica to support Greece and secretly staging with the Yugoslav Army a coup and bilateral alliance that dramatically reversed the previous day's alliance treaty forced on Belgrade to join the Axis and consolidate Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy strategic rear in East Europe. Hitler enraged postponed his planned surprise invasion of the USSR and directed the whole Axis to rescue Mussolini with the April 1941 joint-invasions

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<sup>1</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part III, idem; Bocca, *Storia d'Italia nella Guerra Fascista, 1940-43*, idem; "Military History of Italy in World War II", idem; "Teatro Mediterraneo nella Seconda Guerra Mondiale", idem; Paladini, "Mare Nostrum", idem, p.615-627.

of both Yugoslavia (Germany, Italy, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria) and Greece (Germany, Italy and Bulgaria) to secure the strategic rear in the Balkans. Fascist Italy finally annexed Kosovo and West Macedonia in a “Greater” Grand-Duchy of Albania on 12 August 1941, while accelerating her ethnic policy of Italianization of Dalmazia and Albania with colonists and culture, plus supporting Fascist Albanians in burning Serbo-Montenegrin villages and fighting Yugoslav guerrillas.<sup>1</sup>

Despite her propaganda blusters and neo-Roman imperialist myths, Fascist Italy was unable to properly handle both her limited political influence on the Axis satellites of East Europe/Balkans and the wartime greedy disaggregation of her regional enemies (Albania, France, Greece, Yugoslavia) to forge an effective benevolent regional bloc of mutually-supporting Italian “client-states” (Falangist Spain, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Montenegro and Vichy France) capable of rebalancing and partially moderating within the Axis’ political alliance Nazi Germany’s hegemony over Europe. Instead, Mussolini’s inefficient and corrupt Fascist dictatorship remained always an opportunistic and unimaginative propaganda exploiter of Liberal Italy’s hard-suffered gradualist diplomatico-territorial gains and long-gone myths of Roman power without consistent and targeted military build-ups and professional astute regional diplomatico-trade cooperation. Bereft of any independent vision since the late-1930s, Mussolini’s visions of neo-Roman glory shrunk his freedom of action to a mere shadowy image of Hitler’s global hegemonic master-plans during World War II. Mussolini’s growing ideological conformity to Nazi-Fascism, erratic political leadership and fast declining military capabilities in the Axis forced him to increasingly seek German cooperation also in jointly maintaining political “protectorates” over areas initially coveted exclusively by Fascist Italy (*Mare Nostrum* and Balkans):

- a) after letting go his trusted professional diplomatic advisors (dismissing their warning that abandoning Austria to Nazi Germany would inevitably allow Berlin to expand influence throughout the Balkans and even the Adriatic quashing Rome’s existing influence) the “Rome-Berlin Axis” realignment became privileged since 1936, while slowly relinquishing in 1936-1938 the Austrian “protectorate” to Germany until annexed (1938 *Anschluss*);
- b) Rome’s failed “protectorate” over Francoist Spain became a joint failure with Nazi Germany over Franco’s neutralist independence within the Axis in 1936-45;
- c) Greece and Croatia jointly conquered and ruled with Nazi Germany in 1941-43:
  - once independent as an Axis state, Croatia’s *Ustasha* leader Pavelić opposed his protector Mussolini and the Fascist Senate’s demands to annex all Dalmazia’s coast and islands south of Fiume to Cattaro, plus a vital Italo-Croat economic union to integrate the whole region under Italy; instead Foreign Minister Ciano got the *Duce* to accept less land in south Dalmazia with Zara, Sebenico, Spalato, Trau and Cattero in-exchange for Croatia keeping continental and unfortified south Dalmazia with Ragusa, annexing all Bosnia, plus an Italo-Croat alliance and a Savoy Prince as future King of Croatia (1941 Rome Accords); but secretly Croatia sided with Nazi Germany’s own politico-economic orbit rejecting the vital economic union with Italy, as Berlin too resisted Rome’s claims (Zagreb Accord, 10 May 1941), thus erasing Italy’s quest for Adriatic hegemony at the very moment that Mussolini believed he had finally achieved it;
  - finally by 1941-43 Fascist Italy occupied most of Greece and Aegean islands, while Nazi Germany seized strategic Thessalonika and half of the Crete in the East Mediterranean;<sup>2</sup>
- d) the politico-economico-military resurgence of Nazi Germany within East Europe and Balkans since 1935 made her dominant after the Austrian *Anschluss*, forcing Mussolini to accept joint political influence over all Axis satellites (Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Finland, Vichy France) and leaning pro-Axis “neutrals” (Spain, Switzerland, Sweden and Turkey);

<sup>1</sup> Bocca, *Storia d’Italia nella Guerra Fascista, 1940-43*, idem; “Military History of Italy in World War II”, idem; “Teatro Mediterraneo nella Seconda Guerra Mondiale”, idem; Paladini, “Mare Nostrum”, idem, p.615-627.

<sup>2</sup> Bocca, *Storia d’Italia nella Guerra Fascista, 1940-43*, idem; “Military History of Italy in World War II”, idem; “Teatro Mediterraneo nella Seconda Guerra Mondiale”, idem; Paladini, “Mare Nostrum”, idem, p.615-627.

- e) once defeated in North Africa in 1940, any future victory (thanks to Marshall Rommel's *Afrika Korps*) would entail inescapable joint-control as "protectorates" also over British Egypt and Sudan, as well as the Arabian peninsula and France's Chad and Equatorial Africa, which Mussolini had initially single-out as his "exclusive" areas for *Mare Nostrum* colonial expansion;
- f) defeated again in 1941 both in Greece and Horn of Africa, Fascist Italy's imperialist quest to control the Adriatic, West Balkans, Greece and East Mediterranean became conditioned to joint regional "protectorates" with Nazi Germany (Croatia, Greece) as undisputed Axis leader;
- g) finally also Mussolini's plans to complete the last irredentist annexations to *Grande Italia* by planning to jointly seize British Malta in 1941 (with a secret Italo-German paratroopers operation with Italian Navy support), and Italian Switzerland anytime in Summer 1940-to-1944 in "Operation Tannenbaum" with 500,000 German and Italian troops (south of the Alpine divide Ticino, Italo-German Grigioni and Franco-German Valais for Fascist Italy with north of the Alpine divide most of German and French Switzerland for the Third Reich) were indefinitely postponed by German decision (in 1941 Rommel woefully rerouted to North Africa the Axis special forces, instead of waiting for the destruction of the strategic Malta base that was cutting down Axis petrol supplies to Rommel's tanks; in Summer 1940 Hitler postponed invading Switzerland until London's capitulation, hoping also for a peaceful Swiss surrender; in 1941-44 Nazi Germany invaded the USSR and could not divert forces to an expensive side-show conquest of neutral lucrative collaborationist Switzerland vs. the Swiss General Henri Guisan Plan to immediately destroy the vital Gotthard and Simplon rail-road tunnels connecting Nazi Germany to Fascist Italy and wage a long guerrilla resistance around a Swiss Alpine Redoubt).<sup>1</sup>

In the end, Fascist Italy traded her 1920s-30s Great Power's imperialist international vision of an independent exclusivist neo-Roman Empire over the Mediterranean and Balkans (*Mare Nostrum*), plus Horn of Africa, for actual practical politico-military Axis integration and subordination to Nazi Germany whenever Italian forces were sent alone into combat unprepared, ill-equipped and with no concrete strategic war-plans to achieve their ambitious goals, or were not pre-positioned in sufficient numbers for easy surprise attacks on undefended enemies (France, Tunisia, Egypt and Horn of Africa in June 1940, Greece in Fall 1940). After being humiliatingly defeated by weaker, but well-entrenched enemies (French and Greeks) or by a smaller, but more mobile foe (Great Britain in Egypt and Horn of Africa in 1940-41, Malta 1940-43), then only when Fascist Italy was forced to subordinate to superior German leadership (Rommel) and/or armoured forces (*Afrika Korps*; Yugoslavia, Greece) in World War II did Rome finally secure briefly both:

- 1) her geo-strategic designs for a 1940-43 geographically-broader irredentist-nationalist *Grande Italia*/"Greater Italy" (Italy annexing "Greater Albania", Nizza, Corsica, Savoy, Dalmazia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Greek Ionian Islands and Tunisia, but not yet Italian Switzerland—Ticino, Grigioni and French Valais—or the British fortress of Malta);
- 2) her "neo-Roman Fascist Empire" ("Greater Italy", Libya and Egypt, East Africa with Eritrea/French Djibouti, Somalia/British Somaliland, Ethiopia, with additional claims over British Southern Sudan and French Chad to reach Libya; military presence in Spain's Balearic Islands after the Spanish Civil War; joint-occupation with Germany of Greece; occupation of France's Provence/East Rhone region). But this was a hollow short-term victory in 1940-43 before politico-military collapse in late-1943.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bocca, *Storia d'Italia nella Guerra Fascista, 1940-43*, idem; "Military History of Italy in World War II", idem; "Italian Irredentism in Switzerland" in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_irredentism\\_in\\_Switzerland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_irredentism_in_Switzerland); George M. Lubick, *Germany Germany's Attitude toward Swiss Neutrality 1933-1945* (M.A. Thesis: University of Montana, 1967): <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6239&context=etd>; "Operation Tannenbaum" in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Tannenbaum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Tannenbaum); Stephen P. Hullbrook, "The Swiss were Prepared to Fight Fascism to the Bitter End" in *PBS Frontline* (1997): <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/nazis/readings/halbrook.html>; Christian Oord, "To This Day, the Myth Still Abounds: Why Didn't the Germans Invade Switzerland?" in *War History On-line* (2 February 2019): <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/instant-articles/nazis-never-invade-switzerland.html>

<sup>2</sup> "Italian Irredentism", idem; "Italia Irredenta" in *Liberal Dictionary*: <https://www.tekportal.net/italia-irredenta/>

Paradoxically, Axis military reversals in Africa and USSR, left Italy by Summer 1943 bereft of all colonies, while Nazi Germany's declining hegemonico-military power in 1943-44 briefly allowed Mussolini to emerge again (by default) as the shadow-leader of all Balkan Axis states seeking Mussolini's secret protection against Hitler's uncompromising war-to-the-end, where no Axis satellite nor Fascist Italy believed in victory anymore. To avoid collective defeat at the hands of the Allies, all other Axis satellites (Hungary, Croatia, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Finland) secretly pressured Fascist Italy to negotiate a separate collective armistice with the Allies, but a now totally spent Mussolini twice found himself psychologically and politico-militarily unable to forge such strong politico-diplomatic Axis counter-weight to Hitler's leadership. Instead, Mussolini's inability to use his new-found influence over the Balkans to engineer another bold alliance-reversal on behalf of the Allies led to generalized collapse first of Fascist Italy by defeat at the hand of the Allies (loss of Sicily and Southern Italy in Summer 1943); then the shocking imprisonment of Mussolini and collapse of the Fascist régime after the July military coup by Chief-of-Staff Badoglio and King Vittorio-Emanuele III supported by both previous Foreign Ministers Grandi and Ciano vainly striving to succeed to the *Duce*; followed by the failed alliance-reversal towards the Allies by Badoglio and the King in the 8 September unconditional surrender, which in-turn countered by the swift German occupation of Rome and Central-Northern Italy and disarming of the Italian Army (from France to Greece and Italy), while creating under a freed Mussolini a diminutive Italian Fascist Republic of Saló under total German control; then a bloody civil war between Nazi-Fascists and pro-Allied Italian partisans, while the British eliminated all military power and significant independent role to Badoglio and the Kingdom of the South until the Allies' final victory in May 1945 and Mussolini's killing by Communist Partisans.<sup>1</sup>

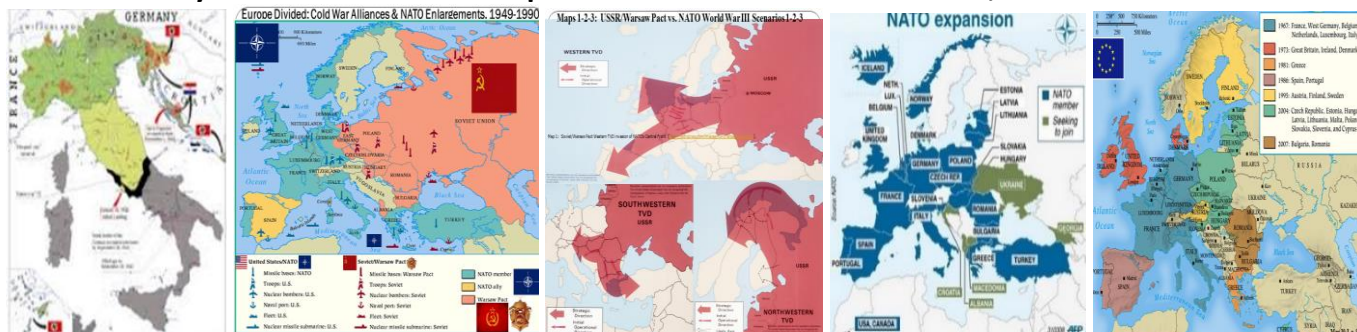
After Italy's military defeat and fall of Fascism in 1943, the Italian military was left without orders by new Premier Badoglio and the King who fled to Allied-controlled Southern Italy, while German forces seized Rome and disarmed/interned many Italian units, as the majority of the military disbanded on their own and returned home as civilians. Few units fought back against the Germans and joined the ex-enemy local Partisans (Greece, Yugoslavia and Corsica until liberated by the Allies in 1944) or formed new Partisan units in Northern Italy in a 2-years civil war. In Greece and Albania, Italian units were interned or executed as an example (Corfú), leaving Berlin in complete control. As Albania was part of Fascist Italy, the German command restored independence as a Nazi Axis satellite until in November 1944 when Soviet penetration in the Balkans via Romania and Bulgaria (both had switched side like Italy the year before) forced German forces to evacuate north: in Greece the British seized the Italian Dodecanese, Aegean islands and Athens where they defeated the local communist partisans who started a long civil war until 1948; in Albania the expanding local Communist partisans under Enver Hoxha took-over Tirana in November 1944. In Axis-controlled ex-Yugoslavia since 1942 the Communist partisans under Josip Broz Tito waged guerrilla warfare against the Croats *Ustasha* in Bosnia and Germans in Serbia and Montenegro, until in October 1944 the Yugoslav Communists entered with the Soviets in Belgrade, and then moved into Montenegro and Bosnia.

Since Italy's surrender in September 1943, Tito extolled the retreating Italian forces to leave him their heavy weapons and ammunitions in exchange for safe-passage, while manipulating London to bomb Zara, which he misstated on purpose as the main logistic center for German forces in Yugoslavia: from November 1943 to 31 October 1944, Allied Forces bombed Zara 54 times killing 2,000 people and forcing 12,000 refugees to Trieste and 1,000 by sea to Southern Italy, until Tito's Communist partisans could finally seize Dalmazia and Zara where they executed 138 people and forced a massive exodus of remaining local Italians from the *Irredenta*. By 1945-47 all remaining Italians in Dalmazia, Istria, Venezia-Giulia and Slovenia were expelled, leaving behind only few families as a Communist federal Yugoslavia was formed, while Trieste remained an international zone under British rule until finally re-annexed by Italy in 1954.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Monzali, *Sogno dell'Egemonia: Italia, Jugoslavia e Europa Centrale, 1918-41*, idem; M. Rimaneli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part III, idem; Giorgio Bocca, *Storia dell'Italia Partigiana, 1943-1945* (Milan: Mondadori, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> "Italian Irredentism" idem; "Italia Irredenta", idem; Bocca, *Storia d'Italia nella Guerra Fascista, 1940-43*, idem; "Military History of Italy in World War II", idem; "Teatro Mediterraneo nella Seconda Guerra Mondiale", idem.

## Democratic Italy's Euro-Atlantic Partnerships in Balkans and East Mediterranean, 1946-2020s



a. Fascist Italy collapse 1943-45; b-c. U.S./NATO vs. USSR/Warsaw Pact in Cold War & World War III Plans; d. NATO Post-Cold War Enlargements; e. European Union

In World War II Fascist Italy briefly conquered in 1940-43 all her irredentist and imperial-colonial claims, but such *Grande Italia*/"Greater Italy" and fragile neo-Roman Fascist Empire collapsed just as fast, bringing down also the patiently negotiated and won over lands earlier by Liberal Italy, while the country collapsed ever since as a Great Power. Out of a population of 44,400,000, Italy lost in World War II 340,000 ca. military dead (plus 20,000 African troops), 161.100 civilians dead (including 8,000 Jews) and 300,000 ca. wounded. Also Italian Irredentism collapsed after the ignominious defeat of Fascism and the Savoy Monarchy, followed by the forced evacuation as refugees to Italy of most Italian populations in Dalmazia, Istria, Dodecanese, Albania and Tunisia.

After World War II, the new Italian Republic took credit for fighting with the Allies in the Partisan civil war, the superb role her Navy did most Allied convoy escorts in 1943-45, and abolishing in 1946 the Savoy monarchy tainted by her power-sharing with the Fascist régime. But despite futile diplomatic negotiations, "Allied" Italy was still condemned as a defeated Power by the Allies in the 1947 Treaty of Paris, losing all ex-colonies, most post-1919 irredentist lands, all 1920s-43 annexed irredentist lands, all outstanding land claims, her Navy and most military equipment.<sup>1</sup>

a) Italian colonies:

- Ethiopia became independent (since her conquest by Fascist Italy in 1935-36) and was given Eritrea (annexed by Liberal Italy since 1885) sparking a 40-years-long insurgency;
- Somalia (annexed by Liberal Italy since 1885) and British Somaliland (annexed by Fascist Italy in 1940-41) were merged under U.N. Trusteeship eventually assigned to Italy, prior to independence in the 1960s;
- Libya (annexed by Liberal Italy since 1911-12) was also under U.N. Trusteeship, prior to independence in the 1950s;
- Tunisia (annexed by Fascist Italy in 1942-43) was returned to Free France in 1943 after its conquest by the Allies.

b) Most post-1919 Italian lands granted at the Versailles Peace Treaty:

- Communist Yugoslavia annexed in 1945-53 Caporetto, half of Gorizia and Northern Istria to Slovenia; Southern Istria, Fiume, Zara and Dalmazia to Croatia, but was denied Allied-controlled Trieste International Free Zone A, which finally returned to Italy in 1953 after Rome staged a surprise war-crisis to solve the issue, although Zone B was annexed by Yugoslavia; Italy in the 1970s turned Trieste and Venezia-Giulia into an autonomous region and the 1975 Italo-Yugoslav Treaty of Osimo made both Zones and the neighbouring Yugoslav area into a Free-Trade Zone;
- Austria's repeated claims over the German-majority of Süd Tirol/Alto-Adige (annexed by Nazi Germany in 1943-45), were rejected by the Allies who punished her for her own Nazi past and kept this region in Italy, which was given since the mid-1950s regional autonomy and bilingualism (De Gasperi-Gruber Pact), although the 1960s-70s saw a degree of German terrorist secessionist bombings;

<sup>1</sup> "World War II Casualties" in Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World\\_War\\_II\\_casualties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties); "Italian Irredentism" idem; Bocca, *Storia d'Italia nella Guerra Fascista, 1940-43*, idem; "Military History of Italy in World War II", idem.



## c) Annexed Italian irredentist and Fascist imperial lands:

- France secured Nizza/Nice, Corsica and Savoy (annexed by Fascist Italy in 1940-45) and also annexed slivers of more Italian land at Tenda, but the Allies forced the French back Premier Charles De Gaulle's attempt to annex also the mix-French-speaking Val d'Aosta; Communist Yugoslavia became independent in 1945 and secured Montenegro, Kosovo and Slovenia (annexed by Fascist Italy in 1940-43);
- Greece regained her independence in late-1944 with also Epirus and Ionian Islands (annexed by Fascist Italy in 1940-43), plus Italy's Dodecanese Islands with Rhodes (annexed by Italy from Turkey in 1912);
- Albania (annexed by Fascist Italy in 1939-43) became a Communist independent state in late-1944, but lost Kosovo back to Serbia/Yugoslavia;
- Tunisia (annexed by Fascist Italy in 1942-43) was returned to Free France in 1943 after its conquest by the Allies.

## d) Outstanding Italian territorial claims:

- Malta was never conquered by Fascist Italy in World War II and remained British until independence in 1975, after which it was protected militarily by Italy against impending threats from Dictator Muammar Ghaddafi's Libya;
- Post-Yugoslav Slovenia once it seceded in 1991 strongly debated merger with Italy in 1991-92 (which would cover also North Istria and ex-Venezia Giulia areas), but in the end remained independent due to Italy's inability to pursue any nationalist foreign policy during her parallel politico-institutional collapse over the "Open Hands" illegal financing scandal of most parties and the consequent transition from the First to a Second Republic.<sup>1</sup>

Italy's national security and diplomacy succeeded in balancing Mediterranean naval defense from threats of sea invasions through a close *entente* with the world's hegemonic sea-power Great Britain and creating a large state-of-art Italian Navy, while protecting her porous Alpine borders against land invasions with a large static Army and cyclical alliance-shifting with Europe's new hegemonic land-powers:

- a) with France against Austria in 1859-70 by supporting Italian national unification;
- b) with Imperial Germany in the Triple Alliance (including ex-enemy Austria-Hungary) against France in 1882-1914, allowing Italy under Premiers Francesco Crispi and Giovanni Giolitti to build a small colonial empire (Eritrea in 1882-1941, Somalia in 1880s-1941 and Libya in 1911-43, despite failing to conquer Ethiopia in 1895-96 until later under Mussolini in 1935-41);
- c) with the *Entente*/Allies (France, Great Britain, Czarist Russia and U.S.A.) against her ex-allies of the Triple Alliance (Austria-Hungary and Germany) in World War I (1914-18), allowing Italy to annex most of the *Irredenta*;
- d) playing the Anglo-French against Germany in 1919-36 during Benito Mussolini's Fascist dictatorship (1922-45) to gain colonial concessions from the West;
- e) with Nazi Germany in the Fascist Axis (with Japan and East Europe) against the Allies from 1936 to World War II (1939-45), allowing Rome to briefly become in 1939-43 "Greater Italy" (*Grande Italia*) and a fleeting neo-Roman Fascist empire;
- f) with the U.S.A. in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as dual hegemonic land- and naval-power against the Soviet Union/Russia in the Cold War (1946-90) and Post-Cold War (1990-now).

Italy's naval and land security were both assured by America through the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean since 1946 and U.S. leadership of NATO in Europe since 1949 of which Italy was a Founding member. Italy's Cold War land defense against a World War III Soviet/Warsaw Pact armor invasion through "neutral" Yugoslavia and Austria focused on stopping it at the Gorizia Gap and penetrating deeply

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimaneli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part IV, idem.

in Austria to rescue that country and link with NATO's Central Front in Germany facing the brunt of any attack. In the Mediterranean, Italy hosts NATO's Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH) command and U.S. Sixth Fleet since both were expelled from France's Toulon naval base in 1966, while since 1975 Italy's rebuilt a large modern navy to support the U.S. Sixth Fleet and NATO in World War III naval combat against the Soviet Fifth *Eskadra*, once Great Britain disbanded its historical Mediterranean Fleet and left its Malta base, which Italy defends since 1977.<sup>1</sup>

During the Cold War, Italy's new democratic First Republic (1946-92) under Christian-Democrat Premier Alcide De Gasperi secured vital U.S. aid and military protection against the Soviet Union (USSR) and its Communist satellite states near Italy's border and Balkans, as well as domestically against its large Italian Communist Party loyal to Moscow. By publicly renouncing to the lure of either neutrality or past "imperialism" (both Fascist and Liberal), Republican Italy centered her new image since the 1948-57 on a trinity of national priorities:

- 1) democratic reintegration as a Western Middle Power;
- 2) bipolar/international security reintegration as a U.S./NATO Atlantic Ally founding-member;
- 3) economico-political reintegration as a European federalist founding-member.

Thus, with total access to U.S. trade/finances (1944-46 U.S./UNRRA Aid; 1947-54 Marshall Plan; Most-Favourite Nation) and integrated since 1950 in the regional economic European Community/Union (E.C./E.U.), post-war Italy quickly revived as an important Western capitalist state and one of the world's most-industrialized nations (G-7/G-8 Summits), while supporting NATO Enlargements to new European members (from East Mediterranean rivals in the Cold War to ex-enemies East Europe/Balkans in the Post-Cold War), and E.C./E.U. pan-European politico-economic integration and Enlargements (again from East Mediterranean rivals in the Cold War to ex-enemies East Europe/Balkans in the Post-Cold War), as well as international peacekeeping and economic development with the United Nations (U.N.) once the USSR lifted in 1955 its decade-old veto against Italy, and since 1976 also in the Conference/Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (C/OSCE) for regional free elections and arms-control.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning the historical Adriatic/Balkans region during the Cold War, after re-annexing Trieste from the Allies in 1954, Italy had totally shed any reference to her lost *Irredenta* claims, while fully cooperating with the U.S. as NATO's "Front Line" defense against the USSR and Warsaw Pact forces over eventual World War III war-scenarios:

- a) the Italian military was fully rebuilt twice in the 1950s-60s and since 1975 with its forces and armour deployed to protect her eastern Alpine borders with neutral Communist Yugoslavia and neutral Western Austria against a possible Soviet/Warsaw Pact air-land invasion from Hungary into Austria and north Yugoslavia (Croatia and Slovenia) to also hit northern Italy to cut-off her vital NATO roads/rail link to south Germany via Austria (Brenner Pass) and Switzerland (NATO had secretly supported over the years neutral Yugoslavia and had a secret defense treaty to protect neutral Austria if invaded in World War III, and possibly one with neutral Switzerland as well);
- b) hosts many NATO air bases (Vicenza in the Veneto Region as the most important);
- c) twice has deployed U.S. theater nuclear missiles against the USSR in 1955-60 and 1983-89 during the Euromissiles Crisis, which were dismantled in the 1987-88 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF);
- d) the Kremlin also might have hoped to score a quick dual air-armoured offensive just in north Yugoslavia to reach north Italy cutting Rome from NATO forces in South Germany and pushing towards Milan and the Lombardy industrial heartland (in a way reminiscent of the Italian 1917

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part IV, idem; M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; "Eritrea: Contesting for the coastlands and beyond" in *Britannica*: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Eritrea/Contesting-for-the-coastlands-and>; "First Italo-Ethiopian War" in *Wikipedia*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First\\_Italo-Ethiopian\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Italo-Ethiopian_War); "Second Italo-Ethiopian War" in *Wikipedia*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second\\_Italo-Ethiopian\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Italo-Ethiopian_War); "Italian Somaliland" in *Wikipedia*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_Somaliland#:~:text=On%205%20April%201908%2C%20the.government%2C%20and%20the%20colonial%20government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Somaliland#:~:text=On%205%20April%201908%2C%20the.government%2C%20and%20the%20colonial%20government)

<sup>2</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part IV, idem; M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem.

collapse at Caporetto in World War I) backed hopefully by propaganda to spur some local insurrection by pro-Soviet Communist Party groups and the ubiquitous Communist terrorist Red Brigades in the 1970s to force Rome to sue for armistice and cut-off NATO from the Italian naval bases in Gaeta (U.S. Sixth Fleet) and Taranto, while isolating in the East Mediterranean both Greece and Turkey for later limited USSR/Warsaw Pact strikes from Bulgaria to seize the vital Turkish Straits and Istanbul connecting the Black Sea to the East Mediterranean, as well as Greece's vital Salonika Port/rail network to the West Balkans and Belgrade (again due to geo-strategy imperatives both were reminiscent of the Allied 1915 Gallipoli and frozen 1915-1918 Salonika Campaigns).<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the East Mediterranean in the Cold War Italy successfully reprised her past supporting peacekeeping coalition role to support the U.S. and "*Pax Americana*":

- a) in Egypt's demilitarized Sinai with the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) based in Rome;
- b) in Lebanon twice with Multinational Forces I & II (MNF I & II);
- c) and in the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Concerning the Adriatic/Balkans in the Cold War, for 30 years since World War II, Yugoslavia and Albania remained the dominant open zones of clash between Democratic republican Italy and Communist Yugoslavia remained locked in a long ideologico-ethnic and military confrontation over the collapse of Fascist *Grande Italia* and loss of *Irredenta* and annexed multi-ethnic lands, where Mussolini had also forced the "Italianization" of all minorities (Germans, Slovenes, Croats, Albanians, Greek and French). With Yugoslav communist backing, Slovenes and Croats in revenge destroyed the local Italian communities with massacres, mass expulsions and properties confiscations in 1944-47. Josip Broz "Tito" as the most active and first *junior partner* of the USSR both exploited multi-ethnic nationalism against Italy in Kosovo, Montenegro and Dalmazia in 1944, followed by Istria-Venezia Giulia to the Isonzo River with Gorizia and Trieste in 1945 to force all Allies (Great Britain, USA and USSR) to accept this *fait accomplis* in a future peace conference. The Anglo-Americans equally interested in using the strategic Trieste to supply Allied forces in Austria strongly opposed the Yugoslav take-over of Trieste, Klagenfurt and Villach, and enlisted Stalin's support as he wanted to avoid any premature ideological clash with the West pushed by the "uncontrollable autonomous" Tito before the USSR could complete her take-over of Eastern Europe in the Cold War. Yugoslav forces were forced to withdraw from these three disputed cities and the Anglo-American Zone A in Italy (Tarvisio-Gorizia-Trieste Line), while rejecting Yugoslav excessive claims even on Udine (re-annexed by Italy in 1866). Yugoslavia kept all remaining *Irredenta* in Zone B with Soviet backing at the Paris Peace Treaty (10 February 1947), while rejecting Italy's desperate diplomatic retreat to the old 1919 ethnic "Wilson Line" (which the U.S. in 1945 did not care) renamed "continuous ethnic line". The 1947 Peace Treaty erased Italy century-long politico-economic presence in the Adriatic/Balkans region and thousand-years-old ethno-cultural *Irredenta*, leaving only an Anglo-American-controlled Free Territory of Trieste under the United Nations Security Council (1945-54).

Republican Italy was squeezed diplomatically by Fascist Italy's military defeat and loss of the empire slowly built since Liberal Italy over the past clash for regional control of the Adriatic/Balkans, just as the USSR-U.S.A. Cold War split Europe between Soviet Communist-controlled East Europe and the Anglo-Americans in Western Europe, leaving Italy square in the middle of the Iron Curtain. But for post-war Italy's national consciousness, the re-annexation of Trieste became the only historical and unchanged rallying call at home and abroad for Rome's weak pacifist Christian-Democratic (D.C.) governments vs. wily communist Yugoslavia. Thus, in 1946-49 the U.S. Containment of Soviet expansionism propped Western defense of Trieste as a strategic port and Republican Italy's claims over re-annexing her, while developing a new international identity as a Western and European democracy after the collapse of her past Liberal and Fascist imperialisms. Trieste became a key propaganda battleground between Western democracy and Communism (by Yugoslav and Italian communists), while influencing the historical 1948 Italian elections, where the Anglo-Americans Tripartite Declaration (20 March 1948) liberally promised to revise the 1947 Peace Treaty and re-annexing to Republican

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part IV, idem.

Italy both Trieste/Zone A and Zone B under Yugoslavia. At the same time, Tito strove to enhance his international Communist leadership in Europe by supporting Greek Communists in that country's civil war (1944-48) and Belgrade's regional "hegemony" in a broad communist Balkan Federation (Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania and Greece) to finally eliminate all historical ethnic-territorial clashes of yore between these members (Kosovo, Epirus, Thrace, Macedonia). However, Stalin rejected openly such communist Balkan Federation, which undermined his own parallel Soviet regional hegemony over the Danubian-Balkans Europe, while opposing Tito's quest to elevate himself as the equal to Stalin within the communist world. The ensuing 1948 Yugo-Soviet Split left Stalin in full charge of Eastern Europe and communist bloc, with Yugoslavia expelled and besieged economically and ideologico-politically as "deviationist". Surviving assassination attempts and internal opposition, Tito was forced to open to the West, and received secret assurances of non-invasion from the Anglo-Americans, assurance that Yugoslavia would remain communist, and arms for defense to prevent the USSR from returning to the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas.<sup>1</sup>

As Yugoslavia turned into a communist, but pro-Western strategic "buffer zone" in the Adriatic/Western Balkans, Tito ceased all support for Greece's communist revolt (crushed by 1949) and lost control over Albania whose Communist leader Enver Hoxha tied himself to Moscow to survive any Titoist annexation. Over the 1940s-50s, Tito worked with the U.S. to help stabilize the lower Balkans against the Soviet communist threat by forging in 1953 a pro-Western 20-years military assistance Balkan Pact (Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey), indirectly tied to NATO (Greece and Turkey joined in 1952), although briefly flirting back to the Soviet Bloc after Stalin's death in 1954-56. However, Yugoslavia's pro-Western switch only aggravated the Trieste conundrum: Rome's Christian-Democrat governments never dropped their anti-Yugoslav hostility over Trieste, while the Anglo-Americans now flipped-flopped in their earlier promises to recover Trieste and assumed a strictly neutral posture between Italy as a democratic NATO Ally since 1949 vs. non-aligned Communist Yugoslavia, to the deep chagrin of the Italian population and governments. The Anglo-Americans also sought to leave soon their control of Trieste and modified their 1948 Tripartite Declaration by making its future conditional only on a consensual bilateral Rome-Belgrade accord, not on any Western military-economic aid or pressures on Yugoslavia. In this changed context, the fragile Italian governments responded to Anglo-American pressures to start bilateral talks with Yugoslavia in 1951-53, where Rome retreated to her failed 1947 "continuous ethnic line" principle to claim Trieste and Yugoslav-controlled Zone B over ethnic Italian coastal Istria, which was rejected by Tito, equally weak politically at home, who feared that any concession would enflame Slovene-Croat internal oppositions and lead to his ouster. The Anglo-Americans then sought to force a resolution by announcing in October 1953 a *de facto* partition: Trieste and Zone A would be evacuated and returned to Italy, while Zone B remained to Yugoslavia. Instead, Belgrade's violent threats to invade Trieste if Italian troops entered the irredentist city forced the Anglo-Americans to postpone and negotiate with both Rome and Belgrade the London Memorandum compromise (5 October 1954), with withdrawal of Allied troops and only administrative transfer of Zone A to Italy and Zone B to Yugoslavia until a later official accord. Such stabilization of the tense Italo-Yugoslav border helped especially Tito keep his ill-begotten conquests and strengthen his control over the entire country, which he transformed into a federation, while focusing his defenses against the USSR's Communist satellites in the Balkans, instead of a two-fronts confrontation against the USSR and Italy. The Italo-Yugoslav 1955 Udine Accord started 20 years of intense economico-cultural ties in the 1950s-60s (Italy became Yugoslavia's main importer and second exported after Germany), despite persisting bilateral politico-diplomatic coldness.

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<sup>1</sup> Massimo Bucarelli, *Mussolini e la Jugoslavia, 1922-1939* (Bari: 2006); Massimo Bucarelli, *La Questione Jugoslava nella Politica Estera dell'Italia Repubblicana, 1945-1999* (Roma: 2008); Massimo Bucarelli, *Un'Amicizia Tardiva: la Politica Jugoslava dell'Italia Repubblicana, 1945-92* in *Academia* (2008): [https://www.academia.edu/4440836/La\\_questione\\_jugoslava\\_nella\\_politica\\_estera\\_dell'Italia\\_repubblicana](https://www.academia.edu/4440836/La_questione_jugoslava_nella_politica_estera_dell'Italia_repubblicana) ; Rimaneli, *Italy between Europe and Mediterranean*, idem, Part IV.

In 1963-68, Italian Centre-Left governments (mainly D.C. and Socialists) under D.C. Premier and Foreign Minister Aldo Moro sought to give Italy back some increased diplomatic autonomy within the West, NATO and E.C. by promoting closer political ties with Belgrade to solve the Trieste issue and so provide Rome a peaceful path for renewed economic penetration of the Adriatic/West Balkans by turning Yugoslavia into Italy's mutually-beneficial economically-integrated *Hinterland*, while preserving Belgrade's independence as a vital "buffer zone" against the Soviet/Warsaw Pact threat. The D.C.'s Left-wing (Fanfani, Gronchi and Moro) used to be "neutralist"-oriented in late-1940s compared to the ruling Euro-Atlanticist Premier Alcide De Gasperi who brought Italy within NATO and European Community, and now in the 1960s further advocated closer political Italo-Yugoslav ties as spring-board into the Non-Aligned Third World to reshape Italy's international image and influence beyond her Cold War Western limits, while openly joining Belgrade's and Non-Aligned criticism of U.S. support of Israel and involvement in the Second Viet-Nam War promoting instead East-West arms-control and *Détente*. However, Tito's non-Alignment was threatened abroad and at home. Abroad, the August 1968 Soviet-Warsaw Pact invasion of communist-reformist Czechoslovakia and repressive "Brezhnev Doctrine" of limited Communist sovereignty to prevent any future disaggregation of the Soviet Bloc, which could be turned against a politically-weak Tito to crush his independent communist experiment. At the same moment at home a severe domestic economic crisis revamped ethno-nationalisms among Slovenes (since 1966) and Croats (violent demonstrations in 1969-71, which deeply undermined national cohesion), followed by ethnic claims among Kosovar-Albanians, Hungarians and Macedonians (itself a source of renewed ethnic tensions since 1968 with Soviet Bulgaria). At home Tito introduced reforms to decentralize powers to the Federation's six states and two autonomous provinces, while deeply fearing that domestic turmoil would entice a possible Soviet/Warsaw Pact invasion to reabsorb Yugoslavia in the Soviet Bloc through the "Brezhnev Doctrine". But Tito could not redeploy all his military to the eastern borders against the abroad threat of a Warsaw Pact invasion, for fear that Italy might too invade Yugoslavia's western borders to regain the *Irredenta*. Since November 1965, Italian Premier Moro was the first to visit Yugoslavia and secured the return visit of the Yugoslav Federal Head Mika Spiljak in January 1968. Now fearing a Soviet/Warsaw Pact invasion of Yugoslavia all the way to the border with Trieste and Gorizia, the Italian government on 2 September 1968 secretly reached out to pledge Rome's complete non-involvement against Yugoslavia's borders freeing Tito to redeploy his troops as deterrent against the Soviets, while retraining them to fight guerrilla warfare if defeated in a World War III scenario.<sup>1</sup>

Rome's non-intervention guarantee on behalf of Yugoslavia's independence unfroze bilateral political relations, followed by the visits to Belgrade in May and October 1969 of the Italian Foreign Minister Pietro Nenni (old Socialist revolutionary) and President of the Republic Giuseppe Saragat (Social-Democrat), all proponent of the new Italian diplomatic vision that the country's "true" borders and national security were not on the Isonzo River with Yugoslavia, but were "shared" on Yugoslavia's eastern borders facing the communist Balkans. Moro's return as Foreign Minister in late-1969 sought to use the East-West international relaxation of tensions (*Ostpolitik* and *Détente*) to expand Italy's role in relaunching regional Adriatic/West Balkans stabilization with Austria and Yugoslavia through Moro's "Italian Doctrine of Peace" U.N. speech (October 1969) to overcome old Great Power imperialisms and Cold War bipolar divisiveness with a new European and multipolar international system based on peace, equality and solidarity. On one hand, Moro's regional stabilization with Austria over the German minority autonomy in Süd Tirol (annexed by Italy since 1919) revolved on granting full local bilingual autonomy and minority protection (*Pacchetto*) to quell local German secessionist terrorism. On the other, Moro relaunched bilateral talks to officially partition the old Trieste Zones in gradual and secret talks as part of a broader bilateral politico-economic regional treaty, while Belgrade insisted instead on an immediate limited territorial stabilization. These diplomatico-political divergences reflected the respective countries' deep domestic political weakness

<sup>1</sup> Bucarelli, *Questione Jugoslava e Politica Estera dell'Italia Repubblicana, 1945-99*, idem; Bucarelli, *Amicizia Tardiva: Politica Jugoslava dell'Italia Repubblicana, 1945-92*, idem; Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, idem, Part IV.

(Moro wanted a comprehensive treaty to persuade a hostile Italian opinion and opposition Right parties that he was not abandoning Trieste's Zone B to Yugoslavia as he indeed was following the post-war *status quo*, while Tito too could not bear further Slovene and Croat anti-government protests if it appeared that Italy had regained even a fraction of lost irredentist lands in Zone B). Finally, Moro's "Italian Doctrine of Peace" within the context of East-West *Détente* would slowly influence domestically the Italian communist party to sever its loyalty to Moscow and gradually strengthen the Centre-Left government overcome domestic economic crises and the mounting destabilization of "Black (Nazi) and "Red" (ultra-Communist) terrorisms.

However, after two years of secret inconclusive diplomatic talks (1969-70), Belgrade suddenly postponed Tito's state visit to Italy in November 1970 to force Rome into immediate concessions over Trieste's contentious Zones to play at home such international success and defuse renewed Yugoslav minority tensions (now in Macedonia and Kosovo). To solve this new crisis, Moro relaunched bilateral talks (Venice Foreign Affairs Meeting, 9 February 1971) and reconfirmed Italy's respect of the London Agreement, while securing Tito's state visit on March 1971. Yet, Yugoslavia always demanded immediate Italian official recognition of Belgrade's *de facto* annexation of the B Zone, to prevent any residual negotiating concessions to Rome in the ensuing bilateral treaty. Further, Belgrade kept pressing Italy for Yugoslav outreach to the Italian Slovene minorities of Gorizia and Udine, which of course was strongly opposed by Rome. But any Italo-Yugoslav cooperation was still resisted in Italy by the Right and local DC in Trieste, while secret talks in 1971-74 were running against rising domestic instability in Italy (3 revolving governments, anticipated elections, Black and Red terrorisms) and Yugoslavia (where many local Croat, Slovene and Serb leaders) were sacked because they failed to implement reforms without also sparking renewed ethnic rivalries). Secret talks stopped and resumed in 1973 with the mutual goal to apply the peace treaty and formalize the territorial border based on the old London *Memorandum*, plus minorities' protections and increase of trade ties through Trieste and Fiume. However, Belgrade in 1974 cut-off bilateral secret talks after 6 years of inconclusive negotiations (1968-74), while blaming Italy as "diplomatically inconclusive". Belgrade feared that Italy was delaying a final decision on purpose to exploit either any future internal crisis in Yugoslavia or a foreign threat like the 1968 Soviet-Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, so it unilaterally established official national borders with Italy by officially annexing the B Zone. Italy's strong diplomatic response only confirmed Belgrade's suspicions, while bilateral relations deteriorated. In 1974 Italy restarted secret contacts and accepted not to claim any minimal territorial concessions and to base the future bilateral treaty exclusively on economic-trade relations, including a bilateral free-trade zone next to Trieste as an international port. Thus, the Osimo Treaty (10 November 1975) was approved domestically, but still strongly opposed in Trieste where the free-trade zone was feared as another "tool" of imminent Yugoslav penetration.<sup>1</sup>

Then, as bilateral Italo-Yugoslav relations flourished, Italian governments in 1975-91 increasingly relied on Belgrade's assistance and cooperation to expand Rome's new dynamic regional Adriatic/Balkan policies: 1) the "Alps-Adria Community" (Venice, 20 November 1978) allowed Italy to expand regional economic-social-cultural cooperation by linking the border areas between Italy (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Trentino, Südtirol, Lombardy), Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Croatia), Austria (Kärnten, Styria, Austria Superior, Salzburg), Germany (Bavaria) and Hungary (Győr-Sopron, Vas, Somogy, Zala), to overcome decades of ethnic rivalries and cross the East-West Cold War divides between NATO, Warsaw Pact, European Community and Communist COMECON. Top Italian Christian Democrat and government leaders planned to use the "Alps Adria Community" as their vital tool to reinsert Italy's politico-economic role within a cooperative and friendly East-European/Adriatic region to stabilize the Adriatic Sea as common trade route via Trieste for Italy, Yugoslavia, Austria, Hungary and southern Germany. However, this informal regional coordination

<sup>1</sup> Bucarelli, *Questione Jugoslava e Politica Estera Italia Repubblicana, 1945-99*, idem; Bucarelli, *Amicizia Tardiva: Politica Jugoslava e Italia Repubblicana, 1945-92*, idem; M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, idem, Part IV.

between minor regions was strongest in building socio-cultural and political ties, but lacked the necessary official inter-governmental and legal ties to strengthen regional cooperation.

- 2) Domestically controversial Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis sought to enhance both his political stature and the country's foreign status by launching the "Adriatic Initiative" (September 1989) to transform that semi-inner sea into a common economic resource for the entire historical Adriatic/Western Balkans region.
- 3) De Michelis then launched a Central-European "Quadrilateral Community" (Budapest November 1989) as a political bridge in the wake of the 1989 East European democratic revolutions by tying together politically and economically Euro-Atlantic Italy, neutral Europeanist Austria, non-Aligned Yugoslavia and Warsaw Pact communist-reformist Hungary to jointly navigate the end of the Cold War. Italy's "Quadrilateral Community" quickly expanded to Czechoslovakia, Poland and other countries, becoming by mid-1990s the "Central-European Initiative" with national politico-economic cooperation aims extended to all states in the entire Adriatic and Danubian-Balkans region to bridge the 45-years-long Cold War divide in Europe and consolidate democratic institutions for ex-Soviet Bloc satellites.
- 4) De Michelis also promoted a new regional "Centre-South Adriatic Labour Community" tying both sides of the sea through all Yugoslav states (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, Vojvodina, Kosovo) with Italy's counterpart regions (Emilia-Romagna, Marche, Abruzzo, Molise e Puglia) to strengthen Adriatic cooperation.
- 5) Italy's "Adriatic Sea Declaration" on against regional pollution was the last effort, bringing together Italia, Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania. However, such Adriatic community quickly dissolved in the general collapse of Yugoslavia in five civil wars during the 1990s.<sup>1</sup>

Rome's renewed diplomatic dynamism in the Adriatic/Balkans/Danube sought to attain three key goals during *Détente* and post-Cold War:

- 1) to strengthen regional stability and integration between Western and ex-Communist states, while relaunching Italy's international role as vital reference point for all East European states to integrate in the European Community (E.C.);
- 2) to contain Germany's politico-economic return to the Balkans region and Eastern Europe;
- 3) seek to prevent through Italy's new regional integration ("Adriatic Community" and "Central-European Initiative") and politico-economic liberalization the impending collapse of Yugoslavia since the late-1980s, while trying to diplomatically help in 1990-91 Belgrade survive its internal crisis and prevent a regional slide into chaos.

Indeed, Rome strongly opposed the 25 June 1991 declaration of independence of Slovenia and Croatia against Serbia's control of the Yugoslav Federation and her nationalist suppression of autonomy in Kosovo and Vojvodina. Thus, Italian Foreign Minister De Michelis again got involved into convincing Slovenes and Croats to briefly suspend their declaration of independence to allow Italy to seek a comprehensive mediated solution to the Yugoslav crisis through a E.C. Tripartite Commission ("European *Troika*"), which also forced a ceasefire in Slovenia where the Yugoslav Army had been opposed by the local self-defense forces and population's independentist revolt. This became the "European *Troika*" Brioni Compromise (7 July 1991), but the Yugoslav Army's escalation of fighting in Croatia (1991-92) and later Bosnia (1993-95) undermined the E.C. mediation push, while splitting the Europeans between the Vatican (September-December 1991) and Germany (November-December 1991) recognizing Slovenia and Croatia as independent vs. Italy, France and Great Britain opposing this and the disintegration of Yugoslavia to prevent also a slide towards independence for Bosnia and Macedonia. Then following Germany's lead, the E.C. on mid-December 1991 unanimously agreed to recognize these new independent states by mid-January 1992 (including Italy, whose change of position reflected her efforts to retie Germany back into a

<sup>1</sup> Bucarelli, *Questione Jugoslava nella Politica Estera dell'Italia Repubblicana, 1945-99*, idem; Bucarelli, *Amicizia Tardiva: Politica Jugoslava dell'Italia Repubblicana, 1945-92*, idem.

united E.C. diplomatic effort, fearing that otherwise Germany would quit the E.C. and clash with Italy for influence over the changing Adriatic/Balkans region). Rome's pro-Yugoslav position until late-1991 was also strongly criticized at home and in the "Alps-Adria Community" where Slovene and North Italian provinces had long cooperated and no jointly jettisoned keeping Yugoslavia's territorial integrity.

Thus, Yugoslavia's 1990s collapse in five civil wars suddenly erased Italy's First Republic final politico-diplomatic strategy since Moro's 1960s Plan and 1975 Osimo Treaty to penetrate through Yugoslavia an Adriatic/Balkans/Danubian area in transition from Communism oppression to Western democracy and Euro-Atlantic integration, and so revive Rome's prestige as the region's vital Power to help integrate these post-Communist states into the E.C. and NATO. This had been Italy's constant goal from 1870s to 2000s, through either diplomatic, or economic, or imperialist, or military strategies, both sequential and complementary, but all in the end elusive and failing in lasting results, due to Italy's military-economic Power differential compared to Germany, France, Great Britain or Russia/USSR, and traditionally uncoordinated Grand Strategy since her national unification. Worst, in the Post-Cold War the domestic political collapse of Italy's First Republic in 1992 under widespread corruption scandals for illegal election financing, decapitated all existing parties and leaders, leaving the country rudderless internationally during her transition to an equally weak Second Republic (1992-current) in the midst of the Yugoslav Civil Wars and the dual enlargements of the E.U. and NATO.<sup>1</sup>

Again in the Adriatic/Balkans region during the Post-Cold War (1990-current), Italy was able to mask her weakness by exclusively operation within the traditional international institutions she had favoured since the Cold War through high military engagement as "Front Line" logistics and second-largest air-naval support to U.N., NATO and E.U. peacekeeping in the Balkans (Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Albania), while being the second-largest peacekeeping land-force in most U.S. *ad hoc* coalitions:

- a) the 1990s ex-Yugoslav Civil Wars over Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia by supporting U.N. Protection Force peacekeepers (UNPROFOR) and NATO air-naval sanctions blockade;
- b) Bosnia and Croatia with NATO's Implementation Force peacekeepers (IFOR, 1994-95), then as Stabilisation Force (SFOR, 1995-2004) and follow-up E.U. Force (EUFOR, 2004-current);
- c) Albania with NATO's Multinational Protection Force (MPF/AMF-L), renamed Albania Force (AFOR, 1999);
- d) Kosovo with NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR, 1999-current).

Equally significant, despite domestic political divisiveness, has been Italy's politico-military commitment to also joined for the first time since World War II "Out-of-Area" NATO and U.S. Coalition strikes in the Post-Cold War in the Mediterranean to support the U.S.-NATO air-strikes against Libya's Ghaddafi during his "Arab Spring" civil war in 2012-13; in the Gulf against Iraq in the First Gulf War (1990-91) and Second Gulf War (2003), followed by U.S.-Coalition peacekeeping in Iraq until 2006; and in Afghanistan with NATO's "International Security Assistance Force" (ISAF, 2001-2014) and follow-up "Resolute Support Mission" (RSM, 2015-2021).<sup>2</sup>

Another important venue for Italy's return to the Balkans and East Mediterranean has been during the Cold War her marginal diplomatic support for NATO Enlargements to new European East Mediterranean rivals (Greece, Turkey, Spain, Albania) to Post-Cold War ex-enemies in East Europe/Balkans (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Albania, Romania, Montenegro, Bulgaria, North Macedonia), as well as more active support for E.C./E.U. pan-European politico-economic integration and Enlargements during the Cold War for her same Post-Cold War ex-enemies in East Europe/Balkans and ex-rivals in the Mediterranean (plus Malta and Cyprus, while retaining a non-committal position towards Turkey's future entry in the E.U.). In this context Italy's marginal diplomatic role towards NATO/E.U. dual Enlargements during the Post-Cold War was primarily focused on a case-by-case basis in three tiers: 1) a First Tier with Partners/Aspirants/Allies in NATO and E.U., with strongest

<sup>1</sup> Bucarelli, *Questione Jugoslava nella Politica Estera dell'Italia Repubblicana, 1945-99*, idem; Bucarelli, *Amicizia Tardiva: Politica Jugoslava dell'Italia Repubblicana, 1945-92*, idem; Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe and Mediterranean*, idem, Part IV; Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO & International Security*, idem.

<sup>2</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, Part IV, idem.



support towards her old Axis area-of-influence in the Adriatic/Balkans and East Mediterranean (but without old malice or any secret dreams of regional control to enhance her own role within either the Alliance or Europe); 2) a Second Tier with Partners/Aspirants/Allies in NATO and E.U., with secondary marginal support towards the West Mediterranean and East Europe; 3) a Third Tier with mismatched/uncommitted Partners/Aspirants in NATO and/or E.U., with strong-to-marginal support towards mismatched/uncommitted Partners/Aspirants in NATO and E.U. from the East Mediterranean and Balkans (see below in details).

1) First Tier Partners/Aspirants/Allies in NATO and E.U.:

- Greece (1952 Ally; 1980 E.U. state)—After being invaded in World War II (1939-45) by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, British forces replaced the retreating Germans by 1944, helping the Greek government fight against Greek Communist partisans in Athens and the mountains. During the Cold War (1946-90) the U.S. 1947 Truman Doctrine of containment against the Soviet Union (USSR) was crafted to help Greece and Turkey with direct military assistance and defense, leading to the Communist rebels' defeat in 1949. Greece joined in 1945 the U.N. and by 1952 also NATO under U.S. pressure, sealing-off the USSR from the Mediterranean, while Italy supported such Atlantic enlargement, given her subordination to the U.S. and fear of a Soviet invasion. Joint membership in NATO erased the stigma of past Fascist imperialism, while promoting democratic cooperation between Italy and Greece. Tensions at home against leftists led to the 1967 Colonels' Coup and military dictatorship forcing the king to flee, while tensions with Turkey over Greek aims to annex Cyprus led to two Cypriot Crises in 1965 and 1974, which forced Greece to back-down and the military junta to fall, while Turkey remained in control of Northern Cyprus. As a democratic republic Greece joined the European Community/Union (E.C./E.U.) in 1981, while the freeze in Greek military ties with NATO, U.S. and Turkey were slowly patched-up in the 1980s-90s. As the modern Italian Navy reemerged in the 1970s to support the U.S. Sixth Fleet and replace the withdrawing British Royal Navy, Italy increased her military cooperation with Greece as Allies in the East Mediterranean, and was also a supporting E.C. member that co-sponsored Greece's integration in the E.C. in 1980. More recently, in 2020-21, Italy together with France has dispatched few warships back into the East Mediterranean to protect Athens' interests in developing underwater oil exploration and drilling from escalating choreographed threats from Turkey against Greek territorial integrity as a way to secure a cut in any future profits.<sup>1</sup>
- Hungary (1994 Partner; 1997 Aspirant; 1999 Ally; 2002-04 E.U. state)—An Axis ally of Fascist Italy in World War II, Hungary was devastated by the invading USSR, losing all lands annexed in 1939-41. During the Cold War (1946-90), Hungary became a Soviet Communist satellite state within the Warsaw Pact, poised to follow in a World War III invading Soviet forces against the West and NATO through "neutral" Austria and Yugoslavia to reach Italy. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchëv's "de-Stalinization" campaign of 1955-56 sparked the massive anti-communist 1956 Hungarian Revolution egged on also by U.S.-Western propaganda, but once a new Soviet military repression crushed Hungary with tens of thousands of death and 100,000 refugees streaming in Austria, NATO and U.S. refused to rescue for fear of unleashing World War III. Hungary regained its democratic freedom only by late-1989 through the peaceful 1989 East European Revolutions hastening the collapse of Soviet/Warsaw Pact authority in East Europe in 1989-90. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland formed the Visegrad-3 Group to petition NATO entry since 1990, but were rebuffed by the U.S., while integrated in the West. Hungary joined as a Partner in 1990 NATO's North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NAC-C) and in 1995 its Partnership for Peace with peacekeeping in Bosnia and Kosovo. Hungary joined NATO's First Enlargement with the Czech Republic and Poland, and in 2002-04 the E.U., in both organizations with key support of Italy.

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; "Fact Sheets on the European Union" in *European Parliament*: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/home>

- Slovenia (1994 Partner; 1997 Aspirant; 2002 Ally; 2002-04 E.U. state)—At the end of World War II, communist Yugoslav partisans under Marshal Broz Tito reunited Slovenia to a federal communist Yugoslavia tied to the USSR, while ethnically-cleansing the Italian population of Istria, which was split between Croatia and Slovenia. Tito and Soviet Leader Josef Stalin soon clashed with the 1948 Yugo-Soviet Split, and Tito survived on Western support and domestic repressions of both secessionist Croats and pro-Soviet Stalinists Serbs. During the Cold War (1946-91) Slovenia and Croatia were considered the likely routes for a Soviet/Warsaw Pact invasion of both Yugoslavia, and along the Gorizia Gap against Italy and NATO. The end of the Cold War in 1990 and collapse of the Soviet/Warsaw Pact control of East Europe led Slovenia, dissatisfied with power being monopolized by the majority Serbs, to seceded and became independent on 25 June 1991 after a short 10-day war against the Yugoslav Army, who retreated once its supply lines risked being cut-off by the impending independence of Croatia (1991) and Bosnia (1992) from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. Serb minorities committed widespread ethnic-cleansing with hundreds of thousands of deaths, rapes and refugees in the region until the Dayton Peace Accords (November 1995) reversed Serb expansionism. Slovenia has since integrated in the West by joining in 1995 NATO's Partnership for Peace and peacekeeping. Slovenia was rejected from NATO's First Enlargement of 1997-99 because it had failed to develop autonomous NATO-integrated forces, hoping to rely just on its geo-strategic location. Only when NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP) civil-military reforms were adopted and Slovenia provided logistical support for NATO also during the 1999 Kosovo War, was Ljubljana finally accepted in 2002-04 both in NATO and E.U. with a Second Enlargement with the strong support of Italy.<sup>1</sup>
- Romania (1994 Partner; 1997 Aspirant; 2002 Ally; 2007 E.U. state)—In World War II Romania's Axis alliance did not spare it major border changes: Berlin imposed that Hungarian Northern Transylvania rejoin Hungary, while North Buchovina and Bessarabia went to the USSR in the secret 1939 Nazi-Soviet Molotov-von Ribbentrop Pact. But with the Nazi Germany and Axis invasion of the USSR in June 1941, Romania reannexed Bessarabia and North Buchovina, plus Ukraine's Prut area. By 1944 the USSR defeated the Axis and invaded Romania, turning it into a communist satellite republic in 1945-48, while re-annexing North Buchovina to Ukraine and turning Bessarabia in the Soviet republic of Moldova. In the Warsaw Pact since 1955, Romania provided logistics and forces against NATO for any World War III Soviet/Warsaw Pact invasion of "neutral" Yugoslavia in the west to support the main thrust against Italy, and in the south backing Bulgaria to conquer the geo-strategic Turkish Straits and Greece. Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu ruled Romania in 1965-89 oppressively, while becoming increasingly independent from the USSR. The collapse of Soviet rule during the 1989 East European Revolutions was peaceful in all satellites, except Romania where a brief, bloody anti-communist civil war left also Ceausescu dead. Under an ex-Communist government in 1990-96, Romania suffered rampant corruption, and lagging economic and democratic reforms, which denied it the semi-agreed inclusion in NATO's First Enlargement (1997-99) to three East European ex-satellites. Romania joined in 1990 NATO's North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NAC-C); in 1994 NATO's Partnership for Peace, while militarily helping NATO against Serbia in 1995 and 1998 over the civil wars in Bosnia and Kosovo and NATO peacekeeping. Under NATO's MAPs its Second Enlargement included Romania and six East European Aspirants joining NATO in 2002-04, and in 2007 the E.U. with strong support of Italy, but talks on ethnic merger with Moldova are on hold.
- Bulgaria (1995 Partner; 1997 Aspirant; 2004 Ally; 2007 E.U. state)—Fascist Italy in 1920s-30s sought to influence Bulgaria once it became an authoritarian state through economic penetration and political support of Sofia's ethnic claims on lost lands. But Fascist Italy's influence was marginalized when Bulgaria became an Axis satellite of Nazi Germany and in World War II it reconquered North Macedonia and West Trace. Bulgaria in 1943-44 with most other Axis satellites twice secretly offered to switch political support

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimaneli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; "Fact Sheets on European Union", idem.

to Fascist Italy if Mussolini did sway Hitler to accept an armistice with the Allies, but the *Duce* lost his nerves, failed to regain Balkan influence and his country collapsed in war. Bulgaria too collapsed and was invaded by the USSR in late-1944. In the Cold War she became a communist republic and the second-most loyal Soviet satellite and Warsaw Pact member, poised to strike Yugoslavia, Turkish Straits and Greece in case of World War III against NATO. Atlantic Italy under Christian-Democrats government coalitions renewed only trade and diplomatic relations since the 1960s-70s on the basis of East-West peaceful coexistence and economic cooperation with Bulgaria and the Communist Bloc. In the late-1980s Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachëv's reforms were adopted also in Bulgaria, but as local standards of living collapsed into crisis, and in the absence of Soviet military repression, popular resentment and huge anti-government demonstrations in November 1989-August 1990 brought her to democracy. Bulgaria since 1990 joined the Visegrad-12 Group of East European ex-satellites quickly seeking to join the West since 1990, NATO's Partnership for Peace in 1995, NATO's 2002-04 Second Enlargement and E.U.'s 2007 Enlargement, while supporting NATO-E.U. peacekeeping in the ex-Yugoslavia and 1999 Kosovo War. As a NATO-E.U. member, Italy lent her minimalist diplomatic support to Bulgaria's dual memberships, yet the influence of Germany and U.S. remain politico-economic dominant in the Balkans until in the 2020s.

- Malta (1994 Partner; 2002-04 E.U. state)—Malta and Gibraltar were the main naval bases for the British Mediterranean Fleet since the 1800s. In 1881 Italy's plans to annex Tunisia south of Sicily and Malta were preempted by France seizing it, while Great Britain who normally had favored Italy against France now sided with Paris to prevent the same power (Italy) from controlling both sides of the Sicilian Channel and so threaten also Malta on which Italy had also claims. By World War I (1914-18) the Allies feared the locally-superior Triple Alliance navies under Italy, Austria-Hungary and Germany, and their possible conquest of Malta, but Italy's neutrality in 1914-15 and switch to the Allies' side shifted naval warfare to the Adriatic and Aegean Seas and Turkish Straits. In World War II Malta was isolated and bombed by Fascist Italy who wanted to annex it, but Axis plans aborted leaving Malta as a vital British air-base raiding Axis convoys to North Africa. In the Cold War (1946-90) it was an air-naval base for NATO in anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and Western convoy protection against the USSR in case of World War III, but after its independence in 1964 as a Commonwealth member its NATO military role waned and by 1975 Great Britain disbanded the Mediterranean Fleet and left Malta. But Libyan and Soviet attempts to control Malta, compared to U.S.-NATO indifference forced Italy to intervene in 1977 guaranteeing Malta's "neutrality" and defense against any threat. By 1985 Malta became a freight trans-shipment and tourist-financial center. As a pro-Western state Malta joined in 1994 NATO's Partnership for Peace/Mediterranean Dialogue and in 2002-04 the E.U., with strong support of Italy in both organizations.<sup>1</sup>
- Cyprus (1994 Partner; 2002-04 E.U. state)—A Greek-speaking island, it was conquered by the Venetian Republic in the Middle Ages and then by the Ottoman-Turkish Empire in the 1500s, and finally ceded as "compensation" to Great Britain in 1878 for British protection against Russia. London held to Cyprus as a key naval base in the Mediterranean against: Russia in the late-1800s; Turkey in World War I (1914-18); the Axis in World War II once Nazi Germany with Fascist Italy conquered Greece and Crete, and Italy's Navy challenged the Royal Navy; and the Soviet Union (USSR) during the Cold War. London finally imposed independence on 16 August 1960 to prevent the majority Greek-Cypriot population from merging with Greece and to retain its large British military bases vital also to NATO. Cyprus' independence included a power-sharing deal between the Greek-Cypriot majority and the Turkish-Cypriot minority, plus a pledge never to unite with either Greece or Turkey to eliminate fears of both rival ethnic groups, under a Treaty of Guarantee between Greece, Turkey, Cyprus and Great Britain. But inter-ethnic violence in Cyprus between Greeks and Turks in mid-1960s threatened relations

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; "Fact Sheets on European Union", idem.

among the two NATO Allies. U.S.-NATO pressures kept both Turkey and Greece at bay, while British peacekeeping with the U.N. Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) initially defused the crisis. Then in 1974, a Greek-Cypriot nationalist pro-annexation (*Enosis*) coup backed by Greece's Fascist military dictatorship provoked Turkey to invoke its treaty obligations and launch a massive military invasion seizing 37% of Northern Cyprus, while British peacekeepers could play only a limited role as buffer within the split island. This Second Cypriot Crisis led to the collapse of the sponsoring Greece's Fascist military régime and a freeze in relations between Greece with both Turkey and NATO because the Alliance had not intervened, while the two countries were in a state of near-war. Furthermore, bilateral tensions were tense since Turkish-Cypriot ruler Rauf Denktasch's declared independence of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" on 15 November 1983—recognized only by Turkey—and declared in 1994 that all 1600 Greek-Cypriot prisoners kept by the Turkish military since 1974 were dead. The international condemnation of Turkish occupation of the divided island's north remained a major thorn within NATO and the E.U., as the Turkish Cypriots self-declared independent state in the north is unrecognized by the U.N. and world community, but guaranteed by Turkey. In 2002-04 the U.N. held direct talks between the two sides for a settlement and joint, federal application to join the E.U. Both sides publicly supported a settlement, but remain split on either a federation (Greek-Cypriot view) or loose confederation (Turkish-Cypriot view). Decades of rejection by the secessionists Turkish-Cypriots of federal reunification condemned them to chronic impoverishment without international tourism, while Turkey's hopes to join the E.U. in the future forced the Turkish-Cypriots to accept a U.N.-E.U. federative plan, but the unity referendum (April 2004) was rejected by Greek-Cypriots who joined the E.U. alone.<sup>1</sup>

- Croatia (1994 Partner; 2001 Aspirant; 2007 Ally; 2013 E.U. state)—By World War II, Yugoslavia was pressured by both Nazi Germany and Great Britain to join their side, until a pro-British coup reversed the pro-German Axis alliance in 1941. The Axis invaded and destroyed Yugoslavia in spring 1941, creating an independent Axis Croatia under the *Ustaschas* who sought to ethnically- cleanse Serb-populated Krajina. After the war, communist Yugoslav partisans under Marshal Broz Tito reunited the country as a federal communist Yugoslavia tied to the USSR, while executing the *Ustaschas* and ethnically-cleansing the Italian population of Istria and Dalmazia, which were annexed to Croatia. But Tito and Soviet Leader Josef Stalin clashed with the 1948 Yugo-Soviet Split, and Tito survived on Western aid and domestic repression of both secessionist Croats and pro-Soviet Serbs. During the Cold War (1946-91) Slovenia and Croatia were considered the likely routes for a Soviet/Warsaw Pact invasion of Yugoslavia and Italy against NATO. The end of the Cold War in 1990 and collapse of the Soviet/Warsaw Pact control of East Europe led Croatia, dissatisfied with power being monopolized by Serb-dominated Yugoslavia, to seceded after Slovenia became the first to seize independence on 25 June 1991 after a short 10-day war against the Yugoslav Army, who retreated as their supply lines risked being cut-off by the looming independence of Croatia (1991) and Bosnia (1992). During the 1991-2000 Yugoslav Civil Wars, Serb minorities in the new states with Yugoslav help fought to create a "Greater Serbia" including Croatia's Krajina (1991-95), suffering widespread ethnic-cleansing with hundreds of thousands of deaths, rapes and refugees in the region fleeing to Europe. Serb violence doomed all mediations by the E.C./E.U., U.N. and peacekeeping by the U.N. Protection Force in Bosnia (UNPROFOR) in 1992-95, which was supported by NATO with a U.N.-NATO "No-Fly Zone" over Croatia and Bosnia, plus sanctions and arms embargo to all sides. Croat dictator Franjo Tudjman alternatively fought against Serbia and sought its help in annexing the Bosnian-Croat areas in a secondary civil war with the Bosniaks. Eventually, in the summer of 1995 NATO conducted a short air-campaign in Bosnia in parallel with Croatia's reentry in the war, defeating Serb forces of the *Republika Srpska* in Bosnia and Krajina in Croatia, forcing them to sign with their enemies of the Bosnian Federation (the rival Muslim Bosniaks and Bosnian-Croats) the Dayton

<sup>1</sup> "Fact Sheets on European Union", idem; M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem.

Peace Accords (November 1995). Under U.N. supervision also the last Serb-held enclave in Eastern Slavonia was returned to Croatia in 1998, while Croatia provided logistical support for NATO during the 1999 Kosovo War. Since Tudjman's death in 2000, Croatia has sought entry in NATO and the E.U., becoming a Partner in 2001 and an Aspirant in the Vilnius-10 Group. But remained until 2007 a "Left-out" Aspirant for both organizations due to controversies with the International Tribunal on the ex-Yugoslavia with NATO-E.U.-U.N. support seeking extradition of alleged Croat war-criminals. Croatia joined NATO in 2007 and E.U. in 2013 in both organizations with strong support of Italy.

- Albania (1994 Partner; 1999 Aspirant; 2007 Ally; 2020 E.U. state)—Albania became independent on 28 November 1912 once Italy and Austria-Hungary blocked its seizure by Serbia who had also annexed Macedonia. In World War I (1914-18) Italy occupied Albania, but in 1920 local rebellions forced Italy to withdraw, leading to the January 1925 Albanian republic with Ahmet Zog as President, who became King Zog I by September 1928. Albania always remained threatened by both Yugoslavia and Fascist Italy, until Rome annexed it on 7 April 1939 and in World War II (1939-45) used it to launch the 1940-41 failed invasion of Greece. By spring 1941 Nazi Germany conquered Yugoslavia and Greece, and Italy annexed Yugoslavia's Kosovar-Albanians and Macedonian-Albanians to its "Greater Albania" province. The Allies' invasion of Italy in summer 1943 forced it to switch to their side, while Nazi Germany seized Albania until 29 November 1944. Under dictator Enver Hoxha, Albania became a Communist satellite state of the USSR and supported Josef Stalin against Yugoslavia during the 1948 Yugo-Soviet Split. As the USSR's totalitarian, isolated bastion on the Adriatic against NATO, Albania joined in 1955 both the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact and U.N. Yet, Hoxha opposed Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchëv's reforms and de-Stalinization, joining Communist China during the 1963 Sino-Soviet Split, until China itself opened to the West in the 1970s-80s abandoning Albania. Only after Hoxha's death, an isolated Albania finally became a pro-Western democracy on 29 April 1991, become a Partner of both NATO and the E.U. Albania helped U.N.-NATO sanctions against the ex-Yugoslavia in 1991-99, surveillance and air-strikes over Serb-controlled Bosnia in 1995. However, Albania was repeatedly rebuffed as an economically weak "Left-out" Aspirant from joining NATO and the E.U. during their 1999-2007 twin Enlargements. Albania's 1997 economico-political collapse was halted by an Italian-led Western Multinational Protection Force (MPF/FMP) in Operation Alba, later renamed Albania Force (AFOR) under NATO Command. Albania later supported NATO against Yugoslavia in the 1999 Kosovo War and Operations Essential Harvest, Amber Fox and Allied Harmony during the 2000 insurgency of Albanian-Macedonians. Albania cooperates to stop illegal migration from its coasts to Italy, while promoting its socio-economic development and future integration through NATO's MAPS and E.U. Stability Pact. Albania joined NATO in 2007 and E.U. in 2020, in both organizations with Italy's strong support.<sup>1</sup>
- Montenegro (1994 Partner; 1997 Aspirant; 2016 Ally; 2020 E.U. state)—Annexed to Serbia in 1913-14 and again to Serbia-Yugoslavia after World War I, Montenegro was briefly annexed to Fascist Italy in 1941-43 (to establish within the strategic context of a Greater Italy/"Grande Italia" a continuous Adriatic land-bridge from Italy's Istria and Dalmazia to Albania, as well as the fact that King Vittorio-Emanuele's wife was herself a Montenegrine Princess). In late-1944, Communist Yugoslav Partisans under Marshal Broz Tito reunited Montenegro in a federal Communist Yugoslavia state tied to the Soviet Union (USSR). After the 1990s Yugoslav Civil Wars, Montenegro was the last to become independent in 2010 in reaction to the complete defeat of "Greater Serbia". Montenegro became in 2010 a NATO Partner; joined NATO in 2016 and E.U. Aspirant, in both organizations with Italy's strong support.
- North Macedonia (1994 Partner; 1999 Aspirant; 2019 Ally; 2020 E.U. state)—In the Inter-Wars period (1919-39) Allied support merged Croats, Serbs, Montenegrins and Slovenes in a joint kingdom under Serbia, renamed in 1929 Yugoslavia, allied with France and member of the Little Entente (with Czechoslovakia and Romania), while in World War II (1939-45) Bulgaria joined the Axis and in 1941 with

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; "Fact Sheets on European Union", idem.

Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia invaded and dismembered Yugoslavia, with Macedonia to Bulgaria without its western Albanian lands annexed with Kosovo to Italy's Greater Albania. By late-1944, Communist Yugoslav Partisans under Marshal Broz Tito reunited Yugoslavia as a federal Communist state tied to the Soviet Union (USSR) until the 1948 Yugo-Soviet Split. The 1990-91 collapse of the Soviet/Warsaw Pact control of Eastern Europe led also to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, once Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia, dissatisfied with power being monopolized by the majority Serbs, seceded in 1991-92. Yet, international recognition of Macedonia's independence was delayed by Greece's trade blockade in 1991-95 to protest Skopje's use of the country's Hellenic name and symbols already used by Greece's Macedonia province. NATO, E.U. and U.N. used in the 1990s the artificial name of Former-Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) until in 1995 Greece lifted its trade blockade and normalized bilateral relations. Macedonia has integrated in the West by joining in 1993-95 the NATO's North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NAC-C) and Partnership for Peace and in 2000s the E.U. Stability Pact for the Balkans. Macedonia cooperates in NATO peacekeeping and is an Aspirant, but was rejected from NATO's First Enlargement of 1997-99 because it was too unstable and economico-militarily weak, hoping to rely just on its geo-strategic location to Salonika. NATO's MAP civil-military reforms were adopted since 1999 and Macedonia provided logistical support for NATO in the 1999 Kosovo War, but remained too politically unstable and split in a budding civil war to be able to join in 2002-04 either NATO's Second Enlargement or the E.U. Indeed, Macedonia's discriminated ethnic Albanians were galvanized into open insurgency and civil war in early-2001, following the example of Kosovo's Albanian insurgents. However, under joint pressure by NATO, OSCE and E.U., both Macedonian Slavs and rebel Albanians stopped fighting and signed the Skopje Peace Accord (13 August 2001) assuring internal reforms and political participation of the discriminated Albanian minority. NATO disarmed ethnic Albanian insurgents in 2001-03. To bypass Greek vetoes, North Macedonia finally joined NATO in 2019 and E.U. in 2020 with Italy's strong support.<sup>1</sup>

## 2) Second Tier Partners/Aspirants/Allies in NATO and E.U.:

- Spain (1952 Partner; 1981 Ally; 1986 E.U. state)—Spain's neutrality in World War I (1914-18) led to violent turmoil under a weak Leftist republic soon undermined in the devastating Spanish Civil War (1936-39): General Francisco Franco's *coup d'état* by Spanish Fascist forces was backed by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany against external government support by the Soviet Union, France and Great Britain. Franco's victory aligned Spain with the Axis, but again in World War II (1939-45) Madrid remained neutral hoping to exploit a forecasted Axis victory, then to shield the country from the vengeful Allies who in 1945 could only isolate Spain from joining in 1945 the U.N. and in 1949-50 NATO. Although spurned by NATO, Spain's bilateral alliance with the U.S. in 1952, which provided for its support of NATO in case of World War III against the USSR. International isolation against Franco's dictatorship challenged at home by Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) terrorism, ended only since his 1975 death transforming Spain into a democratic monarchy under King Juan-Carlos of Bourbon and the country's late-industrialization. As a Western country, Spain joined in 1955 the U.N., in 1976 the Conference/Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (C/OSCE), in 1981-82 NATO, and in 1986 the E.C./E.U. As part of EuroCorps, Spain's peacekeepers are in NATO, E.U. and U.N., while facing terrorism by ETA and Islamic groups (2002 Madrid attack by Al-Qaeda).<sup>2</sup>

## 3) Third Tier mismatched/uncommitted Partners/Aspirants in NATO and/or E.U.:

- Austria (1994 Partner; 1997 Aspirant; 1995 E.U. state)—Austria's crushing defeats during Italy's Unification (1848-70) and Germany's Unification under Prussia (1860s-70), forced it to create in 1867 a joint Austro-Hungarian kingdom (*Ausgleich*), while denying federative rights to Slavs, Romanians and Italians: Austria controlled Bohemia, Slovenia, Italian Provinces (Trentino, Friuli, Istria), Polish-Ukrainian Galicia and Bosnia; while Hungary-Transylvania ruled over Slovakia and Croatia. From 1870

<sup>1</sup> "Fact Sheets on European Union", idem; M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem.

<sup>2</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; "Fact Sheets on European Union", idem.

to World War I (1914-18), the Austro-Hungarian Empire's slow decline was shielded by the politico-hegemonic sway of Germany's alliances: the two *Dreikaiserbunds* (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, 1873-78, 1882-87) and Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, 1881-1914). Unable to stop domestic secessionism among its Slavic populations, or foreign enmities with Russia and Italy over the Balkans, led finally to World War I against the Entente-Allies (Belgium, France, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Romania, Russia and United States). Austria-Hungary's defeat led to the nationalist disintegration of its empire at the 1919 Versailles Peace Treaty, while the Allies twice prevented Austria from merging with Germany until the 1938 *Anschluss*. After World War II (1939-45) and Germany's demise, the Allies (France, Great Britain, USSR, U.S.A.) recreated an Austrian republic in 1945, but kept it split in four Allied Occupation Zones. During the Cold War (1946-90), France, Great Britain and U.S. merged their Occupation Zones of Austria and West Vienna, but the USSR held onto Eastern Austria and East Vienna until the 1955 Austrian State Neutrality Treaty traded the withdrawal of Soviet forces for the country's neutralization. The Kremlin wanted to prevent Austria from joining the U.S.-led anti-Soviet NATO or European integration organizations, but allowed its entry in the U.N. in 1955, while hoping to turn Austria into a model for a future "demilitarized" reunited and "neutralized" Germany to prevent West Germany from joining NATO in 1955. In the Cold War, Austria's official "neutrality" was paralleled by pro-Western diplomacy and secret accords to join the Alliance and have its Central Front and Italy's defenses military rescue Austria should the USSR invade in a possible World War III. After the Cold War in 1990 and USSR's collapse in 1991, Austria finally shed its "neutralism": in the 1990s Vienna became the headquarters of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in January 1995 it joined the E.U. and in February 1995 NATO's Partnership for Peace (in both organizations with Italy's strong support), cooperating in peacekeeping missions, including in 1995-2004 NATO-led peacekeeping in Bosnia with the Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilisation Force (SFOR), as well as the Kosovo Force (KFOR). Austria strengthens both the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and U.N. peacekeeping. Austria also supports NATO-E.U. anti-terrorism policies, arms control and non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

- Turkey (1952 Ally; 1964 E.C./E.U. Partner)—After defeating Greece in 1921 and forcing Allied Occupation forces out of Constantinople and the Turkish Straits, Turkey became a democratic republic under President Kemal Atatürk's path of Westernizing secularism and modernization. Neutral but pro-German in World War II (1939-45), Turkey sought Anglo-American protection against encroachments by the Soviet Union and during the Cold War (1946-90) receiving with Greece direct military aid by the U.S. in the 1947 Truman Doctrine and U.S. Sixth Fleet. In the Korean War (1950-53) Turkey joined the U.S.-U.N. coalition and in 1952 with Greece entered NATO to seal off the USSR from the Mediterranean, while as member of the 1954 Baghdad Pact's Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) it sealed the Soviet TransCaucasus and Central Asian borders by cooperating with the U.S., pro-Western Iran and Pakistan until CENTO's collapse in 1979. Thus, in any World War III scenario, economically-weak Turkey remained an essential geo-strategic member of NATO, despite its obsolescent military forces: if defense with Greece and the U.S. Sixth Fleet of the Turkish Straits could not prevent a Soviet/Warsaw Pact conquest of the area and Greece, Turkish forces could stop a parallel thrust by the USSR down the TransCaucasus and even link with Iran in trying to prevent the Kremlin from reaching the Gulf's "Warm Waters".

However, Turkey soon had problems also with NATO: twice it clashed with Greece against the Alliance's will by intervening militarily on Cyprus in the mid-1960s and 1974 to protect local Turkish-Cypriots from a Greek annexation of the island: in mid-1960s interethnic violence in Cyprus and Turkish military strikes were defused by U.S.-NATO pressures and British peacekeeping under the U.N. Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). Then in 1974, Athens' sponsored pro-annexation (*Enosis*) coup by Greek-Cypriot extremists provoked a military invasion by Turkey seizing 37% of Northern Cyprus, establishing a pariah Turkish-Cypriot government, while British peacekeepers were limited as a weak buffer on the split island. The global

condemnation of Ankara's seizure of Cyprus' north and Turkish military's past coups against domestic Leftist and Islamic extremist parties, are major thorns in NATO and the European Union (E.U.), while Greek relations with both Turkey and NATO were frozen by Athens because NATO had not intervened. Turkish-Greek relations have improved greatly since the 1990s, while Turkey's hopes to join the EU by 2015 forced the Turkish-Cypriots to accept a U.N.-E.U. federative plan. Turkey is also member of the Conference/Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (C/OSCE); provides NATO and U.N. peacekeepers in the Balkans and Afghanistan; and during the Post-Cold War (1990-current) it is the leading NATO Ally collaborating with the U.S. to Westernize ex-Soviet Central Asian Turkic states as Partners (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) against the rival influence of Russia and Islamic Iran. Intermittently since 1984, Ankara has also fought the terrorist insurgency of the Marxist-Leninist secessionist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in southeast Turkey, using military and human rights repression, as well as occasional raids in Iraq's Kurdistan province. The PKK largely ceased violent attacks since its unilateral ceasefire in September 1999 after its leader was captured. But ill-will over Kurdish autonomy and a neutralist moderate Islamist government in power since 2002, kept Turkey from joining the U.S.-led coalition's Second Gulf War (2003) against Iraq, or allowing U.S. combat forces to cross Turkey into Iraq.<sup>1</sup>

- Switzerland (1995 Partner)—Since the 1815 Congress of Vienna, Switzerland's independence and neutrality were respected by all European powers, although it barely survived as a neutral back-channel for intelligence in both World War I (1914-18) when it risked invasion by Germany to swing through its Basel border area to attack the southern French front, and World War II (1939-45) when Italy and Nazi Germany planned to partition Switzerland until the Axis' defeat unraveled it. In 1919-45 Switzerland headquartered in Geneva the League of Nations, but since 1945 it refused to join the U.N. until 2002, although it was always active in U.N. and international organizations. Switzerland never sent troops on U.N. peacekeeping operations, but provides funds, medical aid and aircrafts. Switzerland also lent routinely its ex-League of Nations headquarters for international Summits, peace negotiations (Viet-Nam, Middle-East) and East-West arms control talks during the Cold War (1946-90), while seeking to avoid a World War III invasion by the Soviet Union (USSR) by refusing to join the European Community/Union (E.C./E.U.) and NATO, although secret plans provided for NATO protection against a Soviet invasion. Since the end of the Cold War and USSR's collapse, Switzerland has sought to join the politico-economic integration of Europe and slowly reversed its neutralism, but its 1995 entry in the E.U. was scuttled by a domestic nationalist referendum, leaving the country an E.U. Partner. Switzerland has joined in 1975 the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), then in 1995 also NATO's Partnership for Peace and peacekeeping in the Balkans, while being an Aspirant for NATO-E.U. Enlargements.
- Bosnia (1994 Partner; 1997 Aspirant; 2014 Neighbourhood Partner)—Historically absorbed by its more powerful neighbors—Serbia until 1400s; the Turkish-Ottoman Empire until 1878; the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918; and Serb-dominated Yugoslavia in 1919-41 and 1944-91—the control of Bosnia was the spark that ignited World War I (1914-18), but Bosnia became independent briefly in 1941-44 as a Nazi German protectorate in World War II (1939-45), and then since 1992. During the 1991-2000 Yugoslav Civil Wars, the seceding states of Slovenia (1991), Croatia (1991) and Bosnia (1992) broke-off from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia, while Serb minorities in the new states with Yugoslav help fought to create a "Greater Serbia." Serb violence doomed all mediations by the European Community/Union (E.C./E.U.), United Nations and peacekeeping by the U.N. Protection Force in Bosnia (UNPROFOR) in 1992-95. The break-up of Yugoslavia forced NATO to intervene "Out-of-Area" to preserve the Balkans' fragile post-Communist ethnic balance and Alliance security threatened by hundreds of thousands of dead, rapes and refugees fleeing to Europe. NATO sought to contain ethno-nationalist conflicts by

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimaneli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; "Fact Sheets on European Union", idem.



implementing United Nations sanctions and arms embargo against Bosnia in 1992-95, with air- and sea-patrols, plus a U.N.-NATO “No-Fly Zone” by Allied Forces-Southern Europe (AFSOUTH) command in Naples, Italy. In February 1994 NATO retaliated with targeted air-strikes against the Bosnian-Serbs in support of UNPROFOR. Finally, in the summer of 1995 NATO conducted a short air-campaign in Bosnia in parallel with Croatia’s reentry in the war, defeating the Serbs of the *Republika Srpska* in Bosnia and Krajina in Croatia, forcing them to sign with their enemies of the Bosnian Federation (the rival Bosniak-Muslims and Bosnian-Croats) the Dayton Peace Accords (November 1995) and General Framework Agreement for Peace (Paris, 14 December 1995). Mandated by the U.N. Security Council, Dayton sent NATO peacekeepers to impose peace and redraw ethno-nationalist borders to reduce Bosnian-Serbs supremacy. Operation Joint Endeavour (16 December 1995-20 December 1996) deployed 65,000 troops of NATO’s multinational Implementation Force-Bosnia (IFOR), absorbing UNPROFOR’s 15,000 Anglo-French peacekeepers and from Russia too. The U.S.-led NATO IFOR implemented Dayton’s military Annex 1A: prevent hostilities, oversee the movement of military forces, patrol the 1,400 kilometers demilitarized Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL), separate rival Bosniak-Muslims and Croat forces (the symbolical Bosnian Federation Entity) from Bosnian-Serb ones (*Republika Srpska*), transfer areas between the hostile ethnic groups by mid-March, remove by end-June all heavy-weapons and equipment into 800 monitored central sites and regularly inspect them, repair Bosnian communication lines (2,500 kilometers of roads, railways, 60 bridges and Sarajevo’s airport), inspect weapons storages, free elections by April 1996 and limited NATO raids to capture Bosnian-Serbs and other war-criminals. IFOR’s success enabled the High-Representative for Bosnia to implement Dayton’s civil provisions. NATO’s Defense Ministers meeting (Bergen, Norway, September 1996) and Bosnia’s Peace Implementation Conferences (November-December 1996, Paris-London) prolonged NATO peacekeeping with a reduced 32,000 men Stabilisation Force-Bosnia (SFOR) mission in Operations Joint Guard/Joint Forge (20 December 1996-20 December 2004) until replaced by the European Union Force (EUFOR). NATO’s 2006 Riga Summit agreed to turn Bosnia in a Partner, and the E.U. promotes its economic integration through the E.U. Stabilisation Pact.<sup>1</sup>

- Serbia (1994 Partner; 1997 Aspirant; 2019 Neighbourhood Partner)—In World War II, occupation by Nazi Germany in 1941 was resisted by both pro-British monarchist Chetnić paramilitary bands and communist Yugoslav partisans under Marshal Broz Tito, who fought each other, as well as the Axis, until in late-1944 Tito reunited Yugoslavia as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia tied to the USSR, while executing the *Ustaschas* and ethnically-cleansing the Italian population of Istria and Dalmazia annexed to Croatia. But Tito and Soviet Leader Josef Stalin clashed with the 1948 Yugo-Soviet Split, and Tito survived on Western support, while repressing both secessionist Croats and pro-Soviet Stalinists Serbs. Tito briefly returned to the Soviet fold in 1955-56 attracted by Nikita Khrushchëv’s reforms, but the Soviet bloody repression of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution had Tito turn again against the USSR, becoming soon a leader of the Third World’s Non-Aligned states. During the Cold War (1946-91) Slovenia and Croatia were considered the likely routes for a Soviet/Warsaw Pact invasion of both Yugoslavia and Italy against the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), while Yugoslavia prepared for guerrilla war. Finally, after Tito’s death in 1980 and the end of the Cold War in 1990 with the collapse of the Soviet/Warsaw Pact control of Eastern Europe also led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia along ethnic lines, once Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia, dissatisfied with power monopolized by the majority Serbs led by Slobodan Milošević, seceded in 1991-92. Serbia and Montenegro as rump-Yugoslavia, on 27 April 1992 unleashed a series of civil wars supporting Serb minorities to create a “Greater Serbia” with Croatia’s Krajina and half of Bosnia (1991-95), with widespread ethnic-cleansing with hundreds of thousands of deaths, rapes and refugees fleeing to Europe. Serb violence doomed all mediations by the E.U., U.N. and peacekeeping by the U.N. Protection Force in Bosnia (UNPROFOR) in 1992-95, supported by NATO’s “No-Fly Zone” over Croatia and Bosnia, plus sanctions and arms embargoes. Eventually, in the

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; “Fact Sheets on European Union”, idem.

summer of 1995 NATO conducted a short air-campaign in Bosnia in parallel with Croatia's reentry in the war, defeating Serb forces of the *Republika Srpska* in Bosnia and Krajina, forcing them to sign with their enemies of the Bosnian Federation (the rival Muslim Bosniaks and Bosnian-Croats) the Dayton Peace Accords (November 1995) implemented by NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilisation Force (SFOR) until 2004. Instead, Milošević secured international forgiveness by abandoning to its fate the *Republika Srpska* and letting the last Serb-held enclave in Eastern Slavonia be returned to Croatia in 1998. However, by 1998-99 Milošević badly miscalculated Western reactions by using Yugoslav troops and Serb paramilitary to expel secessionist ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia's province of Kosovo, where they constituted 90% of the population. Despite Russia's and China's support of Yugoslavia and threats to veto any U.N. punitive action, the international response sparked new sanctions and NATO bombing of Serbia and Kosovo, while Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania and Slovenia provided logistical support for NATO during the 1999 Kosovo War. In June 1999 the Serbs' withdrew and Kosovo has been under joint NATO-U.N. administration with NATO and Russian peacekeepers of the Kosovo Force (KFOR), operating also in Albania and Macedonia, while preventing Albanian insurgency in Serbia's Presevo Valley (2001) and Macedonia (2000-02). Repercussions in Yugoslavia led to Milošević's defeat in the fall 2000 elections, his ouster from power in 2001 and secret transfer as prisoner to the International Tribunal on the ex-Yugoslavia (Hague, Netherlands) for trial on war-crime, where he died of a self-administered overdose in 2005. U.N.-NATO sanctions against Yugoslavia were lifted and the E.U. sought to stabilize Yugoslavia by slowly integrating it economically in its Stability Pact and Western Balkans Group. Controversies over Kosovo's "Final Status" remain with Yugoslavia and Serbia claiming it back, while the ruling U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), backed by NATO and E.U. have accepted in 2007 its future independence provided Albanian-Kosovars stop attacking the minority Serbs and renounce to any dream of a "Greater Albania" by merging with Albania proper and also Macedonia's Albanian minority. Finally, in 2002-03 domestic contrasts over Serb ethno-nationalism (Bosnia, Kosovo) and NATO-E.U.-U.N. suspension of aid to punish Belgrade for refusing to hand over Bosnian-Serb war-crime, led to the collapse of rump-Yugoslavia: in February 2003 it became a Serbia-Montenegro loose confederation, then in 2006 Montenegro seceded as an independent state, joining as Partner the E.U.-NATO by 2007-08. Serbia instead, still struggles between democratic politico-economic reforms, economic stagnation, ethno-nationalism anger over losing Kosovo, corruption, crime and reluctance to join both E.U.-NATO partnerships, despite warm ties with Russia.<sup>1</sup>

In the post-Cold War (1990-now), a different widespread type of regional and global crisis has been the widespread diffuse impact of Islamic Fundamentalist terrorism on NATO/E.U. members since the shocking terrorist attacks of "9/11" in September 2001 on New York and Washington D.C. by Al-Qaeda, which precipitated the Global War on Terror and 2001-02 Second Afghan War with international peacekeeping (2003-21). Although Italy has participated with combat forces along the U.S. and NATO Allies in geographically-distant Afghanistan, it has also contributed to NATO's regional defense in the East Mediterranean and Greater Middle East against bloody Jihadist terrorist dreams of conquest and building an anti-Western "Caliphate" launched first by the global terrorist groups Al-Qaeda in 1990-2021 (under Osama bin Laden and his successor Ayman al-Zawahiri) and then briefly achieved by ISIL/ISIS in 2013-19 (or Islamic State of Iraq and Levant/Syria under Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi the successor of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's original leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, 2003-13) when it seized in 2014-19 one-third of Syria and Iraq.<sup>2</sup>

ISIL terrorism was able to suddenly threaten not only Iraq (in its earlier identity as Al-Qaeda in Iraq), but the entire Levant (Middle East) region by exploiting cross-currents of fanaticism and hate against the inept, weak and corrupt Iraqi Shi'a government after the 2011 withdrawal of U.S./Coalition peacekeepers,

<sup>1</sup> M. Rimaneli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; "Fact Sheets on European Union", idem.

<sup>2</sup> Marco Rimaneli, "NATO's Security Transformation, Partnerships & Post-Cold War Peacekeeping" in *Florida Political Chronicle*, v.22, n.1-2 (2011-2013): p.19-43; Gus Martin, *Understanding Terrorism: Challenges, Perspectives and Issues*, 6th Ed. (Belmont, CA: Sage, 2017); Larry Diamond, "What went Wrong in Iraq?" in *Foreign Affairs* (September-October 2004) in <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/60095/larry-diamond/what-went-wrong-in-iraq>; William McCants, "The Rise and Fall of Al Qaeda" in *Foreign Affairs* (September-October 2011): p.20-32; Melvyn Leffler, "The War on Terror in Retrospect" in *Foreign Affairs* (September-October 2011): p.33-44.

and in Syria's Civil War against the despised Assad régime, as well as the unwillingness of the U.S., NATO and Europe to resend large ground forces abroad back into Iraq or Syria or Afghanistan. Despite ISIL's large territorial gains, constant terror attacks, public decapitation of prisoners in 2014-19 and attracting many thousands of willing foreign jihadist volunteers, its terror strategy ultimately backfired politically in the region by reluctantly convincing many apathetic local Sunni populations (only 15% of them support terrorism) to support the Western efforts to contain fellow-Sunni ISIL terrorism, once local Arab national pride was insulted by publicly televised killings of their citizens (Jordan and Egypt in 2015).

Slowly ISIL's growth was contained and reversed by the U.S.-NATO-Coalition triple anti-ISIL strategy:

- 1) expand anti-terrorist drone air-strikes;
- 2) massive, constant air-bombing since December 2014 in Syria and Iraq of terrorist oil assets and *jihadi* forces;
- 3) arming and supporting anti-ISIL regional land forces (Iraqi Kurds supporting their brethren and other minorities in North-East Syria; the Shi'a government of Iraq despite its controversial Iranian-trained militias; and a weakening odd-coalition of reformist Syrian insurgents-SNA).

The U.S.-led Coalition had a core of 10+ fighting states out of a nominal total since 2015 of 50 states, including 9 Middle-East/Gulf states (Bahrein, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates), Japan, plus all of NATO (including Italy) with its Mediterranean and Istanbul/Gulf Partners, as well as the unlikely vague support of Lebanon, Turkey, Iran and Russia against ISIL as common enemy (but Russia and Iran pursue both anti-ISIL and pro-Syria/anti-West policies against U.S.-NATO global leadership, while Turkey mainly strikes at pro-Western Syrian YPJ Kurdish fighters). Further, Saudi Arabia has fortified its borders against Iraq and Syria, and fought a stalled parallel air-land campaign in Yemen's civil war against pro-Iran Houthi rebels.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S.-NATO-Coalition targeted its air-strikes to decapitate ISIL's leadership and stop the jihadi terror-machine and "Caliphate" dominated by the alliance-of-convenience between Islamist fanatics and Iraq's ex-Ba'athist cadres, both leadership initially banking on Western irresolution and a tacit global acceptance of the inevitable twin collapse of the terrorized and weakened Shi'a governments in Baghdad and Damascus on behalf of ISIL's Islamist "Caliphate" confessional rule controlling north Iraq and east Syria to spread to their entire countries erasing the old Sykes-Picot Western colonial lines, while containing rival Iranian and U.S. regional influences. But in reality, ISIL's savage terrorist jihadist "Caliphate" for all Muslims, remained only a regional, brutal, Sunni pan-Arab, Islamist dictatorship.

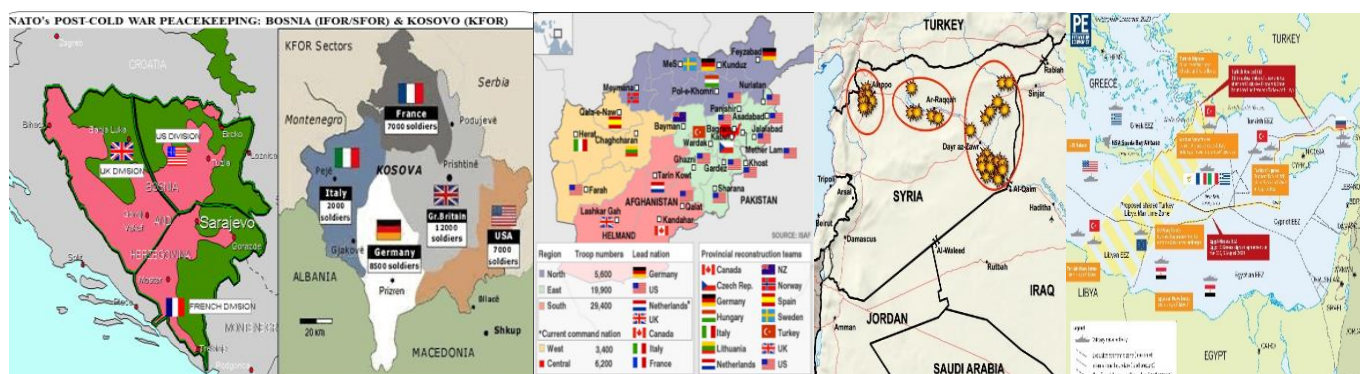
Throughout 2015-2017 it proved difficult to quickly destroy ISIL, given U.S. and European public rejection of sending any large-scale combat forces in Iraq and Syria, while U.S. President Barak Obama (Democrat, 2013-2016) remained reluctant to take any decisive leadership in the Syrian Civil War against either ISIL or Syria's dictator Bashir Assad, after having already abandoned all influence in Iraq by pulling-out U.S./Coalition peacekeepers in December 2011, which sparked ISIL's terrorist emergence). Instead, the U.S.-NATO-Coalition continued to wage increasingly heavy air-strikes against ISIL forces and infrastructures piece-by-piece, while helping the ground slow offensive of a motley-coalition of U.S. forces (kept to a minimum by both Presidents Obama and rival successor Republican Donald Trump in 2017-2020) with semi-secular Syrian rebels and secular Kurdish forces (North Iraqi Kurdish *Pashmerga* with Syrian YPJ Kurd rebels), as well as in Iraq on U.S.-Kurdish forces working with rival Iraqi Shi'a government forces, pro-Iran militias and Iranian troops.<sup>2</sup>

By 2017-19 the concerted air-land attacks against ISIL from both the large U.S.-NATO-Coalition and from the rival Russo-Syrian-Iranian coalition finally led to the incremental military-territorial collapse of ISIL's terrorist state, despite continued disorganized fighting on the ground and in other regional chaotic areas (Sinai, Libya).

<sup>1</sup> William McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse: History, Strategy and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015), p.23-105; Jared Malsin, "Iraq's Fight for Survival" in *Time* (4 July 2016): p.34-41; Bernie Schechterman, "Tomorrow's Warfare is being Fought Today" in *Florida Political Chronicle*, v.22, n.1-2 (2011-13): p.10-18; Hall Gardner, *American Global Strategy and War on Terrorism* (London: Ashgate, 2005); Marco Rimaneli & Jack McTague, "Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism and Hatred of the West from Al-Qaeda to ISIL" in *Florida Political Chronicle*, vol.25, n.1 (2017-2018): p.29-40.

<sup>2</sup> Audrey Kurth-Cronin, "ISIS is not a Terrorist Group" in *Foreign Affairs* (March-April 2015), in <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/143043/audrey-kurth-cronin/isis-is-not-a-terrorist-group>; W. McCants, *ISIS Apocalypse*, idem, p.23-105; Jonathan R. White, *Terrorism and Homeland Security*, 9<sup>th</sup> Ed. (New York: Wadsworth, 2017), Chp.11.

ISIL's last strategy in 2016-19 has been to multiply its disorganized and on-line recruitment of inspired-“Lone Wolves” terrorist attacks against Western countries to kill large numbers of unsuspecting civilians at crowded public events with either small-scale knives attacks (London, Jerusalem) or explosives (Boston Marathon bombing, Manhattan, etc.) on “soft”-urban target (like the rock concerts attacks in Paris and U.S., and mass-vehicles attacks against crowds in Jerusalem, Nice, Berlin and London). Finally ISIL's “Caliphate” collapsed in 2019 under the rival offensives by the U.S.-led Coalition (U.S., NATO, Arab states, Iraq, Kurds and Syrian rebels) in Syria and Iraq with U.S.-Kurdish forces killing al-Baghdadi, while the Russo-Syrian-Iranian-Iraqi coalition in Syria and Iraq forced back Northern Iraqi Kurds from oil-rich Kirkuk and Mosul and helped Assad's dictatorship expand in most of Syria (where the partial pull-out of U.S. forces at the end of the Trump Presidency was only partially reversed under his rival successor Democrat Joe Biden with little influence on the ground to impose any lasting regional peace and stop the growing influence of Iran and Russia in both Syria and Iraq.<sup>1</sup>



1) NATO Peacekeeping Zones in Bosnia 1990s; 2) NATO Peacekeeping Zones in Kosovo 1990s; 3) NATO Peacekeeping Zones in Afghanistan, 2001-2021; 4) U.S./NATO Coalition air-strikes on ISIL in Syria, 2014-2019; 5) East Mediterranean EEZs & Gas Exploration rivalries, 2018-2021; 1-2-3-4) U.S. Government sources; 5) <https://www.worldoil.com/news/2020/9/22/six-nation-mediterranean-gas-group-forms-without-turkey-to-strengthen-regional-cooperation>

Finally, since 2011 a final series of tensions emerged in the East Mediterranean over energy deposits and overlapping rival maritime Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) between Greece and Cyprus vs. Turkey and its vassal Turkish-Northern Cyprus have gotten so bad that both sides have threatened military action to defend their territorial rights. On one hand, Turkey had invaded and occupied since 1974 Northern Cyprus, refusing to recognize the Greek-Cypriot state, which joined the E.U. in 2004 and rejects Cyprus' own EEZ off-shore drilling, while Turkey is among few states who have not ratified the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which since the 1980s under International Law allowed all countries' territorial waters to 12 miles from shore (and only inhabited islands), plus access underneath international waters to an adjoining EEZ of 200 miles for mineral and fishing exploitation. The 2011 discovery by the U.S. company Noble Energy of vast gas deposits in the East Mediterranean within Cyprus's EEZ (“Aphrodite” gas-field), with estimated reserves at 3.5 trillion cubic meters (equivalent to Nigeria's ones), while 5.13 trillion cubic meters of gas are also estimated in the Egypt's Nile Basin.

This new East Mediterranean dispute directly involves Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Israel, Lebanon and Egypt (all traditional areas that were never before oil-producing) and also implicates Libya, Jordan, Italy, France and Germany, sparking renewed regional tensions and new alliances, while energy-hungry European Union (E.U.) has long sought to cut its reliance on Russian gas and would be an ideal market for East Mediterranean natural gas. However, recently Turkey has clashed with Greece and Cyprus and tried to deny Greece's own EEZ over her inhabited Aegean Islands, which Turkey rejects by stressing that Greek islands' EEZ overlaps on Turkey's own EEZ, as well as opposing also Cyprus' own EEZ rights by seeking in

<sup>1</sup> A. Kurth-Cronin, “ISIS is not a Terrorist Group”, idem; J.R. White, *Terrorism & Homeland Security*, idem, Chp.11.

2018-21 to claim exclusive Turkish rights on new underwater energy exploration and drilling, while arguing that the distribution of Cyprus's natural resources must be negotiated also with Turkish-Cypriots.<sup>1</sup>

Greece, Cyprus and other E.U. states (France, Italy, etc.) sharply criticized Turkey's unilateral regional threats of deploying warships to stop joint-exploration for underwater hydrocarbons undertaken by Greece with Cyprus, by Cyprus with Israel and by Cyprus with Lebanon, while Israel in 2018 had responded with a \$15 billion bilateral deal to export gas to Egypt. The U.N. rejects Turkey's flouting of International Law on EEZ, but Turkey has repeatedly sent warships into Cyprus' waters since Spring 2019, which has been condemned by the E.U. with sanctions. Both NATO and E.U. are concerned that Turkish erratic aggression undermines both their unity in the region and regional stability, while risking strengthening Turkish-Russian ties, as well as about falling behind Turkey's race for regional geopolitical dominance, while exacerbating Middle East conflicts with local Arab states who are confrontational against Turkey for its support of *Hamas* and Islamist groups in the Middle East, and its opposition to any regional gas-pipeline.

Indeed, as Turkey is dependent on 90% imports of energy it seeks exclusive control of other countries' gas reserves in the East Mediterranean as a strategic tool to transform itself into a regional gas-hub and strong invasive regional Power, while rescuing its stagnant economy after recent U.S. sanctions over Turkish purchase of non-NATO air-defenses from anti-Western Russia. Turkey as an energy-dependent country has relied historically on imports, especially from Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran, and now fears being excluded from the EMGO energy security export plans and so losing any future durable influence in the East Mediterranean region where Ankara acts as a spoiler, against competitors (Greece, Egypt and Israel) seeking to secure its "fair share" of regional energy resources. The recent discovery of the "Tuna-1" gas deposits in the Black Sea near Turkey (320 billion cubic meters of gas as two and a half times the size of the Aphrodite field south of Cyprus) allows Ankara to strive to become its own gas trade hub through proposals for a Trans-Anatolian Gas-pipeline from Azerbaijan to Turkey to Europe (part of the Southern Gas Corridor) and try to reduce reliance on Russia's Gazprom (whose strong-arm trade deals did hamstring Turkey, even despite the Russian-E.U./NATO suspension of Russia's controversial Southern Stream pipeline project, because Turkey was unable to extract significant concessions from Russia for the TurkStream alternative project across the Black Sea), although the "Tuna-1" gas deposit requires Western oil drilling expertise and will produce energy for only seven years. Turkey has recently reduced its energy dependence on Russia (from 52% in 2017 to 33% in 2020) by buying larger amounts of liquified natural gas from Algeria, Nigeria, Qatar and U.S.A. at lower prices than Gazprom, while Turkey's own economic recession has further contracted much below capacity Russia's Black Sea pipelines (TurkStream and Blue Stream).<sup>2</sup>

Access to Aegean and East Mediterranean gas is seen as a free ride to economic independence for all traditionally non-oil-producing countries: Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, Greece and Turkey, while greater regional influence as ambitious energy hubs is the end-goals for Israel and Egypt, as well as Turkey. Turkey also is massively boosting its home-made military-industrial-complex with large naval ship-buildings of destroyers, corvettes, frigates, a small air-carrier, the amphibious assault ship "Anadolu", combat drones, missiles and attack-helicopters, while Turkish forces have waged limited border skirmishes in Northern Syria against local autonomist Kurds, and in Libya's on-going civil war since 2019 by sending massive military aid and Turkish troops to save the embattled Libyan U.N.-recognized government in Tripoli. Thus,

<sup>1</sup> Salma El Wardany & Mirette Magdy, "Six-Nations Mediterranean Gas Group Forms, Without Turkey, to "Strengthen Regional Cooperation" in *World Oil* (22 September 2020): <https://www.worldoil.com/news/2020/9/22/six-nation-mediterranean-gas-group-forms-without-turkey-to-strengthen-regional-cooperation>; Alex Gatopoulos, "Project Force: Battle for Resources in the Eastern Mediterranean" in *AlJazeera* (13 August 2020): <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/8/13/project-force-battle-for-resources-in-the-eastern-mediterranean>; Agneska Bloch & Israa Saber, "What's Driving the Conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean" in *Lawfare* (25 January 2021): <https://www.lawfareblog.com/whats-driving-conflict-eastern-mediterranean>

<sup>2</sup> Dimitar Bechev, "Turkey's Plans to Become a Regional Energy Giant Just Got a Boost" in *Foreign Policy* (28 August 2020): <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/08/28/turkeys-plans-to-become-a-regional-energy-giant-just-got-a-boost/>

in November 2019, Ankara and Tripoli signed a joint controversial new maritime zone from the rival Libyan National Army rebels (backed by Egypt, UAE, France and Russia) own coast of Cyrenaica (which Tripoli does not control) all the way to Turkey for exclusive joint gas exploration and drilling, despite the middle waters overlap the EEZ of Greece and Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

Israel was the first regional Power to turn around its past oil-dependency into a future energy hub and major energy exporter after the discovery in 2009 of the “Tamar” gas field and in 2010 of the “Leviathan” gas field, both in Israel’s EEZ, with gas exported since 2020 to Egypt and Jordan. Israel now sees a powerful Turkey as growing threat: Israeli-Turkish relations were historically close and even discussed developing a joint gas-pipeline from Israel to Turkey to Europe, but it got scrapped as bilateral ties deteriorated sharply under Erdogan’s new Turkish-Islamist diplomacy since 2010, once Israeli forces blocked and stormed the Gaza Freedom Flotilla—a group of civilian ships trying to break the Gaza blockade by delivering humanitarian aid and contraband, but refusing to have its cargo inspected beforehand in Israel’s Ashdod container port for land trans-shipment to Gaza—and killed nine Turkish Islamist activists who attacked them on a boat. Both countries have sought to reconcile, but relations remain tense and Erdogan’s May 2021 support of Palestinian statehood under Israeli occupation and the terrorist *Hamas* (off-shoot of the Muslim Brotherhood) in the fourth Gaza-Israeli War of 2021 (where *Hamas* launched 4,000 missiles in a week and shot-down by Israel’s Iron Dome defenses), not to mention Ankara’s involvement in regional conflicts (Syria, Libya, Nagorno-Karabakh). This has led Israel to work instead with Cyprus and Greece on the EastMed Pipeline, which lowers the future value of the Trans-Anatolian pipeline and showed to Ankara that all its neighbors will survive fine without Turkey. Such widespread Turkish isolation might enhance Turkey’s increasingly confrontational approach in the East Mediterranean and other conflicts (Libya, Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh) to ensure Ankara holds some degree of regional importance.<sup>2</sup>

Most Middle Eastern Arab states also oppose Turkey, over her support for the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood briefly in control of Egypt in 2012 and Turkish President Erdogan condemning the 2013 Egyptian military coup. Egypt, Saudi Arabia and UAE oppose any stronger influential Turkish presence in the East Mediterranean as an existential threat that could revive the Muslim Brotherhood, and all three Arab states have established closer politico-military ties to Greece and Cyprus (since 2017 UAE regularly joins Greek-led military drills and Greece helped Saudi Arabia after the 2019 Houthi-Iranian missiles attack on her “Abqaiq” oil-processing plant). Especially for Egypt, the 2015 discovery by Italy’s ENI energy behemoth of the “Zohr” gas-field in the East Mediterranean within Egypt’s EEZ as the largest single regional deposit of 10 trillion cubic meters, helps Cairo finally overcome the financial costs of the Arab Spring demonstrations and domestic recession, while earning vital cash through exports and eventual future reemergence as a regional Power. Egypt can convert natural gas into liquefied natural gas (LNG), for re-export via tankers by relying on a potential future Cyprus-Egypt gas pipeline from the “Aphrodite” gas-field for liquefaction in Egypt and then re-export to the European market. Likewise, is Egypt’s cooperation since 2018 with Israel and Cyprus over a possible EastMed Pipeline. As Turkey condemns all regional explorations and gas-pipeline projects, unless also Turkish North Cyprus receives compensations, Cairo sees Turkey’s belligerence as compromising Egypt’s own future emergence and fosters Cairo’s advocacy of regional energy ties with Greece, Cyprus and Israel.<sup>3</sup>

Although an irreparable clash is still unlikely between isolated Turkey and aggravated E.U.-NATO Allies (Greece, France, Italy, U.S.A.), everybody fears a bloody accident at sea that would unravel regional stability long established since the Cold War in these Turkish-provoked cyclical crises:

<sup>1</sup> El Wardany & Magdy, “Six-Nations Mediterranean Gas Group Forms”, *idem*; Agneska Bloch & Israa Saber, “What’s Driving the Conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean” in *Lawfare* (25 January 2021): <https://www.lawfareblog.com/whats-driving-conflict-eastern-mediterranean>; Gatopoulos, “Project Force: Battle of Resources in East Mediterranean”, *idem*.

<sup>2</sup> Bloch & Saber, “What’s Driving Conflict in East Mediterranean”, *idem*; Gatopoulos, “Project Force: Battle of Resources in East Mediterranean”. *idem*.

<sup>3</sup> El Wardany & Magdy, “Six-Nations Mediterranean Gas Group Forms”, *idem*; Bloch & Saber, “What’s Driving Conflict in East Mediterranean”, *idem*; Gatopoulos, “Project Force: Battle of Resources in East Mediterranean”, *idem*.

- a) in May 2020, France's air-carrier "Charles De Gaulle" launched military drills off of Cyprus as tacit warning against Turkish survey vessels and warships trying to prospect in E.U. waters;
- b) in July as a clear signal to Ankara, the U.S. announced it would train the Greek-Cypriot army;
- c-d-e) then in July 2020 Turkey postponed sending an oil survey ship with a flotilla of warships in contested Greek waters near Crete after widespread international condemnation; once Greece and Egypt signed a bilateral maritime deal in early-August 2020 (as their own response against the Turkish EEZ accord with Libya's Government), Turkey reversed this decision and sent a seismic research vessel near the Greek island of Castellorizo off-shore Turkey's coast, which was condemned by Greece and E.U. as a violation of their own waters, with Greek forces put on full alert and warships shadowing the Turkish flotilla at "heightened readiness" with a collision between a Greek and Turkish warship in contested waters which for few days created the worst international crisis in the region in the past 20 years; later in December 2020 Turkey also deployed armed drones to North Cyprus to protect another Turkish survey ship, while Turkish naval forces conducted exercises off-Libya's Tripolitania coast, where they confronted an Egyptian flotilla and E.U. naval forces enforcing an arms-embargo against Libya;
- f) both NATO and E.U. promoted regional stability and access to hydrocarbon resources, plus common actions to solve disputes among members, but both organizations require unanimous consensus, which hampers any effective and assertive institutional action by either one as shown by the escalation between NATO members Greece and Turkey, and the recent highly criticized anti-Western closer ties between Turkey and Russia; the E.U. supported for a decade East Mediterranean diversification of energy supplies away from Russia and boost economic growth for Cyprus and Greece, and thus E.U. members Cyprus, Greece, Italy and France support the EastMed Pipeline project by Egypt and Israel, while France's military was immediately strengthened by several frigates in joint "naval diplomacy" patrols with Italian, Greek and Cypriot warships off Greece's South Aegean Sea Islands (from Crete to Rhodes and Castellorizo to Cyprus) against Turkish threats, just as also the UAE sent warplanes to Greece's Crete for joint military exercises, with Egypt and Israel supporting Greece, and Cyprus demanding the International Court of Justice arbitrate on the overlapping Cyprus-Turkish EEZ claims.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, despite assurances given to Turkey in late-January 2020 by Italy's Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio that any rival undersea gas-pipeline project in the East Mediterranean would be prohibitively expensive (\$7.4 billions), Turkey found herself fully isolated diplomatically, when after a year of quiet negotiations all her rivals formed an East Mediterranean Gas Organization (EMGO) in Cairo in September 2020 without Turkey (members: Egypt, Israel, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Jordan, with France applying in January 2021; Observers: U.S.A. and E.U.). The EMGO jointly cooperates in gas exploration and drilling in the contested East Mediterranean, while planning to build by 2025 an undersea EastMed gas-pipeline (2,000 Km./1,200-miles-long) from Israel to Cyprus to Greece and Italy to boost diversification of E.U. energy resources by ship liquified gas 9-12 billion cubic meters annually from their off-shore gas deposits, even if the EastMed gas-pipeline through Israel, Cyprus, Greece/Crete EEZs will also cross the November 2019 illegal joint Turkish-Libyan EEZ (globally not-recognized). This EastMed project is now an E.U. priority energy project (regardless of condemnation by anti-carbon European ecologists opposed to hydrocarbons' environmental effects and speculations that such gas-pipeline could produce the same carbon emissions as both France and Spain annually, and outweigh in climate cost its value in Europe's carbon neutral futures). Ankara's futile opposition also to Israel becoming a founding member in the EMGO and EastMed gas-pipeline shows how widespread Turkish isolation has suddenly become (other non-members are: Syria, Lebanon, Libya) in its aggressive clashes over rival East Mediterranean states' EEZs and energy reserves, while exacerbating

<sup>1</sup> Agneska Bloch & Israa Saber, "What's Driving the Conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean" in *Lawfare* (25 January 2021): <https://www.lawfareblog.com/whats-driving-conflict-eastern-mediterranean>; El Wardany & Magdy, "Six-Nations Mediterranean Gas Group Forms", *idem*; Gatopoulos, "Project Force in East Mediterranean", *idem*.

Turkey's confrontation also in other side-wars (Libya, Syria, Nagorno-Karabakh) to secure some degree of regional importance.<sup>1</sup>

However, what is Italy's real role in these recent East Mediterranean crises? Apparently, all post-Cold War Italian governments have been beset by domestic political and economic weakness, and beyond joining in several U.S./Coalitions/NATO peacekeeping operations (1990 First and 2003 Second Gulf Wars with Iraqi peacekeeping in 2003-11, Bosnia in 1995-current, Kosovo in 1999-current, 2001-02 Second Afghan War and peacekeeping in 2002-21, Libya in 2013), Rome has studiously kept a wide diplomatic anti-imperialist berth from other rival regional actors involved in recent Mediterranean crises (France, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel and Libya) without openly taking any firm side, despite being part of both NATO and E.U. But although this is literally correct, the ambiguous stasis of Italy's Mediterranean foreign policy is now being revealed as mostly a convenient diplomatic cover that belies her post-2018 secret dominant energy business undercurrents coalescing together with France's current diplomatico-military efforts to also reemerge as a key regional actor. Her geographic position as one of the most prominent geopolitical actors at the center of the Mediterranean basin, gives Italy a natural dominant strategic role for trade, naval security and diplomacy. Since the Cold War to today, democratic Euro-Atlantic Italy's four core foreign policy pillars remain unchanged:

- 4) loyal alignment with the U.S.A. bilaterally and as NATO Ally;<sup>2</sup>
- 5) loyal membership in the NATO Alliance;
- 6) loyal E.U. membership and integration;
- 7) stability in the Mediterranean region, where Rome has many security, economic and cultural relations in the Mediterranean basin with Libya, Greece, Egypt, Turkey, Cyprus, Malta, France and Spain.

Yet, after Fascist Italy's collapse in World War II, Rome's regional interests in the basin were always subordinated to the U.S. and NATO, until the later post-Cold War has seen a reduction of U.S. presence after 2011, while outside actors (Russia, UAE) role remains scattered. Thus, the four key Mediterranean states are France, Italy, Egypt and Turkey (followed to a degree by Israel), with the four strongest militaries, economies and 60% of regional population. The Mediterranean's big four Powers (and increasingly Israel) dominate regional geopolitics, trade routes (Italy over Malta and Sicilian Channel; Egypt over the Suez Canal, Turkey over her Straits) and local energy resources.

Italy's longtime ambiguous diplomatic role in such complex post-Cold War Mediterranean geopolitics has been more of a studious minimalist ploy by Rome to hide her considerable post-Cold War recent energy investments and historical security interests in war-torn Libya and East Mediterranean, where the Peninsula's chronic energy-dependence is the dominant strategic reason dictating new engagements in both areas. Already since the 1950s, within the emerging D.C. autonomous pro-Third World vision of Premier Moro, Italy's internationally controversial entrepreneur Enrico Mattei had created a successful state energy company ENI (*Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi*-National Hydrocarbons Authority) to spearhead ambiguous partnerships with Nasser régime in Egypt, Iran and other African states undercutting the historical Western monopoly by the Anglo-American petrol companies ("Seven Sisters") to secure for Italy's industries an independent access to vital energy imports. After Mattei's "mysterious" death in 1962, ENI has kept growing to become Italy's largest state and energy company ENI (30% state-owned) and by 2020 the 115<sup>th</sup> global multinational giant out of Forbes's "500 List". Thus, at the center of Italy's post-Cold War minimalist diplomacy in the Mediterranean and Middle East is her secret support throughout all revolving weak governments in Rome of ENI's own large-scale investments and operations abroad, which make Italy's support for ENI since the historic Mattei years seems indistinguishable from her national foreign policy

<sup>1</sup> El Wardany & Magdy, "Six-Nations Mediterranean Gas Group Forms", idem; "Italy's Foreign Minister Expresses Doubts over Feasibility of EastMed Pipeline" in *The Times of Israel* (18 January 2020): <https://www.timesofisrael.com/italys-foreign-minister-expresses-doubts-over-feasibility-of-eastmed-pipeline/>; Bloch & Saber, "What's Driving Conflict in East Mediterranean", idem; Gatopoulos, "Project Force: Battle of Resources in East Mediterranean", idem; "Scrap Gas Pipeline in Eastern Med due to Climate Cost, Says Report" in *Guardian* (October 2020): <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/30/scrap-gas-pipeline-eastern-med-due-climate-cost-report-turkey-greece>

<sup>2</sup> In March 2021 on the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of U.S.-Italian diplomatic relations, U.S. Secretary of State Tony Blinken reaffirmed that on Mediterranean and NATO issues: "Italy's leadership is critical" (U.S. State Department).



overall, despite occasionally provoking major contradictions (like in the Mattei years with U.S. energy policy) by continuing to challenge British, French and U.S. energy interests. Since 2015, the ENI energy giant dominates East Mediterranean gas reserves: it discovered Egypt's massive "Zohr" natural gas field; it controls Egypt's two gas liquefaction plants to re-export liquified gas (LNG) to E.U. markets; it is the lead operator in Cyprus' natural gas development; it is also the dominant energy operator in Italy's ex-colony of Libya under the weak Tripoli government (ENI has 45% of assets with 8% of Italian gas imports annually since 2019); and in neighbouring Algeria, which is Africa's top gas producer, ENI is a leading partner of the state oil company *Sonatrach* with the two jointly owning the 1,500-mile Trans-Mediterranean gas-pipeline shipping Algerian gas via Tunisia to Italy (20% of Italian gas imports annually).<sup>1</sup>

Italy's earlier pre-2020 Libyan support of the U.N.-recognized Tripoli Government of National Accord (GNA) alongside Turkey and U.S.A. was part of a broader effort to protect her own energy interests in Libya and pivot to the Mediterranean basin where Italian exports to regional markets now outstrip exports to the U.S.A. and China, but had been constrained by France's massive rival influence in the basin. But now, as such recent tough regional geo-political competitions over the Libyan Civil War and East Mediterranean gas deposits sparked dangerous local clashes in 2018-20 since Turkish warships in February 2018 had forced the withdrawal of an ENI survey-ship from Cyprus' EEZ, ENI secretly waged a brilliant, multi-level, geo-economic energy clash that rapidly unraveled Ankara's strategy of regional energy dominance via gunboat intimidations and blackmails:

- 1) ENI responded by partnering with France's energy giant TOTAL in all of its Cyprus operations;
- 2) then also in 2018 these two European energy companies joined forces in Algeria with the local *Sonatrach* company for the exclusive rights on all energy explorations off-shore in Algeria EEZ;
- 3) at the same time, with ENI's secret *placet*, TOTAL also bought major new oil holdings in Libya;
- 4) by 2018-20, despite Italy's decades-long past staunch diplomatic support of Turkey within the E.U. and earlier alignment with Turkey to back Tripoli's GNA, this bilateral diplomatic partnership collapsed when Rome "officially" adopted an ambiguous "equidistant" diplomatic posture in the recent new geopolitical competition for regional dominance through a proxy-war over Libya between Tripoli's GNA vs. the rebel stronger anti-Islamist Libyan National Army (LNA) under General Khalifa Haftar of Benghazi in Cyrenaica (backed by Egypt, France, UAE and Russia with her paramilitary Wagner Group), while the U.S. also became uncommitted and Cairo feared Turkey's support of the GNA would expand Ankara's power and prop-up Islamists at Egypt's borders;
- 5) ENI also secretly promoted in 2019-20 the plan to pool Cypriot, Egyptian and Israeli gas using Egypt's gas liquefaction facilities to cost-effectively market regional LNG gas to Europe through a proposed future EuroMed gas-pipeline by the new regional economic bloc EMGO (Italy joined Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel and Jordan), secretly negotiated for a year and unveiled in Egypt in 2019-20, where also France joined since January 2020 given her own energy giant TOTAL's heavy investments in the East Mediterranean. ENI's brilliant marketing plan isolated Turkey from the EMGO and reduced the European appeal for Ankara's rival Black Seas dual pipelines (TurkStream), dashing her plans to become a regional energy hub.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matteo Colombo, "Rome's Foreign Policy-Italy in the Eastern Mediterranean: Between Continuity and New Challenge" in *ISPI* (10 September 2020): <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publicazione/italy-eastern-mediterranean-between-continuity-and-new-challenges-27357>; Michael Tanchum, "Turkish Military Maneuvering Pushed Italy and France to Join Forces in the Mediterranean. Now What?" in *Foreign Policy* (23 September 2020): <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/23/pax-mediterranea-italy-turkey-france-oil-european-union/>; Riccardo Gasco, "Where does Italy Stand in the Eastern Mediterranean Dispute?" in *Al Sharq Strategic Research Think-Tank* (7 October 2020): <https://research.sharqforum.org/2020/10/07/where-does-italy-stand-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-dispute/>; El Wardany & Magdy, "Six-Nations Mediterranean Gas Group Forms", *idem*; Bloch & Saber, "What's Driving Conflict in East Mediterranean", *idem*; Gatopoulos, "Project Force: Battle of Resources in East Mediterranean", *idem*.

<sup>2</sup> Colombo, "Rome's Foreign Policy-Italy in the Eastern Mediterranean: Between Continuity and New Challenges", *idem*; Tanchum, "Turkish Military Maneuvering Pushed Italy and France to Join Forces in the Mediterranean", *idem*; Gasco, "Where does Italy Stand in the Eastern Mediterranean Dispute?", *idem*; El Wardany & Magdy, "Six-Nations Mediterranean Gas Group Forms", *idem*; Bloch & Saber "What's Driving Conflict in East Mediterranean", *idem*; Gatopoulos, "Project Force: Battle of Resources in East Mediterranean", *idem*.

Turkey then in November 2019 sought to up-the-ante by signing with Tripoli's GNA an illegal joint Turkish-Libyan EEZ (but from the LNA-controlled Cyrenaica coast hostile to Tripoli) angering Europe and not recognized world-wide. But more dangerous still was Turkey's January 2020 break-out strategy of direct military intervention in Libya by rushing arms and troops to help Tripoli's GNA forces stop Haftar's LNA siege of Tripoli and drive to conquer all of Libya. As the LNA was defeated and forced to withdraw 280 miles back east to Cyrenaica, Egypt backed a U.N. cease-fire since June 2020 and in August 2020 signed its own joint EEZ with Greece criss-crossing the rival illegal Turkish-Libyan one, while Greece also developed good relations with the rebel LNA in Cyrenaica. Turkey's 2020 direct military intervention apparently helped Tripoli's GNA reverse the course of Libya's civil war, while Turkey's major air force presence at the recaptured al-Watiya air base (17 miles from Tunisia's border) and its naval presence at the GNA base of Misrata have increased Ankara's clout also in neighboring Tunisia and Algeria.

But all these Turkish shockers in Libya's Civil War caused major alarms in Rome radically altering her regional diplomacy and security, forcing Italy to abandon her uneasy diplomatico-energy balancing act between Libya and East Mediterranean, while reshuffling ENI's geopolitical deck to redress its grievances with Greece and Cyprus against Turkey over East Mediterranean gas deposits. Rome now strongly opposes Tripoli's GNA dependence on Turkey as new key security provider because it will render ENI's majority oil and natural gas assets concentrated in Libya's GNA Tripolitania (45% of Libya's productions with 8% of Italian annual gas imports since 2019) subject to Ankara's dictates, while rising Turkish influence also in neighbouring Algeria threatens ENI's joint controls of the 1,500-mile Trans-Mediterranean gas-pipeline shipping Algerian gas via Tunisia to Italy (20% of Italian annual gas imports). Turkey's increasing assertiveness in the East Mediterranean and Libya forced a radical change also in France's strategy, while making also Italy rethink her old diplomatic alignment with Ankara, given the now openly divergent ENI's energy business calculations. Paris had for a long time been unwilling to allow her good relations with Rome in E.U. and NATO to develop into an official "partnership of equals" in the Mediterranean where the two Powers were historical trade rivals. But the parallel Franco-Italian energy cooperation since 2018 in response to Turkey's aggressiveness gave political momentum for a comprehensive Franco-Italian rapprochement when Italy's diplomacy openly recruited her ex-rival France to mitigate their common Turkish risks in both the East Mediterranean and Libya. All of these ENI secret energy alliances and joint deals, together with Italy's recent unexpected diplomatic moves in Libya undercutting Turkey have angered Ankara for losing her historical ally inside the E.U. (although Poland and Romania remain pro-Turkish in both E.U. and NATO as part of their anti-Russian posture based on Turkey's support in NATO), while practically undermining Turkey's rival regional energy and political ambitions in both East Mediterranean and Libya.<sup>1</sup>

In early-September 2020, French President Emmanuel Macron denounced President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Turkey as "no longer a partner", signaling the inevitable potential and permanent divorce of Turkey from Europe, while also diplomatically prodding Rome as the old ex-rival in the Mediterranean, to jettison Italy's long ambiguous balance between Turkey and other E.U. anti-Turkish states, in favour of a *realpolitik* reset in the Mediterranean great game around a egalitarian Franco-Italian partnership to jointly police the region and lead all E.U. Southern members in Macron's vision of a common "*Pax Mediterranea*". The Franco-Italian reset in the Mediterranean now was quietly implemented when the expected Tripoli GNA agreement to give Turkish energy firms a share of Libya's oil and natural gas production was abruptly cancelled following Libya's Prime Minister Fayez Al-Sarraj even more unexpected resignation in mid-

<sup>1</sup> Colombo, "Rome's Foreign Policy-Italy in the Eastern Mediterranean", idem; Michael Tanchum, "Turkish Military Maneuvering Pushed Italy and France to Join Forces in the Mediterranean. Now What?" in *Foreign Policy* (23 September 2020): <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/23/pax-mediterranea-italy-turkey-france-oil-european-union/>; Riccardo Gasco, "Where does Italy Stand in the Eastern Mediterranean Dispute?" in *Al Sharq Strategic Research Think-Tank* (7 October 2020): <https://research.sharqforum.org/2020/10/07/where-does-italy-stand-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-dispute/>; El Wardany & Magdy, "Six-Nations Mediterranean Gas Group Forms", idem; Bloch & Saber, "What's Driving Conflict in East Mediterranean", idem; Gatopoulos, "Project Force: Battle of Resources in East Mediterranean", idem.

September 2020 as victim of such complicated politicking among Italy, France and Turkey. This in-turn paves the way for the dissolution of the GNA and the creation finally of a Libyan government of national unity out of both rival halves, resulting in a rapid weakening of Turkish influence and be instead a strategic boon for Italy and France with their regional allies (Egypt, Greece, Cyprus, Israel, UAE). But during the informal Med-7 Summit in Corsica of Southern E.U. states in mid-September 2020, just like the parallel E.U. Brussel Summit postponed from late-September to late-December 2020, the E.U. remained beset by inner divisiveness between anti-Turkish advocates (France, Greece and Cyprus pushing for strong sanctions) vs. conciliatory advocates (Germany, Spain, Malta, Portugal and some East Europeans). Had a wavering Italy officially backed the French-led former E.U. group, these two largest E.U. Mediterranean states could likely rally the entire E.U. towards stronger sanctions against Turkey, which Ankara feared would engender the E.U.'s unbridgeable "divorce" from Turkey after bilateral relations were already blocked since 2018 when the E.U. froze Turkey's E.U. accession negotiations and was followed by strong U.S. sanctions on Turkey's defense industry to rein-in Turkey's gunboat foreign policy, while seriously weakening Turkey's already tottering national economy. The German-led latter E.U. group fears antagonizing an unpredictable Turkey into further escalating tensions and even breaking-off the German-brokered and paid 2016 E.U. accord to stop within Turkey all new illegal inflows of Arab refugees to Europe, after the historical 2016 one million refugees walking from Syria via Turkey to the Balkans into Germany. Instead, in both 2020 E.U. meetings Spain, Italy, Malta and Portugal contained President Macron's offensive against Turkey, by siding with Germany to approve milder sanctions and diplomacy to resolve the East Mediterranean crisis.<sup>1</sup>

Turkey is largely to blame for the increasing levels of instability in the East Mediterranean, wrongly claiming any overflight or undersea exploration/drilling violates Ankara's sovereignty as the country with the longest coastline in the Mediterranean. This pattern of regional escalation, aggravated by Turkey's diplomatic sidelining by most Western states, harms NATO and E.U. regional unity and security (controlling Arab refugees' illegal migrations; counter-terrorism against ISIL; a united front against Russia's threats), while exacerbating Middle East contrasts (Syria; Libya; Israel) and bolstering Turkish-Russian ties. Also the over-abundance of LNG from outside Russia, has caused both the Russo-Turkish gas-pipelines in the Black Sea and the EastMed gas-pipeline in East Mediterranean to temporally decrease in importance, while the E.U. and all Mediterranean states have grievously suffered from the unexpected global economic contraction over the COVID-19 calamitous pandemic from Wuhan, China (November 2019-Summer 2021). Within this context, given Greece's refusal to enlist either NATO or E.U. in her grievances in the East Mediterranean, the resumption since late-January 2021 of bilateral Greece-Turkey talks without preconditions (61<sup>st</sup> round in recent decades) is a realistic step to deescalate regional tensions, although Turkish diplomatic good faith now holds little currency in the West, while Turkey's privilege for bilateral deals is a convenient tool to still exclude Cyprus.

In the E.U. after the British exit (BREXIT), the old Germany-France-Great Britain triad is now history, just as the even older "Franco-German Axis" given France's economic decline, so the new decision-making center will gravitate towards a Germany-France-Italy triad as envisaged by President Macron and strengthened by the continued diplomatico-business Franco-Italian partnership in the Mediterranean (in this way an economically weak Paris can shore-up her declining international influence by enlisting the diplomatic partnership of an even faster-declining Rome to jointly triangulate other E.U. issues by moderating any future German economico-political hegemonic tendency, while Italy benefits from a

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<sup>1</sup> Colombo, "Rome's Foreign Policy-Italy in the East Mediterranean", idem; "Italy's Foreign Minister Expresses Doubts over Feasibility of EastMed Pipeline" in *The Times of Israel* (18 January 2020): <https://www.timesofisrael.com/italys-foreign-minister-expresses-doubts-over-feasibility-of-eastmed-pipeline/>; Tanchum, "Turkish Military Maneuvering Pushed Italy and France to Join Forces in Mediterranean", idem; Gasco, "Where does Italy Stand in the East Mediterranean Dispute?", idem; Rabia Iclal Turan, "Spain, Italy offer Dialogue with Turkey at Med-7: Report" in *AA-Anadolu Agency* (12 September 2020): <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/spain-italy-offer-dialogue-with-turkey-at-med7-report/1970962>

higher “cooperative” policy-making image within the E.U. and Western support to end Libya’s Civil War and so stem the parallel flow of illegal African and Arab migrants to Europe via Italy). But even as the newfound Franco-Italian “*Pax Mediterranea*” influences both the basin and E.U., Macron will be unable to openly stiffen Europe’s stance towards Turkey given the need to rely on Rome’s traditional mediatory posture to secure the required unanimous vote of all 27 E.U. members, where the Eastern E.U./NATO states see Turkey’s largest military in NATO after the U.S. as a bulwark against Russia’s threats, while Cyprus and Greece can always threaten to veto E.U. sanctions against Belarus’ and Russia. Thus, amid tensions over Mediterranean states and energy, a wavering Italy “officially” still prefers bilateral and regional diplomacy and will unlikely take any unilateral, independent, key policy-shifts in major regional disputes, siding instead with NATO and E.U. as both organizations require unanimous votes and thus foster more nuanced responses or limited sanctions to contain any chronic “spoiler” in the East Mediterranean (Turkey), while allowing Rome to fold within whichever diplomatic “collective” to minimize risks of economic losses individually hurting her. At the secret international business level, ENI with Rome’s “discreet blessing” will continue to foster stronger regional cooperation on sharing Mediterranean energy policies among the EMOG key stakeholders (which will soon add also a united Libya), while keeping the regional “spoiler” Turkey isolated, until Ankara seriously signs constructive bilateral and regional diplomatic accords with her much-aggravated neighbours to pursue international judicial mediation to retouch their respective EEZ boundaries and add any future Turkish gas deposits to the EMOG “common pot”, or officially agree to exploit all alone only her own Turkish EEZ for potential gas resources.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, Balkans security remains vulnerable to Russia’s anti-Western strategy to undermine NATO’s integration of ex-Communist Eastern Europe/Baltics and Balkans (opposing Alliance Enlargements in 1999-2020s, fostering Serbia’s resentment on Kosovo, destabilizing Montenegro and Bosnia, opposing NATO’s Missile Defense in Romania and Poland), as well as the Euro-Atlantic pull to integrate also Georgia, Ukraine and other ex-Soviet successor states in Russia’s “Near-Abroad” orbit. NATO security in the “Post-Cold War” (1990-2021) after 40+ years of defensive strategy against the Soviet Union (USSR) and its Warsaw Pact’s Communist Satellites’ ideologico-military expansionism in Europe. The collapse of Soviet-ruled East Europe/Balkans and USSR’s disintegration in 15 states, plus regional ethno-nationalist civil wars in the post-Communist Balkans (Yugoslavia) led the U.S./NATO to launch innovative security policies to stabilize Eastern Europe, Baltics, Balkans, Russia and ex-Soviet successor states by extending NATO’s Euro-Atlantic Collective regional security architecture, arms-control, democratic values and peaceful cooperation from the “Cold War” (1946-90) 16 Allies to today’s 32 Allies and 30+ Partners. NATO first extended Western security architecture through interlocking regional Partnerships (NAC-C, European/EAPC, ex-Soviet, Mediterranean, Gulf and Strategic states), followed by 7 sequential NATO Enlargements (“Open Door”) to East European/Balkans/Nordic Partners (1999, 2002-04, 2009, 2017, 2020, 2022-23), paralleled by European Union Enlargements (1995, 2002-07, 2013) and Association-Partners. Secondly, the U.S., NATO and E.U. invested 25 years (1990-2013) to also integrate a semi-democratic Russia into the West through arms-control, the highest level of NATO’s Partnerships (“NATO+1”), joint NATO peacekeeping (1990s Bosnia and Kosovo Wars), anti-terrorism (2001-02 Second Afghan War), Western trade and Europe-Russia energy integration. However, since the late-1990s Russia has increasingly embraced virulent anti-Western/NATO, xenophobic, neo-nationalist rhetorics cementing Putin’s hold on power. Putin instrumentally condemned NATO’s Eastern expansions to Russia’s borders and sabotaged the bilateral “NATO+1” Partnership to justify his pan-Slavic and neo-Russian imperialist

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<sup>1</sup> Maurizio Carbone, “Introduction: Italy’s Foreign Policy and the Mediterranean” in *Modern Italy*, vol.13, n.2 (2008): p.111-113; Federiga Bindi, *Italy in the European Union* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2011); Leopoldo Nuti, “The Role of the U.S. in Italy’s Foreign Policy” in *The International Spectator*, vol.38, n.1 (2003): p.91-101; Colombo, “Rome’s Foreign Policy-Italy in East Mediterranean”, idem; Tanchum, “Turkish Military Maneuvering Pushed Italy and France to Join Forces in Mediterranean”, idem; Gasco, “Where does Italy Stand in the East Mediterranean Dispute?”, idem; Bloch & Saber, “What’s Driving Conflict in East Mediterranean”, idem.

agenda to split NATO and Europe (secret bribes of anti-E.U. politicians, Russian energy dependency), while isolating the U.S.A. at the U.N. (BRICS, Second Gulf War), Middle East and ex-Soviet Central Asia. Putin also used financially-rich Beijing to developed with Communist China a joint economico-security “protectorate” on ex-Soviet Central Asia (Collective Security Treaty Organization-CSTO and Shanghai Cooperation Organization-SCO) and penetrate the East Mediterranean and Middle East (Russia’s ambiguous ties with an ambivalent Turkey, penetration in Syria, naval drills with China and security cooperation with Islamic Iran), especially after Russia’s 2022-24 disastrous invasion of Ukraine seeking to reunify most ex-Soviet states (Belarus’, Ukraine, CSTO) in a neo-Russian Slavic empire against the West fully aligned in trade, security and dictatorship with Syria, Islamic Iran (destabilizing the Middle East) and Communist China (herself threatening to invade Taiwan).

Finally, Putin’s frozen wars in Georgia (2008), Crimea (2014) and East Ukraine/Donbas (2014-2021) sought to destabilize NATO as impotent to guarantee its Partners’ security, isolate NATO-E.U. security and trade from their ex-Soviet Partners (Caucasus, Central Asia and Ukraine through CSTO, Shanghai-7), and divide Europe from a strategically drifting U.S. (Obama, Trump, Biden) with the blackmail of E.U. energy-dependency on Russia. But Russia’s failure in 2022 to quickly conquer Ukraine, or split Europe and NATO with her botched energy-blackmails, and her horrendous war-crimes in Ukraine has sparked instead broad U.S.-Western sanctions and coordinated escalating military aid to Ukraine (2021-23: U.S.A. \$47 billions, plus \$15 billions by other NATO Allies), plus new NATO enlargements (Sweden and Finland), beefed-up NATO military defenses of its previously lightly armed “Eastern Flank” and Scandinavia, while decoupling Europe’s energy dependency from Russia, and promising future NATO-E.U. memberships for Ukraine and Georgia. In all these dramatic changes, Italy under new Premier and former post-Fascist leader Giorgia Meloni has positively shocked all observers by strongly siding the U.S., NATO and E.U. against Russia and China, while completely stomping previous pro-Putin and pro-China support among her junior Right-wing coalition partners (late-Senator Silvio Berlusconi’s *Forza Italia* and Matteo Salvini’s League). In this new Cold War era of “Global Strategic Confrontations” (2021-current) precipitated by the current dangerous global “coupling” of Russia-Communist China-Iran-Syria-North Korea vs. Euro-Atlantic defenses and East Asia Western security (“QUAD” and U.S.-Japan-South Korea and Philippines) Italy remains a strong regional player in the Balkans and Mediterranean within the democratic U.S./NATO/E.U./West bloc.<sup>1</sup>

### **Conclusion: from *Mare Nostrum* Imperialism to Today’s NATO-E.U. Regional Solidarity**

Italy’s policies towards the Balkans and East Mediterranean have long been conditioned by her historic weak national image as the “Least of the Powers” in Europe. Thus, Liberal Italy in 1870s-1922 pursued limited imperialist penetration in the Balkans (the Italian *Irredenta* and Albania) and East Mediterranean (Libya and Dodecanese), followed after World War I by limited regional influence and brief periods of dominance culminating under Fascism in the 1920s-40s with temporary political influence in the Balkans and imperial annexation of strategic neighbouring areas. In World War II, as the third Axis Power Fascist “*Grande Italia*”/“Greater Italy” had annexed by 1940-43 nearly all the *Irredenta* (Nizza, Corsica, Savoy, Dalmazia, but not Malta and Italian Switzerland) and all coveted strategic Adriatic/West Balkans *Hinterland* (“Greater Albania” with Kosovo, Slovenia, Montenegro and Greek islands from Corfú to Crete), securing almost full control of the Central and East Mediterranean just like Ancient Rome by annexing to *Grande Italia* also the “Fourth Coast” (Libya’s shoreline, and Tunisia by late-1942), plus Italian military Occupation Zones (France’s South-Alpine/Provence and most Greece). Mussolini’s future plans for an even larger Fascist Italian Neo-

<sup>1</sup> Marco Rimanelli, “NATO’s Post-Cold War Security, Partnerships and Peacekeeping in the Balkans, 1990s-2022”, in *Florida Political Chronicle*, vol.29, n.1 (Fall 2022): p.13-45; “A Visual Guide to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine” in *Bloomberg News* (2022): <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2022-ukraine-russia-us-nato-conflict/?leadSource=verify%20wall>; David Felsen, “Russia’s Foreign Policy and Destabilization of the Balkans”, unpublished lecture at 28 March 2022 Florida Political Sciences Association Conference at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, FL; David Felsen, “The Balkan Tangle Today”, unpublished lecture on 7 December 2023 at the San Diego World Affairs Council (SDWAC).

Roman colonial Empire would unite Italian North and East Africa (Libya, Horn of Africa, with the Somali area of Kenya, Egypt, Chad), while any Axis victorious peace treaty would also give her British Malta and Italian Switzerland, plus joint control with Nazi Germany also of the strategic Suez Canal. But Fascist Italy's increasing military weakness tied her conquests and "*Mare Nostrum*" empire more and more under Nazi Germany's superior military, while Rome failed to permanently turn into "client-states" the rest of the Axis Balkans (Hungary, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia) which gravitated under Berlin's stronger orbit. Then, still unable to fully integrate in 1940-43 all her ethnic conquests within her fragile nationalist "*Grande Italia*" wartime state-construct, Fascist Italy's defeats in 1943-45 saw the country's complete humiliating collapse and occupation by the Allies, a bloody civil war between Nazi-Fascists vs. pro-Allied partisans, and the post-war loss of most *Irredenta* annexed by both Liberal and Fascist Italy, all her colonies, as well as the relinquishment of her proud strong Navy which had fought the Allies to a standstill in 1942.

As the Cold War (1946-90) bipolar division of Europe left Italy frozen-out of her old markets now in Soviet-occupied Balkans/East Europe, both Cold War and post-Cold War (1990-current) forced a permanent total reversal of Rome's diplomatic posture and strategic priorities: no longer a "Third Force" Power between contending alliances, Euro-Atlantic Italy became a pro-U.S. Western democratic state as a key NATO front-line defensive Ally in case of World War III and a key E.U. trade-liaison in the Adriatic/Balkans. Regardless of Italy's happy politico-economic-military integration in both Western organizations and in the U.S. global economic system, the semi-clerical crypto-pacifist Christian Democrat-ruled First Republic rarely sought any more either a bolder pursuit of nationalist priorities, or any stronger institutional leadership role within either E.U. or NATO. Rome instead, pursued contently mostly passive, non-imperialist security and economic policies in the Cold War under the U.S.-led NATO and E.U. (always supportive, yet insisting only in her formal "participation" not actual leadership), while limiting her diplomatic approach to the Balkans and East Europe to economic cooperation with anti-Soviet communist Yugoslavia and supporting pro-Euro-Atlantic Greece and Turkey since the 1950s, as well as limited trade relations with Soviet communist enemies (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria). Italy's own 1990s domestic political collapse under illegal finance corruption scandals that destroyed almost all political parties, left her bereft of any coherent leadership and initiative to either annex in 1991 in some federative structure a lost newly-independent Slovenia, or play any dominant political role in the 1990s five Yugoslav Civil Wars, beyond her critical logistical and strong military involvement in NATO peacekeeping within the Adriatic/West Balkans. Within all other U.S.-Coalitions, NATO and U.N. peacekeeping missions abroad, Italy has participated with large combat forces to a series of missions in the Mediterranean and Middle East/Gulf, which during the previously polarized Cold War era would have been widely condemned as "imperialist" by the domestic Left, but since the end of Cold War bipolarism Italy has re-emerged as a team-player in all missions abroad, yet never seeking to turn this into any dominant political role within the shadows of the U.S.A. (like Great Britain and Germany have always succeeded): 1980s-now Multilateral Force Organization on the demilitarized Sinai; 1980s MNF I & II Lebanon peacekeeping; 1990-91 First Gulf War; 2003 Second Gulf War; 2003-11 Iraq peacekeeping; 2001-02 Second Afghan War; 2003-21 Afghan peacekeeping; 2000s anti-Pirate naval patrols off-East Africa; 2012 NATO air-strikes on Libya; and U.S.-NATO-Coalition air-strikes on the terrorist Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL/ISIS) until its violent demise (2013-19).<sup>1</sup>

Since losing after World War II all her past visions of a Balkans/Mediterranean neo-Roman empire, contemporary EuroAtlantic Italy has consistently eschewed any major nationalist, assertive or hostile foreign policy towards all her past areas-of-influence, which remain in the post-Cold War her key strategic regional economic and energy backyards. Instead, Italy's post-1946 diplomacy always focuses on preserving her special relations with the U.S.A., NATO and E.U., while studiously avoiding any major clash with her EuroAtlantic Allies or with other global Powers. And whenever, Rome's diplomatic margins of maneuver

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<sup>1</sup> M. Rimaneli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, idem; M. Rimaneli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; Bindi, *Italy in the European Union*, idem; Nuti, "The Role of the U.S. in Italy's Foreign Policy", idem, p.91-101; M. Rimaneli & J. McTague, "Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism & Hatred of West from Al-Qaeda to ISIL", idem, p.29-40.

shrunk too much, Italy then rarely struck back (Trieste; “Achille Lauro” hijacking; Libya; ENI’s energy interests), instead usually folding back into her role as a friendly Medium Power that prefers to quietly advance her key interests through bilateral agreements to achieve cooperation and bolster her national economy, while ensuing regional stability and peace. Thus, Italy’s main strategic aims remain the constructive pursuit of her four foreign policy pillars (U.S.A., NATO, E.U., Mediterranean), while assisting others to preserve Euro-Mediterranean regional stability to avoid major economic losses to her as all states involved in local disputes have now important long-term trade ties also to Italy.

Nevertheless, such insular-looking, politically and economically weak Italy remains mostly a passive Medium Power and Western “facilitator” also in the post-Cold War Balkans and East Mediterranean, applying a minimalist diplomatic profile just to support the gradual integration for regional European stability of all new Balkan democracies in the NATO-E.U. dual-Enlargements (Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Malta and Cyprus). Again, in the most recent flare-ups of regional tensions in the East Mediterranean, be it the cyclical six Arab-Israeli Wars, or the Two Gulf Wars against Saddam’s Iraq, or the four Gaza-Israel clashes provoked by Hamas Islamic terrorists, or ISIL’s brief bloody terrorist “Caliphate” over a third of Iraq and Syria, or the 2011-21 rival gas-exploration claims and confrontations staged by Turkey against Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Egypt, Rome has always aligned her diplomacy with the rest of the E.U. and in 2020 to support regional peace and stability, and for the first time has sent warships alongside France and E.U. members to patrol the new East Mediterranean energy “hot-spots”. But this post-imperialist, democratic and Euro-Atlantic Italy since 1946 remains self-marginalized by her own inner politico-economic fragility and economic decline (1946-1955, 1970s, 2000-2020s) as a declining “courtesy” G-7 Medium Power compared to U.S.-German regional dominance, and thus unable and unwilling to reformulate any past dreams of Balkans/East Mediterranean influence within this new NATO-E.U. dual regional system of democratic economico-security integration, or to take the leadership in peacekeeping missions abroad for regional stability. Only in her vital Mediterranean backyard has Rome (despite herself) succeeded in marrying the quick-thinking international business power-game of her autonomous ENI energy colossus with the traditionally-cautious national diplomacy to help forge regional energy cooperation that also covertly blocked and sidelined rival Turkey as a “spoiler”, while officially striving to help mediate and de-escalate all regional tensions threatening her interests.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. Rimanelli, *Italy between Europe & Mediterranean*, idem; M. Rimanelli, *Historical Dictionary of NATO*, idem; Carbone, “Introduction: Italy’s Foreign Policy and Mediterranean”, idem, p.111-113; Bindi, *Italy in the European Union*, idem; Nuti, “The Role of the U.S. in Italy’s Foreign Policy”, idem, p.91-101; M. Rimanelli & J. McTague, “Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism & Hatred of West from Al-Qaeda to ISIL”, idem, p.29-40; Bloch & Saber, “What’s Driving Conflicts in East Mediterranean”, idem; Colombo, “Rome’s Foreign Policy in East Mediterranean”, idem.

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## **Citizen Departure: Investigating Party Dissolution at the County Level**

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2023 Best FPSA Graduate Paper Award**

**ABSTRACT:** Over the past decade (2010s), a growing number of American voters have abandoned their political affiliations, seemingly disillusioned with the actions of their respective party and/or its candidates. This phenomenon will undoubtedly shift the political spectrum, having unforeseen consequences at every level government and in every aspect of the electioneering process. At a minimum, this shift away from traditional party status will have consequential impacts on closed primary systems. Unaffiliated voters currently comprise roughly 28% of the electorate in Florida and approximately 23% in New York. From these numbers alone, it is clear to see that the unaffiliated voter will have substantial impact on elections, either from their absence in primaries or their inclusion in general elections. Therefore, this paper will investigate trends in the unaffiliated populous at the county level, in the states of Florida and New York between 2012 and 2022. Through statistical analysis as well as the use of a geographic information system (GIS) and its resulting visuals, this paper will assist in elucidating party desertion variations at the county level in these two politically important states. Despite background level trends, all but one of the variables assessed in this study, which included things such as population, majority affiliation and year of occurrence, were not significant.

### **Introduction**

A recent national trend that has seen the number of unaffiliated voters surge, now thought to represent approximately 30%-40% of voters nationwide and overtopping one or both major political parties in some states (Jones, 2022). While slightly below this national average, from 2012 to 2022, the number of active registered unaffiliated voters has increased by 2.62% in New York and 6.03% in Florida, now accounting for 23.34% and 27.74% of the electorate respectively. Representing two of the most politically influential states in the United States of America, New York holds the 4<sup>th</sup> highest and Florida the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number of electoral votes for the 2024 Presidential Election, and attempts to understand the unaffiliated populous in these states is increasingly important. Despite these two states' close population sizes and implementation of a closed primary system, New York and Florida represent two considerably different geographical and political landscapes.

From 2012 to 2022 for example, New York's population has remained relatively stagnant, only increasing by roughly 100,000 persons from 19,570,261 to 19,677,151. Despite stagnation and even a recent reduction in population, New York's economy has continued to grow. Over this period, the total GDP in the state has increased by roughly 55% to a current level of 2.05 trillion Dollars. The state has relatively few major metropolitan areas that in terms of voting tendencies, often distinctly contrast from their surrounding rural areas. The Democratic Party has maintained control over the states' Governorship and were the majority in the House during this period, while Republicans held the majority in the State Senate until 2019. Additionally, New York has been a decidedly "Blue State" during national elections, voting heavily in favor of the Democratic candidate during this period and well before hand.

In contrast, the Florida State government has become exceptionally "Red" during this same period, with the local House, Senate and Governorship all remaining in Republican control. However, the states' battleground status coming through at the national level, giving slim majority votes to Presidents Barrack

Obama (D) in 2012 and Donald Trump (R) in 2020, with no candidate securing a majority in 2016. Florida state's population growth is also distinct from that of New York, adding 3,170,389 residents during this recent 10-years period, representing the nation's fastest growing state from 2021-2022 at 1.9% with a current population of 22,244,823 (Perry et al. 2022). Florida's economic productivity has also boomed during this period, with total GDP increasing by approximately 78% from 2012 to 2022 to a present level of 1.38 trillion Dollars, although still dwarfed by New York's total GDP. Florida has a much more diverse and dispersed set of important metropolitan areas and various interwoven suburban battleground counties that are more amenable to political change than the distinctly urban and rural areas of New York.

That being said anthropogenic geography, in the form of county boundaries, has taken precedent in this research particularly because it has been an understudied aspect of the unaffiliated voting population. Much of the research in the field has been directed towards understanding the individual characteristics of the those who decide to register as unaffiliated, their tendencies to align (or not) with traditional party values and possible impacts of various primary systems (Tuckel et al., 1988; Gerber et al., 2010; Rempala & Okdie, 2022). Perhaps where past studies are most relevant to this project, is their analysis of historic party dominance in a given region and its impact on retaining voters in closed primary systems. In a formative study by Arrington and Grofman in 1999, it was found states which featured closed primaries and had a history of single-party-dominance would encourage increased major party registration at the county level yet still maintain an aspect of hidden partisanship that is realized in national elections. In other words, single party states would encourage loosely representative registration that still facilitated competitive national races (Arrington & Grofman, 1999). Additionally, a few studies have tangentially addressed anthropogenic geography on unaffiliated voter tendencies. One such recent study by Bitzer et al. documented a tendency for unaffiliated voters to act increasingly as shadow Republicans as one moves further away from urban areas (Bitzer et al., 2022). However, this study by Bitzer also documented that unaffiliated voters have become increasingly distinct from our nations' two major parties in terms of political attitudes, behavior and demographics (Bitzer et al., 2022). Additionally, work by Kayser and Wlezien has hinted at the role of regional economies in swaying the occurrence of unaffiliated voter proliferation and impact (Kayser & Wlezien, 2011). Another related and important aspect of the distinct unaffiliated voter is their tendency to support strong-willed candidates with distinct personalities that may not always align with traditional party values (Kabashima & Imai, 2002). Unfortunately, many of these studies deal with unique cases, single states and or some other factor that restricts extrapolation to the broader scale. Therefore, that is why this study, although still limited, decided to focus on somewhat benign factors such as anthropogenic boundaries that may be more transferable from state to state.

This study will test various factors against average annual percent change data for active unaffiliated voters across counties in both states (see Tables 1-2). This study affirms the belief that county level data will be able to sufficiently deduce any significant differences between tested variables. It is also a purpose of this study to try to detect background level indicator data from freely available data that may act as a substitute for individualized *in-situ* data that may be more time consuming and or expensive to collect (i.e. polling, focus-groups). Through basic data visualization techniques, this study also hopes to transform otherwise cumbersome datasets into easily understandable illustrations. If successful, this information may aid campaign consultants and political advisors when deciding where to allocate their resources and provide contemporary insight into our constantly evolving political system.

### Methods and Data Sources

Data for this project was gathered from a variety of open-source platforms, as follows. As it relates to changes in active voter registration data, these numbers were derived from Voter Registration Reports issued by the Florida Department of Elections and Enrollment by County reports issued by the New York State Board of Elections. Due to data availability constraints, active unaffiliated voter numbers were used



from December of each year in Florida and from November of each year in New York. Despite this one-month difference, this author is confident that the data are comparable seeing that both dates fall so closely to the general election cycle and that those who wish to participate in said election in New York must register at least 30 days prior, thus ensuring their inclusion in this annual data. As part of this research an urban, suburban and rural county classification scheme was adopted and modified from the Center of Disease Control's, National Center for Health Statistics (Ingram & Franco, 2014). Within the original classification scheme there are six categories: Large Central Metro and Large Fringe Metro, Medium Metro and Small Metro, as well as Metropolitan and Non-Core counties. These dual groupings were condensed in this study to form three classifications: Urban, Suburban and Rural. County classification was based on 2013 numbers, due in part to data limitations and also for the purpose proper temporal analysis, especially in the rapidly growing state of Florida. During this study, counties were also analyzed based on their majority party affinity, meaning whether the county had a greater number of active registered Democrats or Republicans as of 2012. These numbers were gathered from the same datasets used for unaffiliated voter statistics. Also briefly analyzed during this study was county economic data, in particular, percent change in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 2012 to 2021. County GDP data was retrieved from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Microsoft Excel was utilized for all data analysis in this project with multiple statistical analyses implemented based on the format of the data being analyzed. A Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted on county population classification data (i.e. urban, rural) and average annual percentage change in active unaffiliated voter registrants. Kruskal-Wallis was used in place of a traditional ANOVA analysis, as the data was not normally distributed in the case of either state and data in Florida exhibited unequal variance. A two-sample t-Test Assuming Unequal Variances was used to assess possible differences in average annual percentage change of unaffiliated voters between Democratic and Republican controlled counties in New York and the same test, but assuming equal variances was used for counties in Florida. The two-sample t-Test Assuming Unequal Variances was also used when assessing the impact of Presidential election adjacent years (i.e. 2015-2016) with non-Presidential Election adjacent years (i.e. 2017-2018), in the only exploration within this study that does not explicitly focus on individual county analysis. The relationship between county percentage population change from 2012–2022 and average annual percentage change of unaffiliated voters was put through a regression analysis. Regression analysis was again employed when assessing the relationship between percentage change of GDP per county and average annual percentage change of unaffiliated voters.

ArcGIS Pro, a popular geographic information system was used to display these aforementioned data outputs where applicable. Feature classes brought into this program included only county boundary data that was garnered from vector layers found on Florida's Geospatial Open Data Portal and New York's GIS Clearinghouse, particularly the "USA Counties" and "Counties Shoreline" features respectively. Existing feature layer attribute tables were edited when needed to incorporate relevant data that was to be displayed. Standard symbology adjustments were made across many of the resulting layers to improve viewing quality. Most importantly, a graduated color scheme was used, which utilized a geometric interval fill methodology. While not altering the actual data, the geometric interval classification coloring scheme is useful in that it highlights differences between middle and extreme values and attempts to equalize the number of data points (counties) within each class.

## Results and Discussion

Despite some trends being perhaps visually noteworthy, all but one investigation presented no significant results. There was not a significant difference in the average annual unaffiliated voter percentage change among those urban, suburban and rural counties in Florida ( $H(2,64) = 1.09, P = 0.504$ ) or New York ( $H(2,59) = 1.37, P = 0.503$ ) (see Figures 1-4/7-10). No significant difference was observed

between Republican and Democratic majority counties regarding average annual percentage change in active unaffiliated voters in Florida ( $P = 0.744$ ) or New York ( $P = 0.075$ ) (see Figures 5-6/11-12). Percentage change in a county's GDP was not a predictor of average percentage change in unaffiliated voters in Florida ( $R^2 = 0.024$ ,  $F(1, 65) = 1.576$ ,  $P = 0.214$ ) or New York ( $R^2 = 0.007$ ,  $F(1, 60) = 0.442$ ,  $P = 0.509$ ) (see Figures 13-14). The percentage change of a county's population from 2012-2022 was not a predictor of average percentage change in unaffiliated voters in Florida ( $R^2 = 0.007$ ,  $F(1, 65) = 0.496$ ,  $P = 0.482$ ) (see Figure 15). This operation was only performed for the State of Florida because of the rapid population increase over the past decade. No significant relationship was found for unaffiliated voter percentage change between Presidential Election adjacent years and non-Presidential Election adjacent years in Florida ( $P = 0.397$ ). However, a significant difference was found for unaffiliated voter percentage change between Presidential Election adjacent years and non-Presidential Election adjacent years in New York ( $P < 0.001$ ), where Presidential Election adjacent years saw a greater level of voters registering as unaffiliated.

From these results emerge two overarching themes. The first is that although Florida and New York are functioning at two different levels in terms of their annual average percentage change in unaffiliated active registered voters during the 2012-2022 time-period, with Florida's 67 counties averaging a 5.38% increase and New York's 62 counties averaging only a 2.38% increase, various geographical factors are operating in the same fashion. This is evident by the non-significant differences noted in average unaffiliated voter population change among rural, suburban and urban counties in both states, as well as Democratic and Republican majority counties expressing non-significant changes in these numbers within both states and changes in GDP not being a predictor of change among this voter population in either New York or Florida. Additionally, although percentage change of a county's population from 2012-2022 was not a predictor of average percentage change in unaffiliated voters in Florida, this influx of residents may still be contributing to the state's higher overall level of unaffiliated voters.

The second and somewhat contradictory overarching theme is that relatively coarse county level data is simply incapable of determining differences among populations. For example, perhaps smaller areas such as census tracts may have proved more effective. Another concern is evident when considering some of the data utilized for my analysis. For example, the modified population classification data from the NCHS is based off the extrapolation of metro area data to surrounding counties and may not be truly representative of a county's proper classification. This concern comes to fruition when comparing metro area maps to county classifications and through personal experience in these classified areas, an example of this being the classification of Onondaga County in New York (pop  $\approx 475,000$ ) being classified by the NCHS as a medium metro area, while Orleans County, N.Y. (pop  $\approx 40,000$ ) was classified by the NCHS as a large fringe metro area seemingly because of its setting between Buffalo and Rochester, N.Y. These initial classifications led to an improper modified classification of these counties where Orleans was coded as urban and Onondaga was coded as suburban, where in actuality, Onondaga is likely best classified as urban and Orleans as rural. Additionally, the method used to classify Republican and Democrat counties in this study may have been insufficient. As while a purely numerical dominance classification scheme as was used here, may have some merit, it seems that a more accurate classification scheme may have incorporated a given county's voting tendencies. For example, many rural counties across north Florida were coded for Democrats in this study yet these counties consistently vote Republican during general election cycles. This may be attributed to the former dominance of the Democratic Party in the state and a specific group of its registrants that no longer truly affiliate with the party (i.e. Blue Dog Democrats). If these supposed inconsistencies and or inadequacies however would prove to be inconsequential, then this study shall purport that county level data would definitively be proven to be incapable of detecting significant trends among the unaffiliated voter population.

In regard to this study's examination of Presidential Election adjacent and non-adjacent years, the results lend credence to other studies which attribute major changes in the number of unaffiliated voters

to strong and or popular candidates that may break from party norms. For example, even though no significant difference between these two-times classes was found in Florida, the influence of the dramatic 2016 and 2020 elections is hard to ignore. Out of the state's 67 counties, 50 of them experienced their maximum swing in unaffiliated voter percentage change (all positive) during years adjacent to these contentious Presidential Elections which featured candidates that often broke from party norms or at a minimum led to increased fractures within their party. This pattern was much stronger in New York, where a significant difference was present and all but 2 of the 62 counties, which experienced their maximum swing in unaffiliated voter percent change (all positive) during years adjacent to the 2016 and 2020 Presidential Elections. Although these temporal changes are significantly different in New York, they are numerically lesser than in Florida which may be attributed to the state's long standing and relatively stable partisan efforts, unlike Florida which has experienced significant partisan swings as of recent and which would be supported by the findings of other studies.

This study was unique in that it attempted to address change in unaffiliated voters over time instead of solely through contemporary analysis that often focuses on the most recent round of elections. That being said, it is difficult to compare many of the results here to others. However, findings in this study did not support the sentiment presented by Kayser and Wlezien (2011) that regional economies may impact the occurrence of unaffiliated voters. Yet it is important to note that a cursory investigation into this relationship revealed that by substituting contemporary poverty rates with GDP in these areas would support their claims, but inadequate temporal data did not allow for that relationship to be examined here. The importance of election adjacent years that was presented in this study, aligns with and expands upon county level data that was assessed by Gimpel et al. in 2011. Following the work by Gimpel, it may be interesting to see how major party registrant rates compare to unaffiliated registration rates during these times, contemporarily. Overall, the well-known theme of the population of a state with closed primaries increasingly registering with a major party as discussed in Thornburg 2014 does not seem to be the case in either New York or Florida, where the number of unaffiliated voters continues to grow. This study's findings related to a county's population growth and the impact of Democratic or Republican majority does not support earlier claims made by Hood and McKee (2010) when migrants were considered to substantially increase the number of unaffiliated voters in a county as well as support for Democrats, both states in this study displaying increasingly "red" representation (N.Y. in terms of competitive Gubernatorial and Presidential races).

## Conclusion

County level data may be an inadequate substitution to *in-situ* and or fine level data when investigating trends in unaffiliated voter change. However, if trends presented in this study hold true across other levels of measurement, then it seems as though people experiencing very different styles of living are becoming equally dissatisfied with both major parties in the U.S. This would signal a change from whatever initial differences led to urban and generally Democrat majority areas having greater levels of unaffiliated voters than their rural and generally Republican counterparts. Similar future studies should consider creating their own county classification system and consider assessing Democrat and Republican County labels based off of voting tendencies instead of numerical representation, to account for shadow voters. Additionally, perhaps it would be wise to focus on the impact of economic variables such as poverty instead of GDP on the change in unaffiliated voters. Further research must be directed toward understanding the unaffiliated voting population, as their continued rise in closed primary states may serve to alter a variety of electioneering processes and lead to increasingly polarized major parties that will likely become unfettered by dissatisfied moderates abandoning their ranks. Studies have shown that the unaffiliated voter is becoming increasingly distinct from major party values, and only by understanding this population can one appeal to them.

FLORIDA	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	Pop. Class	Party	Average
Alachua	-7.87	9.73	2.38	10.20	3.37	7.41	-0.33	0.47	4.03	-2.70	S	D	2.67
Baker	6.00	5.14	1.08	19.92	10.25	3.41	8.93	8.09	10.44	7.33	U	D	8.06
Bay	-3.57	11.73	-2.57	12.58	7.34	4.63	-5.99	9.59	-1.10	9.05	S	R	4.17
Bradford	6.03	7.95	6.93	2.56	16.66	4.37	2.45	3.73	-0.72	7.70	R	D	5.77
Brevard	1.48	9.57	5.61	7.71	12.83	3.86	0.69	2.84	2.07	6.97	S	R	5.36
Broward	-2.13	2.97	5.16	7.86	6.08	0.52	0.65	5.81	3.31	2.98	U	D	3.32
Calhoun	7.67	7.27	5.56	8.22	12.46	5.91	-5.98	5.61	-5.72	5.74	R	D	4.67
Charlotte	3.59	10.80	0.59	4.80	12.86	4.29	6.64	0.21	2.65	4.78	S	R	5.12
Citrus	6.06	3.37	2.32	4.98	11.21	3.28	-3.93	4.93	1.58	4.59	S	R	3.84
Clay	4.74	7.96	9.99	1.99	13.98	1.39	0.47	0.63	0.01	6.60	U	R	4.78
Collier	0.06	11.83	-1.79	9.68	4.61	7.72	-9.22	16.03	5.11	8.67	S	D	5.27
Columbia	6.52	9.33	6.89	5.49	16.67	2.42	3.66	7.65	-0.94	2.86	R	D	6.06
Desoto	4.76	-1.19	1.82	6.09	14.69	7.03	0.03	6.38	2.70	7.36	R	D	4.97
Dixie	2.81	12.24	2.27	8.78	16.67	0.65	1.93	7.44	-1.94	6.16	R	D	5.70
Duval	-0.34	7.34	1.84	6.44	11.38	8.10	2.69	3.64	0.69	5.57	U	R	4.73
Escambia	0.43	10.09	-0.53	6.84	8.01	6.43	2.25	7.74	-2.11	4.50	S	R	4.37
Flagler	1.59	10.76	3.83	0.58	5.69	3.57	1.00	-0.60	1.89	6.78	S	D	3.51
Franklin	9.27	13.76	8.16	6.24	20.32	4.48	6.62	-0.46	5.23	12.03	R	D	8.56
Gadsden	1.23	5.84	1.29	7.36	14.38	6.29	3.38	6.70	-2.18	5.64	S	R	4.99
Gilchrist	4.19	8.72	-1.05	1.41	19.18	7.46	2.28	3.66	-13.10	9.66	S	D	4.24
Glades	9.94	-12.30	15.83	5.18	18.41	5.40	-3.79	6.31	-6.78	11.41	R	D	4.96
Gulf	13.78	10.01	13.03	6.06	8.43	4.32	6.30	-5.69	10.99	9.75	S	D	7.70
Hamilton	-0.87	9.99	5.21	7.36	9.10	3.58	1.78	7.81	-5.53	15.34	R	D	5.38
Hardee	0.15	9.10	10.27	12.06	16.29	10.60	5.81	5.61	4.38	9.03	R	D	8.33
Hendry	0.12	11.84	3.15	4.45	9.79	5.79	1.92	5.98	-0.33	13.00	R	D	5.57
Hernando	4.49	10.13	2.80	4.34	14.53	1.30	3.89	3.28	2.28	0.19	U	R	4.72
Highlands	5.74	13.97	0.72	9.84	10.67	3.71	4.03	8.82	2.04	6.60	S	R	6.61
Hillsborough	-3.40	8.20	4.98	9.15	5.03	6.08	-0.80	6.70	-0.93	5.81	U	D	4.08
Holmes	0.68	13.13	-2.99	0.62	-1.66	9.24	8.71	6.51	-3.16	8.27	R	D	3.93
Indian River	8.08	7.54	5.93	3.64	15.91	2.14	1.76	0.69	-10.77	7.36	S	R	4.23
Jackson	3.70	-0.60	5.79	4.53	1.01	8.18	4.72	4.13	-2.97	3.84	R	D	3.23
Jefferson	3.86	16.07	6.92	1.44	26.00	4.22	0.00	1.89	-1.68	7.82	S	D	6.66
Lafayette	5.63	2.67	1.30	8.55	17.72	0.33	8.00	-1.54	-1.25	7.94	R	D	4.93
Lake	1.12	11.65	3.37	11.16	14.75	7.40	3.28	9.50	1.23	9.16	U	R	7.26
Lee	5.67	10.55	5.95	-2.21	11.90	5.03	3.11	2.56	5.42	3.64	S	R	5.16

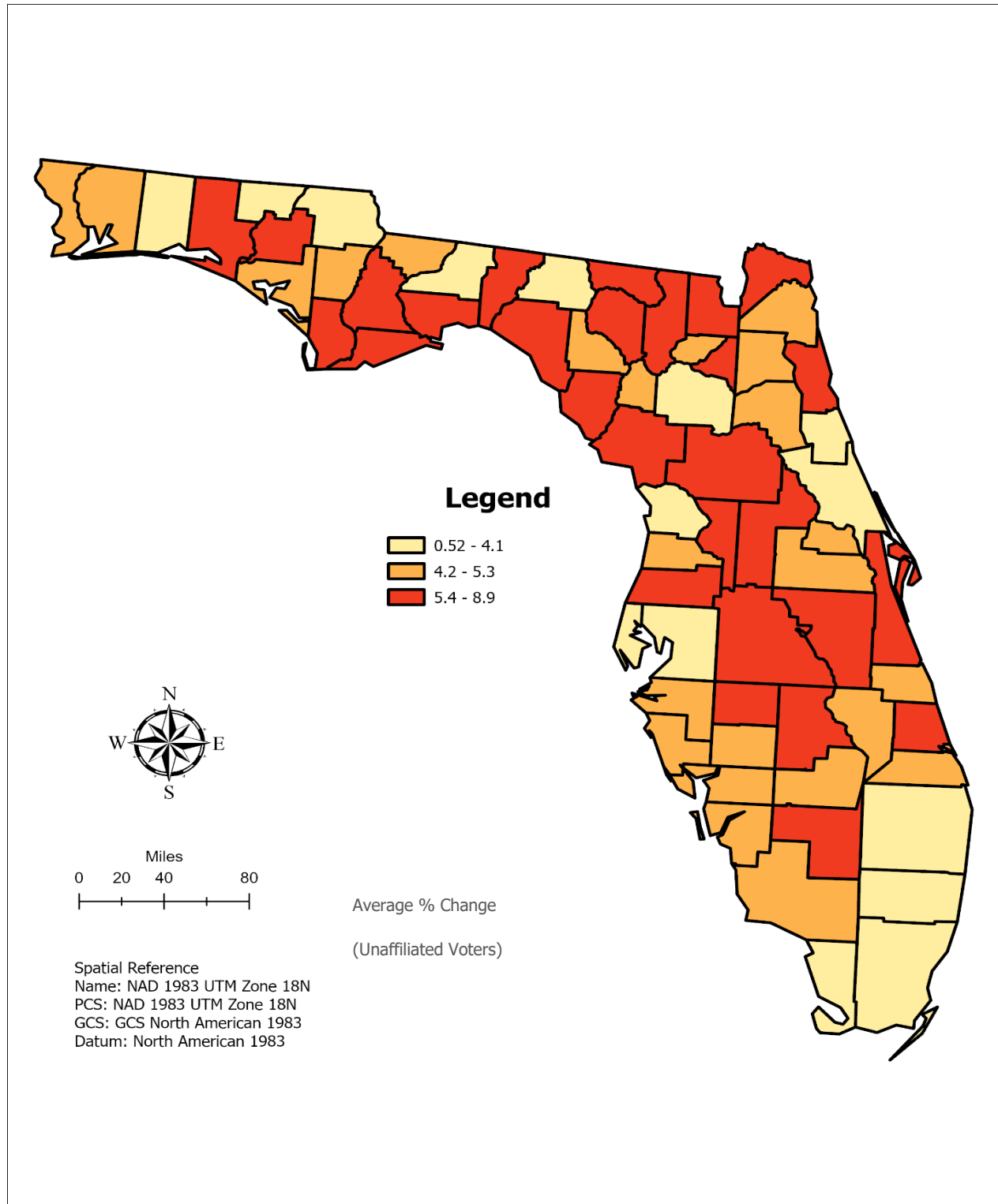
Leon	-1.50	11.47	-1.57	7.78	10.81	6.82	-0.49	-5.57	-2.81	8.24	S	D	3.32
Levy	10.94	9.10	2.84	9.67	25.86	5.13	3.06	2.76	-2.74	10.37	R	D	7.70
Liberty	11.26	19.84	11.49	5.76	0.57	11.68	9.18	7.48	-5.65	5.76	R	D	7.74
Madison	-1.70	4.32	2.90	4.13	22.44	4.03	3.19	-0.37	3.69	-1.85	R	D	4.08
Manatee	-0.47	5.01	3.77	8.30	10.83	4.96	2.39	5.26	1.67	5.72	S	R	4.74
Marion	3.03	7.64	2.94	4.39	25.80	5.49	1.50	3.94	2.01	7.50	S	R	6.43
Martin	4.72	12.63	2.61	4.47	21.40	1.40	-3.89	4.56	-2.20	5.64	S	R	5.13
Miami-Dade	-1.82	5.81	-1.71	14.80	4.57	5.46	1.79	6.47	-2.66	4.51	U	D	3.72
Monroe	3.57	3.01	3.40	-2.06	6.53	-8.18	-2.64	0.87	2.39	-1.73	R	R	0.52
Nassau	10.12	14.94	9.76	0.77	24.14	3.98	-0.82	7.35	1.40	12.06	U	R	8.37
Okaloosa	-7.66	12.37	1.00	11.59	0.43	7.12	-1.86	12.53	-6.72	10.12	S	R	3.89
Okeechobee	3.30	11.83	1.73	4.72	13.76	6.53	3.16	3.23	-1.37	4.72	R	D	5.16
Orange	2.18	9.01	-3.89	15.35	11.07	0.94	3.03	2.81	0.99	6.08	U	D	4.76
Osceola	1.90	10.15	5.35	12.13	12.37	6.56	5.16	8.78	1.86	8.68	U	D	7.29
Palm Beach	-1.08	7.60	-0.18	7.73	13.38	1.21	3.54	2.18	-2.29	5.86	U	D	3.80
Pasco	-2.12	10.53	5.80	10.96	16.97	4.47	1.49	7.38	2.08	7.68	U	R	6.52
Pinellas	1.23	8.36	0.14	1.41	14.43	4.57	1.68	-1.44	1.49	2.49	U	D	3.44
Polk	7.94	5.76	12.15	11.40	11.50	6.94	5.16	-2.48	5.55	-1.11	S	D	6.28
Putnam	7.88	11.74	6.57	2.42	6.41	4.86	3.70	3.05	-0.31	3.89	R	D	5.02
Santa Rosa	7.06	8.27	-0.91	8.29	9.80	5.05	0.42	7.16	-1.48	8.45	U	R	5.21
Sarasota	0.10	8.86	3.61	5.12	12.95	3.86	-1.32	3.14	4.66	3.56	S	R	4.45
Seminole	-2.25	3.18	2.92	10.43	7.51	8.14	4.09	6.34	-0.09	8.97	S	R	4.92
St. Johns	2.83	14.37	2.44	5.46	14.14	3.17	1.54	3.27	5.95	9.95	S	R	6.31
St. Lucie	5.27	3.73	6.59	4.46	15.49	4.28	-0.40	5.72	2.97	9.24	U	D	5.74
Sumter	13.65	12.24	18.46	3.87	13.75	4.96	3.62	-1.60	9.66	9.99	S	R	8.86
Suwannee	4.29	9.78	7.42	6.87	21.04	4.69	0.60	5.89	2.98	9.46	R	D	7.30
Taylor	-0.75	9.72	2.30	5.06	24.95	6.43	2.42	3.22	10.59	0.00	R	D	6.39
Union	3.04	19.49	-1.32	6.68	17.84	-1.73	1.35	1.47	-4.73	8.83	R	D	5.09
Volusia	-1.82	8.11	2.32	9.01	12.36	-0.20	-2.46	6.75	-0.02	6.44	S	D	4.05
Wakulla	5.96	13.86	6.05	6.00	18.80	5.09	3.15	8.62	2.21	11.23	S	D	8.10
Walton	10.75	12.38	5.46	4.79	11.75	1.96	6.00	9.87	1.38	5.38	S	R	6.97
Washington	5.41	3.74	8.55	6.99	19.66	4.63	12.03	5.05	-0.56	-4.91	R	D	6.06

**Table 1:** Annual percentage change in active registered unaffiliated voters in Florida, 2012–22. “Pop. Class” is coded population classification for each county (“R”= Rural, “S”= Suburban, “U”= Urban). “Party” as two major U.S. political parties with largest active registrants (“D”= Democrat, “R”= Republican), “Average” column on Right is average percentage change in unaffiliated voters.

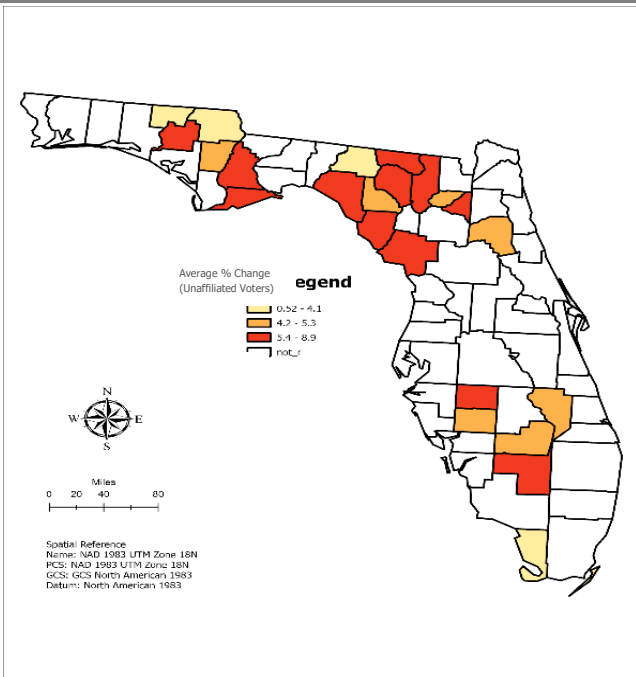
NEW YORK	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	Pop. Class	Party	Average
Albany	-0.17	-1.04	-1.25	9.50	-3.40	2.75	1.42	11.02	3.49	4.99	S	D	2.73
Allegany	1.79	3.69	5.56	8.50	-1.38	3.47	0.31	7.70	3.65	2.04	R	R	3.53
Bronx	1.16	-3.42	0.79	12.77	0.30	4.49	9.31	10.44	4.49	-3.64	U	D	3.67
Broome	-2.87	0.21	1.40	7.46	-4.00	4.90	1.90	12.27	0.70	5.12	S	D	2.71
Cattaraugus	1.43	-0.09	-0.19	4.96	-1.44	2.16	1.05	8.19	2.63	3.49	R	R	2.22
Cayuga	2.71	1.67	0.60	5.54	-1.18	2.19	1.59	9.85	3.48	4.16	R	R	3.06
Chautauqua	0.82	-0.03	0.33	2.30	-2.37	1.07	1.34	7.36	1.59	2.92	R	D	1.53
Chemung	2.56	0.56	0.89	5.36	-1.85	4.12	-2.67	9.10	2.16	1.79	S	R	2.20
Chenango	0.52	1.19	0.64	4.46	-3.41	1.71	0.38	8.19	3.04	25.42	R	R	4.21
Clinton	1.67	-0.53	0.69	3.54	-3.64	3.83	-0.05	8.07	2.10	5.37	R	D	2.10
Columbia	0.06	1.02	-1.60	4.61	-1.73	3.05	-0.27	5.75	2.35	-3.48	R	D	0.98
Cortland	2.03	-0.73	0.17	3.86	0.07	1.58	-2.87	3.11	0.52	4.24	R	R	1.20
Delaware	0.76	0.55	1.16	4.79	-2.30	2.12	1.63	11.89	4.99	1.23	R	R	2.68
Dutchess	0.08	-0.38	1.27	5.40	-3.20	2.53	-0.16	8.06	3.15	1.69	U	D	1.84
Erie	1.84	1.28	2.39	7.83	-1.38	2.86	2.82	12.08	1.77	4.66	U	D	3.62
Essex	3.58	-3.15	-2.64	6.09	-3.37	3.37	2.25	10.14	1.29	2.82	R	R	2.04
Franklin	-1.13	1.01	-2.22	4.47	-3.97	2.72	2.71	14.05	3.47	4.23	R	D	2.53
Fulton	6.29	-0.15	3.38	9.48	-6.20	-0.28	1.80	11.86	6.61	3.90	R	R	3.67
Genesee	-0.58	2.50	2.31	6.28	-0.86	1.72	-3.43	7.98	0.72	2.74	R	R	1.94
Greene	-0.93	1.16	-0.46	3.36	-2.11	1.43	-0.05	10.23	1.86	1.29	R	R	1.58
Hamilton	1.33	0.93	1.11	2.75	-0.36	1.07	0.18	8.83	9.42	4.30	R	R	2.96
Herkimer	-1.89	-0.22	0.00	7.43	-0.88	-0.50	0.62	9.59	4.73	2.38	S	R	2.13
Jefferson	1.21	0.57	-4.62	10.82	-2.11	3.44	-1.30	12.76	3.13	-0.07	S	R	2.38
Kings	2.02	-3.91	1.20	12.85	-1.65	3.54	4.25	6.35	-0.04	-4.19	U	D	2.04
Lewis	-1.50	4.32	0.41	6.21	-2.70	2.20	1.65	8.49	3.38	3.34	R	R	2.58
Livingston	1.58	-1.87	-0.05	10.79	-1.91	4.66	-1.29	2.68	1.49	2.57	U	R	1.87
Madison	1.74	1.24	1.76	3.55	-2.16	2.61	1.11	7.23	2.56	0.49	S	R	2.01
Monroe	0.48	1.11	-2.28	10.49	-3.48	2.96	-1.54	9.18	1.79	3.27	U	D	2.20
Montgomery	4.08	1.33	0.97	5.99	-1.85	2.77	1.64	8.36	3.45	4.14	R	R	3.09
Nassau	1.99	0.93	2.48	7.30	-1.04	-3.40	1.60	8.53	1.24	2.26	U	D	2.19
New York	-2.08	-7.74	-3.72	18.73	-1.47	2.58	3.03	3.31	-2.10	-7.43	U	D	0.31
Niagara	1.41	0.17	1.95	7.22	-0.21	2.59	1.62	10.18	3.85	4.84	U	D	3.36
Oneida	0.37	-6.26	-0.57	9.44	-4.99	5.45	-0.35	8.73	4.96	2.17	S	R	1.90
Onondaga	0.13	-0.74	0.68	5.09	-1.94	1.98	1.38	8.80	1.04	2.56	S	D	1.90

Ontario	5.31	1.85	0.50	7.35	0.18	3.26	1.30	6.75	4.92	1.81	U	R	3.32
Orange	3.14	-0.80	1.45	7.70	-2.11	3.54	0.71	11.52	4.08	1.81	U	D	3.10
Orleans	-0.11	1.29	0.06	6.45	-3.21	2.37	-0.59	7.46	4.15	3.91	U	R	2.18
Oswego	2.48	1.38	-2.02	7.44	-2.76	2.53	-0.03	11.81	4.01	3.10	S	R	2.80
Otsego	0.69	-0.25	1.06	5.19	-2.07	0.95	0.28	7.75	4.03	5.11	R	R	2.27
Putnam	0.62	0.24	1.06	6.48	-1.86	1.87	1.04	10.53	3.01	1.80	U	R	2.48
Queens	2.69	-3.82	2.76	13.54	0.44	4.19	5.54	8.61	0.52	-1.52	U	D	3.29
Rensselaer	-0.42	1.72	-2.97	4.46	-0.99	0.32	-0.88	7.11	2.96	1.83	S	D	1.31
Richmond	2.03	-0.13	1.01	10.68	-0.13	3.91	4.28	9.77	2.94	-0.71	U	D	3.37
Rockland	-0.21	0.29	2.02	7.34	-2.10	2.61	2.67	6.41	1.41	0.72	U	D	2.12
Saratoga	3.10	-1.71	1.39	8.89	-2.29	3.30	0.19	12.02	4.34	5.00	R	R	3.42
Schenectady	0.99	0.83	1.90	5.26	-1.73	2.22	0.46	9.49	4.13	2.85	S	D	2.64
Schoharie	1.05	-0.02	0.02	6.12	-4.63	1.77	3.31	10.18	2.76	2.73	S	R	2.33
Schuyler	1.00	2.47	0.64	5.51	-3.63	2.63	1.45	6.64	-0.25	4.22	S	R	2.07
Seneca	2.04	0.47	1.35	4.09	-0.79	4.08	-1.12	8.51	4.50	3.22	R	R	2.64
St. Lawrence	0.06	-1.14	1.28	4.76	-2.94	4.79	1.16	6.73	1.31	3.06	R	D	1.91
Steuben	-1.86	2.29	1.01	8.65	-1.56	2.43	1.92	9.49	5.58	3.57	R	R	3.15
Suffolk	1.32	-0.09	1.67	7.06	-3.29	2.23	1.02	8.37	2.16	1.09	U	D	2.16
Sullivan	1.68	1.48	-0.36	4.32	-2.22	2.70	-3.76	9.42	-0.06	0.52	R	D	1.37
Tioga	3.01	-1.15	1.40	4.66	-2.08	3.14	-0.92	8.19	3.56	1.82	S	R	2.16
Tompkins	0.11	-3.95	1.51	5.13	-3.52	2.59	-1.82	5.34	0.59	5.04	S	D	1.10
Ulster	-0.04	-1.29	-0.40	3.92	-3.13	0.15	-2.99	6.48	0.56	2.40	S	D	0.57
Warren	-1.62	-0.97	1.43	6.97	-2.59	2.77	0.69	13.43	5.71	5.78	S	R	3.16
Washington	-0.96	-0.88	-0.31	7.99	-2.29	4.63	0.62	12.88	4.82	3.45	S	R	2.99
Wayne	1.16	1.05	0.42	6.60	-2.68	1.14	-0.68	8.36	2.78	2.29	U	R	2.04
Westchester	-1.38	2.59	0.99	11.43	-4.84	2.53	0.44	7.32	2.47	-0.84	U	D	2.07
Wyoming	2.57	1.02	1.11	6.50	-5.71	3.93	0.88	9.39	2.46	2.62	R	R	2.48
Yates	4.22	1.75	-0.38	5.53	-2.48	2.43	-1.13	6.86	4.10	3.15	U	R	2.41

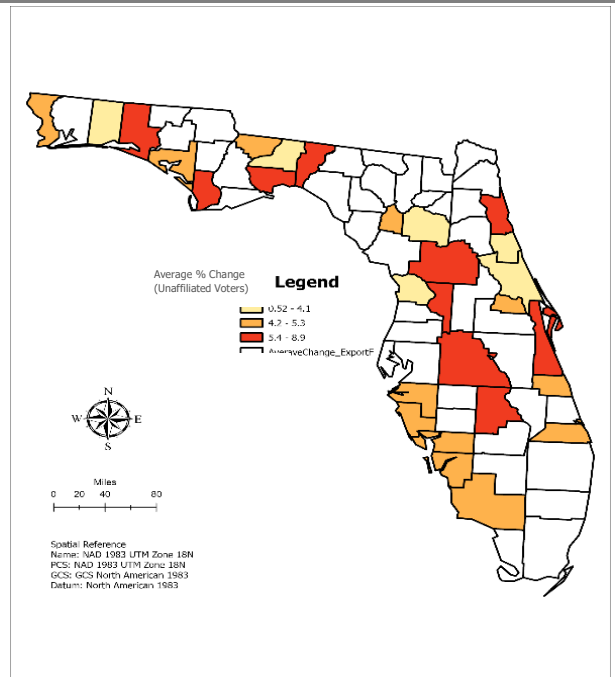
**Table 2:** Annual percentage change in active registered unaffiliated voters in New York from 2012–2022. “Pop. Class” refers to the coded population classification for each county, where “R” = Rural/“S” = Suburban/“U” = Urban. “Party” refers to the one of two traditional major political parties, which has the larger number of active registrants in the county, where “D” = Democrat and “R” = Republican. The “Average” column on the far-Right represents the average percentage change in unaffiliated voter population for each county from 2012-2022.



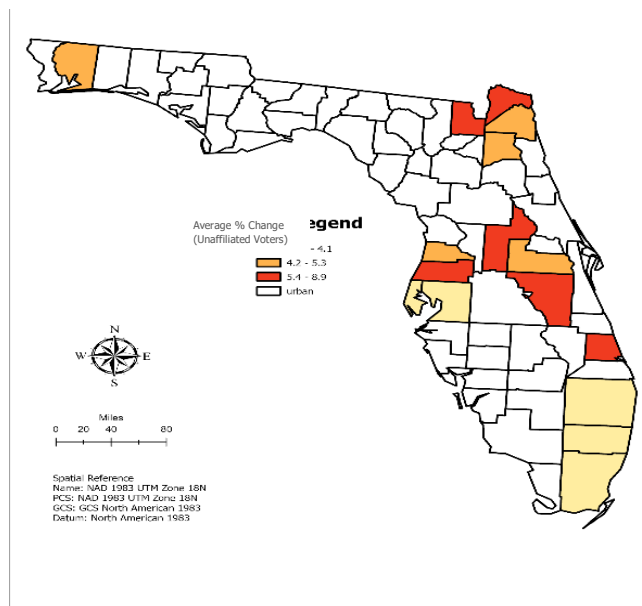




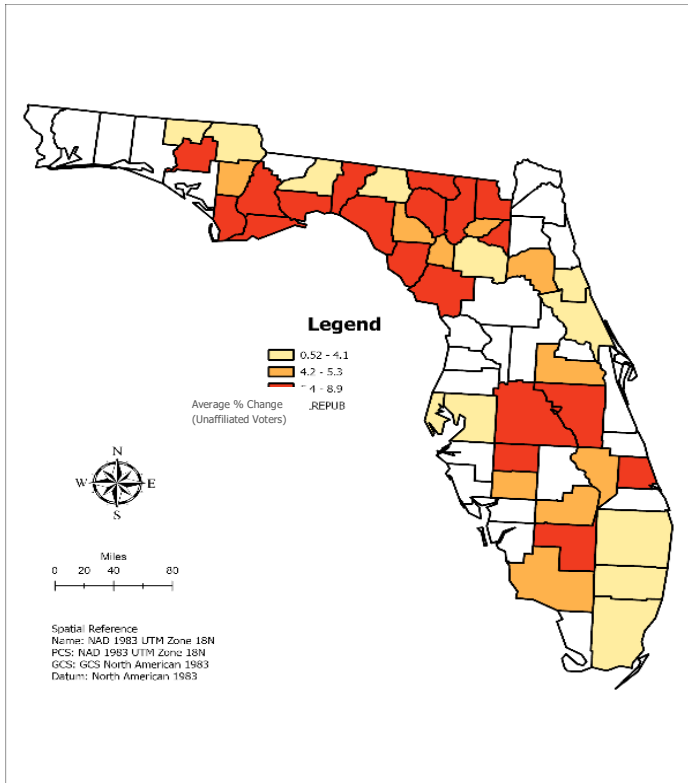
**Figure 2 (Above):** Map highlighting those counties classified as rural, along with their associated average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (2012-2022).



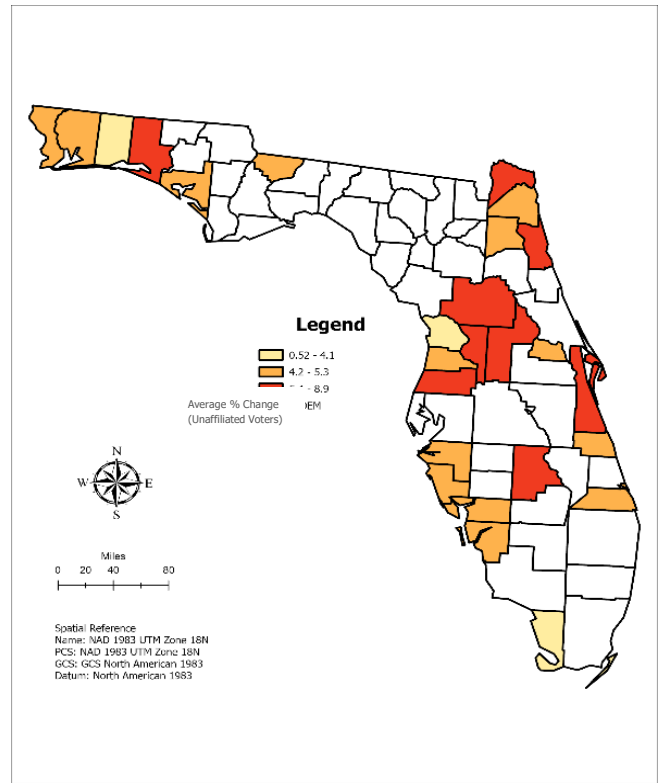
**Figure 3 (Above):** Map highlighting those counties classified as suburban, along with their associated average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (2012-2022).



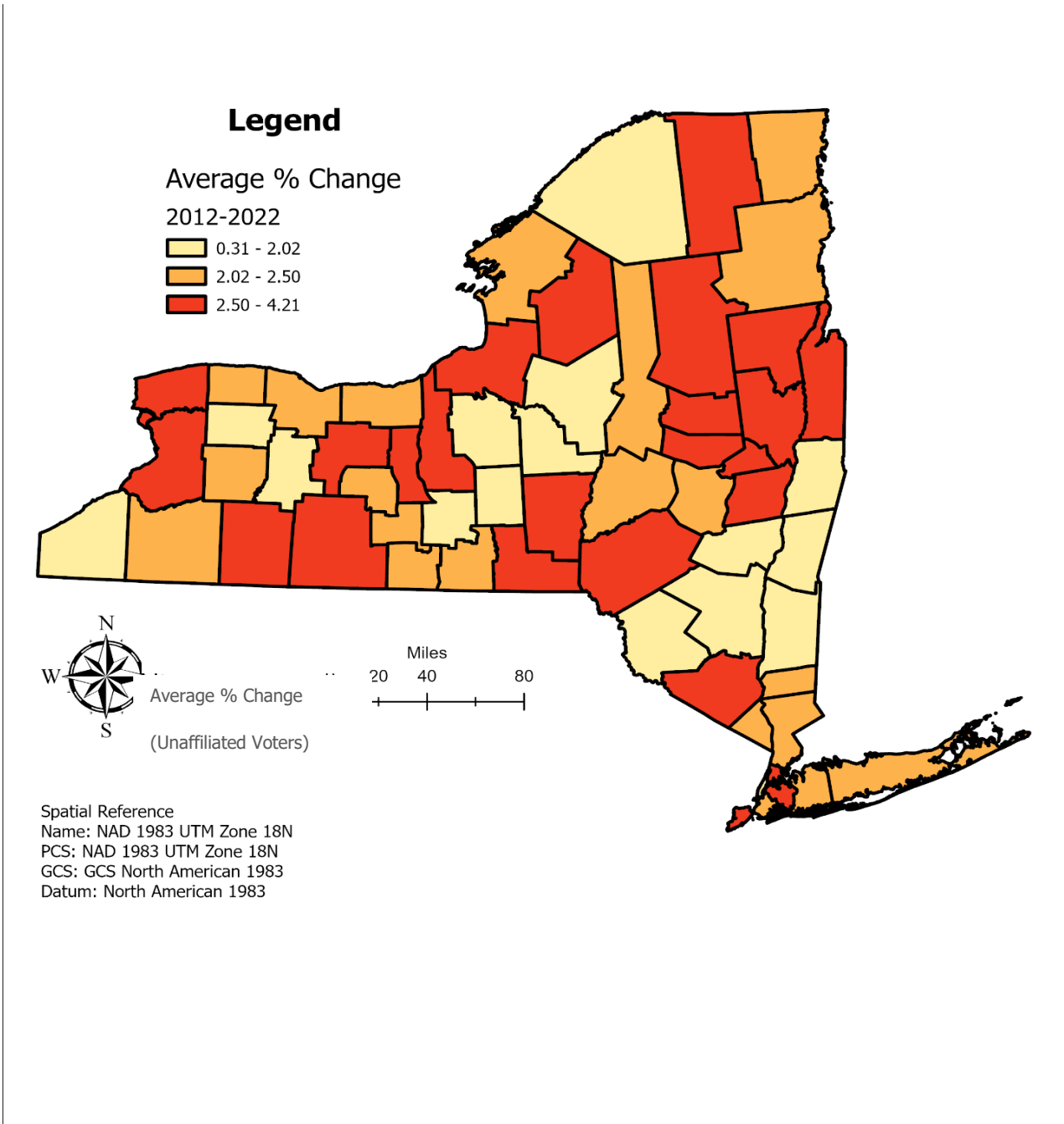
**Figure 4 (Above):** Map highlighting those counties classified as urban, along with their associated average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (2012-2022).



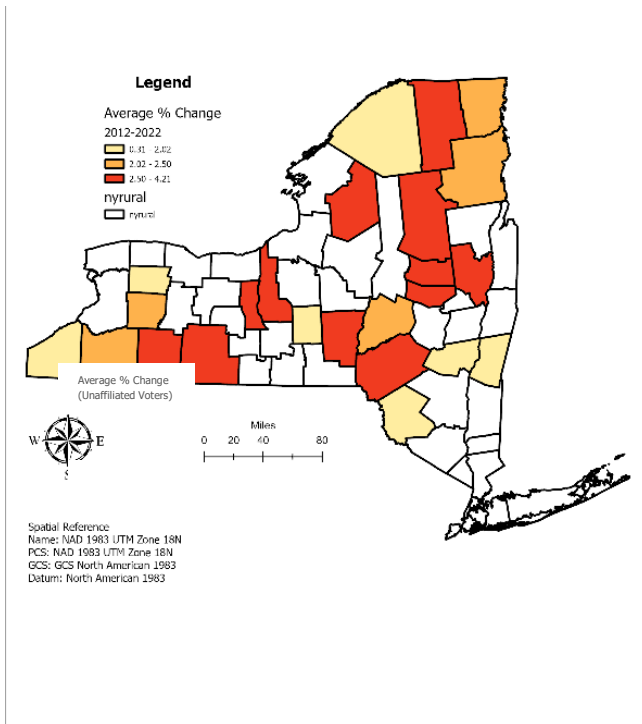
**Figure 5 (Above):** Map highlighting those Democrat majority counties, along with their associated average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (2012-2022).



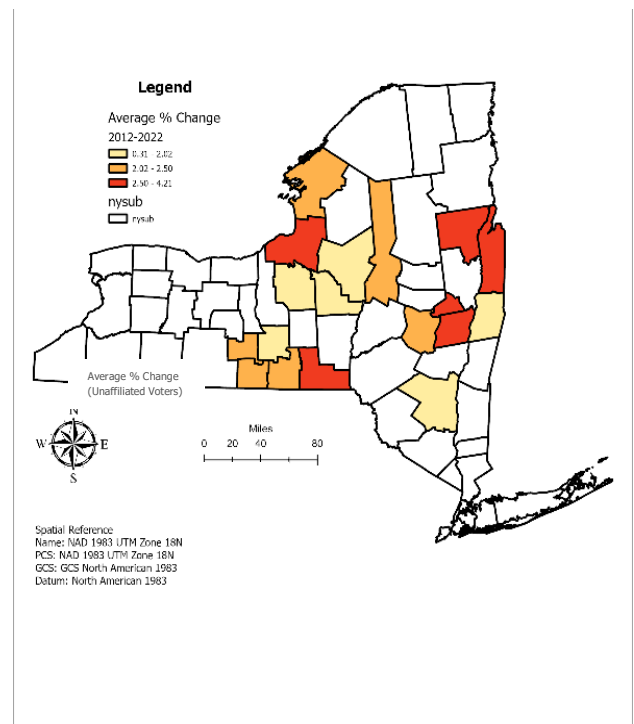
**Figure 6 (Above):** Map highlighting those Republican majority counties, along with their associated average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (2012-2022).



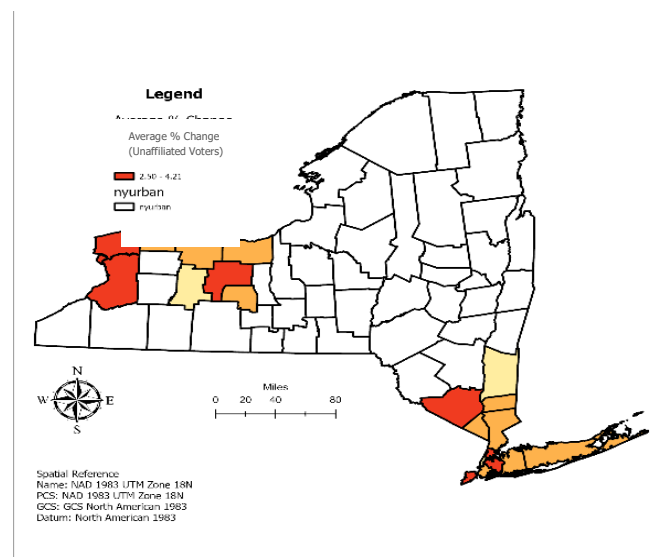
**Figure 7:** Map of New York counties displayed using Geometric Interval classification color scheme, where corresponding data represents average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (2012-2022).



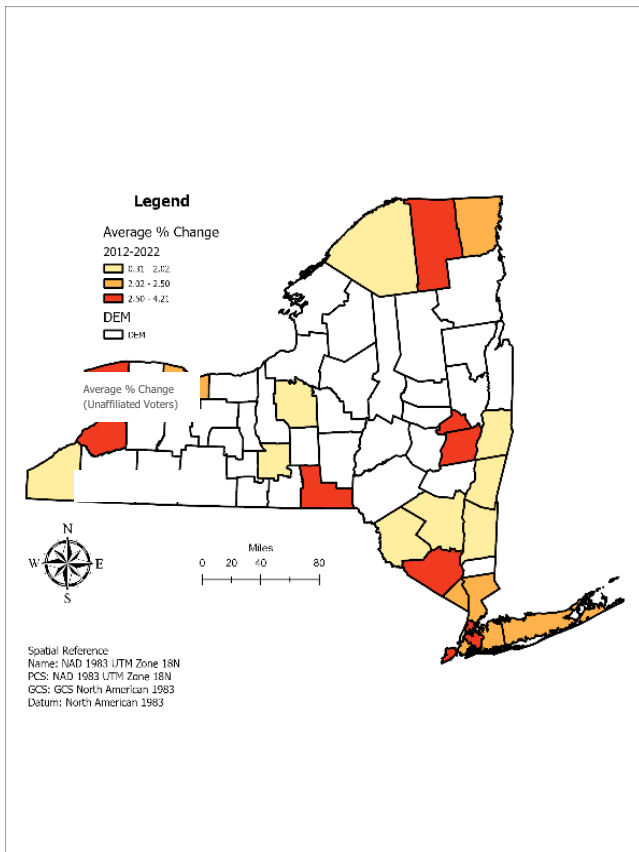
**Figure 8 (Above):** Map highlighting those counties classified as rural, along with their associated average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (2012-2022).



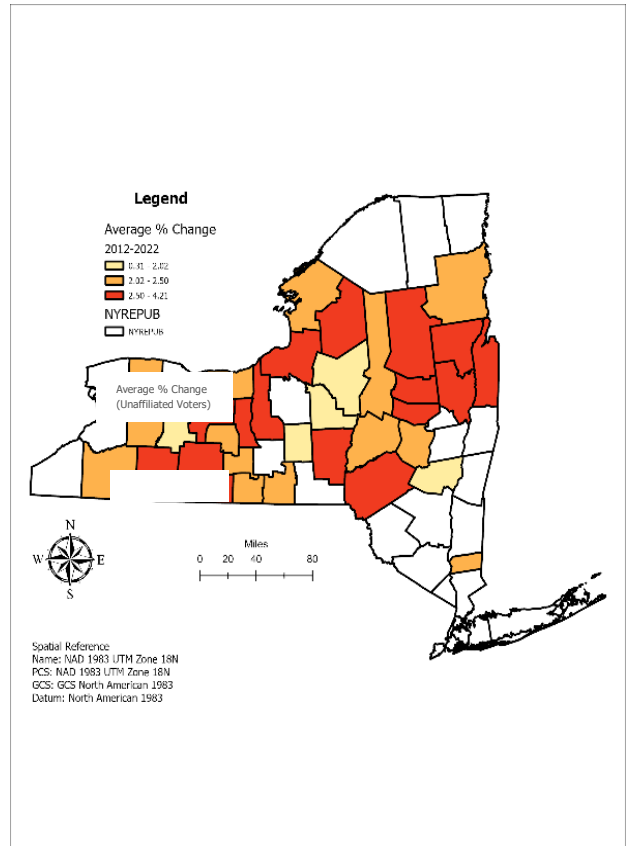
**Figure 9 (Above):** Map highlighting those counties classified as suburban, along with their associated average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (2012-2022).



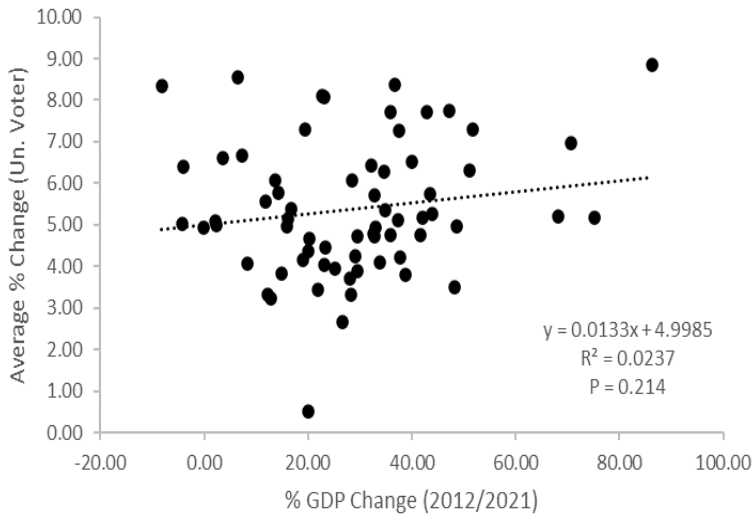
**Figure 10 (Above):** Map highlighting those counties classified as urban, along with their associated average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (2012-2022).



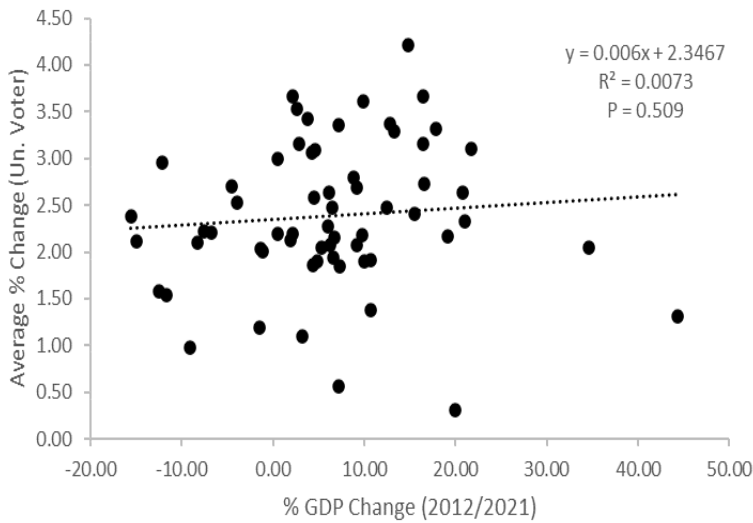
**Figure 11 (Above):** Map highlighting those Democrat majority counties, along with their associated average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (2012-2022).



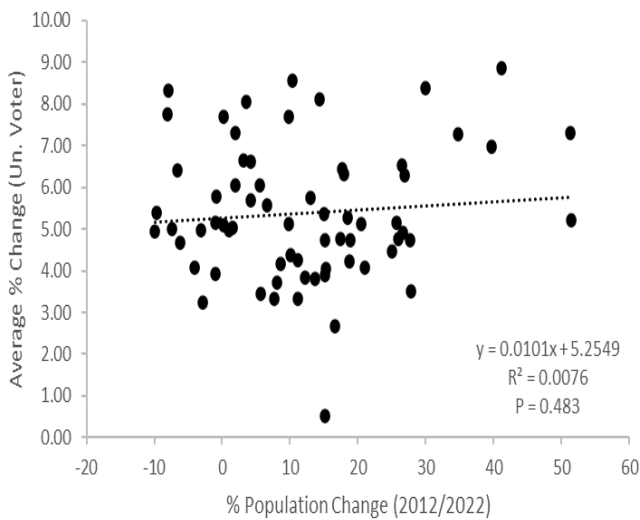
**Figure 12 (Above):** Map highlighting those Republican majority counties, along with their associated average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (2012-2022).



**Figure 13 (Left):** Scatterplot showing the relationship between the percentage change in a county's population and average percentage change in Florida unaffiliated voters.



**Figure 14 (Left):** Scatterplot showing the relationship between the change in a county's GDP (x-axis) and average percentage change in unaffiliated voters (y-axis) in New York.



**Figure 15 (Left):** Scatterplot showing the relationship between percentage changes in a county's population and average percentage change in unaffiliated voters in Florida.

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## Mauritius: a Question of Democratic Development

by Colin Kennelly, B.A. (Stetson University, FL) &  
2023 FPSA Best Undergraduate Paper Award

**ABSTRACT:** According to multiple indexes, including the E.I.U. Democracy index, Mauritius is among the strongest democracies in the world, making it a notable regional outlier when compared to the other governments of sub-Saharan Africa. The intent of this research is to discern the conditions and explanations for Mauritius' democratic formation durability. Using a mostly similar systems case study comparison with Seychelles, the research tested the validity of the National Identity Theory of democratic formation as well as other Mauritius-specific theories found in the literature on the subject. Ultimately, the research found soft rejections of the National Identity Theory, as well as of the British Constitutionalism and Coalition-Building Theories, while finding support for the Civil Society Theory. The research also proposes differences in geopolitical standing and early leadership as potential explanations for this outcome, leading to avenues for further research into those topics.

### Introduction

When searching for examples of stable democracies throughout the world, the African continent is not the first place that many would start looking. In fact, according to the *Economist* Intelligence Unit (E.I.U.) Democracy Index in 2020, Sub-Saharan Africa was the region with the smallest amount of stable democracies and has the second lowest average democratic index score of any region (E.I.U., p.8). In this region of relative political malaise, however, there stands one case that separates itself from the rest, with a stronger index showing than noted bastions of democracy like the United States, France and Japan. The nation that stands apart is Mauritius, a small island nation of little more than 1.2 million people off the coast of Madagascar and the only nation in the Sub-Saharan region that qualifies as a "Full Democracy" in the E.I.U.'s Democracy Index.

Interestingly (though not necessarily surprisingly) the state also scores extremely well on three other major indexes which gauge state success. The Center for Systemic Peace gave Mauritius a 0 on their fragility index, an index that rates how stable or fragile the legitimacy and effectiveness of a states government are (Center for Systemic Peace, p.50). That score is the lowest possible, indicating that Mauritius has one of the most stable governments in the world. Transparency International rates Mauritius as one of the top 50 nations in the world as far as level of corruption is concerned (*Transparency International*) and Freedom House's Freedom in the World Report bestowed a score of 86/100 and a status of "Free" to the nation (Freedom House). Essentially, this is a method of showing in no uncertain terms that Mauritius bucks the trend of corruption, authoritarianism and civil strife that is commonplace in almost every other nation in their region. From this information, however, comes two very interesting questions: why did this nation specifically make this democratic breakthrough, and how have they sustained the positive political culture for nearly their entire independent existence?

### Literature Review

There are a number of theories on democratic formation and the conditions that allow for it, many of which may or may not correlate with and explain the series of events that led to Mauritian democracy. However, there is one specific theory that has a level of intrigue due to its seeming contradiction with an



integral characteristic of Mauritius. The theory in question is the idea that a strong sense of national identity or nationalism is integral to the development of democracy in a nation. In researching this topic, the first time this concept presented itself was in Lisa Mueller's article "Religious Violence and Democracy in Niger." In this article, Mueller discusses whether or not the uptick in religious violence in Niger after their President condemned the *Charlie Hedbo* terrorist attacks. Much of the article does not relate to this specific topic, but the claim that the foreign nature of the threat will strengthen the populace's nationalism and identification as Nigerien over any other group they may be a part of, and this will in turn lead to stronger support for the democratic institutions in place already (Mueller, p.96) is an interesting thought to bring to the discussion of democratic formation in the context of Mauritius.

What makes this notable in the context of Mauritius is that our nation of focus is extremely diverse, in every facet of the word. Be it ethnicity, language, religion, or politics, Mauritius is extremely diverse to the point that no one faction holds a real majority. Mauritius breaks their population into Hindus (52%), general population (consisting of Euro- and Afro-Mauritians at 29%), Muslims (16%) and Sino-Mauritians (3%) (Metz, Society tab). There are Hindis, Catholics, Muslims, and other religions represented, and at least six languages majorly spoken across the island. In addition to this, the island that is today Mauritius was not inhabited until it was first colonized, meaning no one group has the built-in claim of being the 'true' Mauritians. All this is to say, questions arise about how Mauritius curated a national identity strong enough to promote such a strong democracy, or about whether they even curated much of a national identity at all. After all, a major point of discussion in Anne Soper's article "Developing Mauritianness: National Identity, Cultural Heritage Values and Tourism" is the idea that Mauritius actually has not developed a strong idea of what it means to be Mauritian, and that this could be further developed to aid them (Soper, p.98-99). In that article the context is specifically related to the domain of tourism, but her argument against the existence of a true "Mauritian" identity serves to show further how unique their democratic development when related to their national identity is.

Returning to the previous claims about nationalism promoting democratic formation and stability, Francis Fukuyama has an article fleshing these ideas out a bit more thoroughly than the relatively passing mention in Mueller's article. In his article titled "Why National Identity Matters," Fukuyama argues that national identity has intrinsic links to the fortunes of a nation. He cites Kenya and Nigeria as examples of nations where the populace feels a stronger connection to their individual ethnic and religious identities than their national ones, and points to their states of relative economic underdevelopment and civil strife as affirmations of the negative affect this lack of national cohesion can have on a state (Fukuyama, p.7). For contrast, he introduces China, Japan and South Korea, claiming that the fact that these countries did not have to settle internal questions of identity allowed them to advance at exponential rates both economically and politically once any civil conflicts they dealt with were settled (Fukuyama, p.7).

He then goes on to list and explain multiple benefits a country may experience as a result of strong national identity. First, he lists physical security, as a divided nation is a naturally weaker nation. Second is that national identity is important to good government, as this usually guarantees that public officials will put the good of the nation above their own personal gain. Third, unification under one identity will promote economic development. Next, he argues that further benefits include generating a wide radius of public trust, as well encouragement for the country to engage stronger social safety nets to guarantee protection for the wider population, which is only possible when most of the populace is invested in the welfare of their country (Fukuyama, p.10). Finally, he argues that the last role of national identity is to make liberal democracy itself possible. The rationale for this argument is that liberal democracy is "an implicit contract between citizens and their government, and among the citizens themselves, under which they give up certain rights so as to enable the government to protect other rights that are more basic and important (Fukuyama, p.11)." He claims that national identity goes hand-in-hand with this contract and fails to work if either aspect is missing.

To this point, all of the literature as simply fleshed out the arguments related to national identity and democratic formation, and their compatibility with the strange case of Mauritius. Though there is not much literature on theories specific to Mauritius, there is one article that offers a lot of insight into the development and reasons for stability in Mauritius, without giving one overarching answer to the questions posed in the introduction of the paper. "The Mauritius Enigma" by William Miles offers an extensive profile of Mauritius demographically and socially, as well as historically. He offers multiple possibilities as to why "the Mauritian miracle" came to pass, such as the legacy of British constitutionalism, or the insular nature of living on a crowded island with a relatively small amount of people. But just as quickly he provides examples where these things do not result in similar outcomes (Miles, p.93-94). After this he details multiple Mauritius-specific theories that may go some way to explaining the state of democratic stability in that state.

The first he articulates is the concept of sequential colonialism, which entails the idea that being a colonial subject under both French and British rule led to a complex "dualistic" structure that ingrained a balance in the history of the nation. Each of the resident ethnic groups, in a way, chose which administrative method to adhere most closely to. Next, he details the linguistic situation on the island, where French is the language of status, and many of the elites and highly educated speak it. Meanwhile, English is the administrative language, spoken in all government activities, though disputes in French or any other language spoken on the island are allowed on the parliament floor. Ultimately, neither of these languages are spoken casually, with most of the populace partial to Creole, but other languages are spoken as well (Miles, p.95-97). Ultimately, what Miles is arguing with these two points is that compromise has been built into Mauritius from the off, mainly because there were so many vastly differing coalitions and none was large or strong enough to impose their will upon the others, so naturally accommodating policies and social structures quickly followed so everyone could be heard.

The article continues by explaining the institutional structures in place in Mauritius that were borne of parliamentary coalition building. These methods, aided by sage political actions from the first prime minister and Labour Party founder Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, helped alleviate ethnic and religious tensions. He describes the political situation as a "small number of political elites, Hindu, Catholic, Asian and Creole" (Miles, p.98) who have worked both together and against each other but know each other very well all the same. In addition to this, Muslims, who make up a smaller proportion of the population, originally formed their own sectarian parties but as time passed began to participate more strictly as a part of the major parties (Mile, p. 98). In addition to these structures, Mauritius also has an extremely active civil society, with over 500 private nongovernmental organizations that provide a variety of services for the island registered before they even gained independence, and another 3,600 in the intervening years (Miles, p.99). Miles credits these organizations with promoting interethnic harmony on the island as they both provide services for and are run by people from every group on the island. In all, this was an extremely in-depth article that lends a lot of ground to build upon when generating theories about how at the very least Mauritius has been able to maintain their positive political structures, though maybe not as much on how they came to be.

### **Argument and Analysis**

The initial idea of this project was to test the validity of the national identity theory against the case of Mauritius, due to the unique ethnic make-up and lack of definition for what "Mauritianness" is leading one to believe that it would not be a place that is conducive for democratic formation. To test this theory, and to attempt to parse any other potential causes for democratization in Mauritius, a Most Similar Systems case study comparison between Mauritius and the island nation of Seychelles was set up. The idea is to analyze historical trends, formation of political systems, and ethnic and economic makeup between the two nations to attempt to find where the differences between the two nations lie.

Why select Seychelles for comparison? To understand this, we must break down the similarities between the two countries in question. Mauritius, as previously mentioned, is an extremely ethnically diverse island nation in the Indian Ocean, with a slight majority of the population being Hindu, but with sizable populations of Chinese, Muslims, Europeans and Africans. It was originally colonized by the French in 1715 before being captured by the British in 1810 through the Napoleonic Wars. It was primarily a cash crop colony for much of its colonial existence, producing sugar before eventually switching to textiles and tourism once independent (Metz, p.91-92). Seychelles, in a historical and systemic sense, was extremely similar in the lead-up to their independence. They too, are a very small nation located in the Indian Ocean, but with a population of roughly 100,000 people today rather than upwards of one million. They are also ethnically diverse, though not necessarily in the same way. Their population is mostly made up of people of African or European descent in equal proportion, with much of the population being of mixed descent. The French made a formal claim to Seychelles in 1756 before they became a British colony when acquired through the Treaty of Paris in 1814. Similarities exist in their economic development as well, with Seychelles originating as a producer of mostly cash crops like cinnamon and copra, but shifting their agriculture to consumable food and major industries to fishing and tourism (Metz, p.200-201).

All of these similarities in history and development make the divergence in political development all the more intriguing. Mauritius gained its independence in 1968, and from the beginning there was a well-established democratic system in place. Early on, there were instances of ethnic discord as proven by votes falling along ethnic lines, as well as major shifts in opposition coalitions. Much of the dissatisfaction was a result of the growing unemployment rates, leading to the formation of a popular new political party, the M.M.M. (Mouvement Militant Mauricien), which came to represent the urban and unemployed populations that felt they were not being properly catered to by the ruling Labour Party. The M.M.M. had an aggressive style of implementing their will on the political sphere, with a number of targeted strikes in 1971, and truly established themselves as a political power by winning a seat in parliament (Metz, p.106). They successfully made job creation an important issue for the voting populace, and by 1976 they had won 40% of assembly seats in parliament. Essentially, they made a lot of noise with relatively small amounts of political violence, and despite the fact that a state of emergency was declared early in their existence due to the upheaval they caused, over the course of years they began to win their way into legitimate governmental power. In addition to this, in 1982 the M.M.M. joined forces with a new Socialist Party made of members that broke away from the Labour Party. This new coalition was popular enough to sweep the election, leading to a Prime Minister other than Seewoosagur Ramgoolam for the first time in the nation's history (Poupko, p.338). The fact that this opposition party was able to legitimize themselves through the ballot box, and that Ramgoolam peacefully ceded power when defeated went a long way in validating the system in the eyes of the Mauritian population and as a result there has been essentially no political violence in Mauritius since then.

This story of democratic legitimacy in Mauritius coming so soon after independence starkly contrasts with the story of Seychellois governmental functionality. Pre-independence, as suffrage was being granted to the wider Seychellois populace, two major parties emerged: the Seychelles Democratic Party (S.D.P.) headed by James Mancham and the Seychelles People's United Party (SPUP) led by France Albert René. Though there were ideological differences between the two men and parties, the majority of their conflict seemed to come from a personal disdain between the two men (Poupko, p.329). In the very first election under universal suffrage, we see Mancham's S.D.P. hold a one seat advantage in the legislature, despite SPUP winning the popular vote. From here, we begin to see the first instances of political violence of a more intense nature than anything in Mauritius' history. Bombings attributed to the SPUP occurred in addition to targeted and consistent strikes (Poupko, p.329). The tension only ratcheted up through the early-1970s, as constitutional reform tweaked the voting process and led to the SDP winning 70% of the seats in legislature with only a slight majority in total votes. While the

dissatisfaction with the distribution of power was a major source of discord, disagreements over economic policy and the topic of independence added further fuel to the fire, and bombings continued with increasing frequency.

Ultimately, an agreement between the two parties was arranged, expanding the legislature in an attempt to appease the SPUP, but the SDP still held around 70% of the seats, leading to continued dissatisfaction for the minority party. However, the SDP did cave to public opinion on the topic of independence, so by 1976 Britain granted Seychelles its independence with the same governmental formation that had been agreed upon in 1975 by both parties. Mancham was elected President and René acted as Prime Minister (Poupko, p.330). The parties agreed to another round of elections in 1979, but this never came to pass. The very next year, in June of 1977, while Mancham was out of the country, 60 supporters of the SPUP who had been training in Tanzania staged a bloodless coup and overthrew the S.D.P.-led government (Metz, p.212). The SPUP rebranded to the Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF), established René as President, and adopted a new constitution that stipulated the SPPF be the only recognized party in the country (Metz, p.212). In the decade following these events, the SPPF implemented many policies that were actually quite popular amongst the Seychellois, with a set minimum wage, improvements to housing and education facilities, employment-generating policies and growth of the social security system. Though these things generally improved life for the average Seychellois citizen, political opposition was censored or exiled, media was heavily controlled and there were a few policies that were extremely unpopular to the middle and upper classes. External pressure from various sources (mainly France and Great Britain, both of whom were major sources of aid for Seychelles), whipped up by a then London-based Mancham, eventually led to René allowing for a constitutional rewrite that opened elections to opposing parties once again in 1991. However, democratic institutions in Seychelles have remained weak since then, with the opposition only winning a majority in the legislature just once since then, and with multiple accusations of corruption, fraudulent elections and violent government responses to public demonstrations in the intervening years (Poupko, p.331).

Now that the difference in democratic stability is well articulated, the question of what differences in their histories can be pointed to as the cause of this divergence is posed. The first major difference to be analyzed is the actual government structures in each nation and how these differences came to exist despite the extremely similar path through history that these states took. As mentioned in the literature with the theory of British Constitutionalism, the fact that the British did lay systemic groundwork for a constitution and the formation of a parliament pre-independence certainly played a role in the functionality of the government post-independence, as there was not much further work for Mauritius itself to do once they gained independence, though Seychelles also experienced this same British Constitutionalism. The first constitution under colonial rule for Mauritius, established in 1831, allowed for a governor and seven seats appointed by the governor (Metz, p.102).<sup>1</sup> However, the wealthy plantation-owning Franco-Mauritians, who wielded a disproportionate amount of economic influence at the time, felt underrepresented by this style of government due to the fact that the governor was always a British officer, and thus appointed officials that were either British or aligned with the British. Eventually they allowed for ten elected members from nine constituencies, but only about two percent of the population was allowed to vote at that time, with the stipulation being that you must be a landowner to vote.

Eventually, the Indo-Mauritian population, which continued to grow in proportion to those of European origin, grew more and more discontent with their standing in Mauritian society and began organizing politically. In 1926, we see the first instance of Indo-Mauritians elected to the legislature, but not enough changed for the better in that time and riots persisted for a number of years (Metz, p.103). This is also the period where Indo-Mauritians and Creole Mauritians began working together, forming a

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that at this time, up until 1888, the territory that is now Seychelles was under the same colonial administration as Mauritius (Metz, p.209).

number of joint organizations and eventually the Mauritian Labour Party (M.L.P.). This is the first major instance of coalition building seen in Mauritian history, which is brought up as a major factor in the literature for the success of Mauritian democracy. Eventually, due to the pressure building from these organizations, a new constitution was drawn up allowing for universal suffrage for those above the age of 21 with very few requirements, the most difficult of which was a literacy test in any of the island's languages (Sutton, p.242). The same new constitution that expanded suffrage also expanded the number of total seats in the legislature, and implemented the "Best Loser" seats, where candidates who were well supported but not quite well enough to win their elections can be appointed by the head of government. This is very notably a feature that never developed in Seychelles, the reasoning for which will be speculated on later.

The development of the Seychellois government and electoral processes came along much slower, with suffrage for the Seychellois population not being allowed in any form until 1948 and even then that was only open to roughly 2000 members of the population, all of which were male landowners. The candidates were all members of a group known as the Seychelles Taxpayers' and Producers' Association (STPA) which mainly protected the interests of the *grands blancs*, the upper strata of Seychellois society (Metz, p.209). This remained the main source of political influence in the nation until the aforementioned S.D.P. and SPUP both emerged to represent the urban middle and working classes and to attempt to disperse political influence to other sections of society. Universal suffrage was not granted until 1967, and a full ministerial form of government was not set up until 1970, granting 15 elected seats. A major difference in the systems of the two nations, outside of the lack of 'Best Loser' seats, was the fact that the seats were elected via plurality rather than majority, a fact which is credited with making the disproportionate representation the S.D.P. eventually won possible (Poupko, p.331).

Ultimately, it is apparent that the systems in the two nations did not experience the same level of care in their early development. The story of each of these nations' institutional development offers a soft rejection of the British Constitutionalism theory due to the fact that each of them had this characteristic but only one developed into a functional democracy, but the difficulty in writing it off entirely comes with the fact that the British put extra effort into guaranteeing a stable democracy in Mauritius for one reason: the difference in ethnic makeup between the two states. In Mauritius, early in the era of recently-granted universal suffrage, British officers were on record expressing fears of an 'Indian political machine' that could lead to a period of Indian domination across the Commonwealth's colonies and former colonies. Ironically, there was even fear of a Marxist uprising in Mauritius (Sutton, p.243). With this in mind, the extra systemic safeguards make sense, with the 'Best Loser' seats guaranteeing that no one party or group will be able to fully take over the government structures. The question of why this was not extended to Seychelles can be posed, as there was time post-independence in Mauritius to see the success of the system and implement it before Seychellois independence came to pass in 1976, but this could perhaps be explained by the fact that the solidity of Mauritian democracy was not fully confirmed until the late-1970s or early-1980s, as discussed earlier in this paper.

Outside of purely systemic differences, both in development and outcome, there is an argument to be made about the difference in the geopolitical role both of these nations played in their region and how that may affect their democratic stability as well. In many of the sources on Mauritius, there is little speak of foreign influence in their government processes, outside of British influence in the period immediately post-independence. There were passing mentions of French and American influence as well, at least in regards to aid and trade, but nothing related to influence on their domestic affairs or decisions. In contrast, the coup in Seychelles was aided by the government of Tanzania (Ellis, p.167), and once the Marxist adjacent government of France Albert René was established, naturally the Soviets began to involve themselves.

Mancham was a staunchly pro-West politician, so once he was out of power it seemed only natural that relations with the west would deteriorate. However, René recognized that much of the tourist money on which their nation came to so heavily rely was often Western-based, meaning he began to play a game of balancing the financial necessity of positive relations with the west and his personal alignment with the Soviets (Ellis, p.168). The Soviets maintained a large presence in the islands, with a significant number of officials present at the embassy in Seychelles at all times. They also sent financial aid and had warships making periodic “courtesy calls” to the islands (Ellis, p.168). The French and South Africans feared greater Soviet influence in the region and took keen interest in undermining the René government, with French officials in the islands even being exposed as a part of a coup plot in 1979 that led to their expulsion and subsequent replacement by Tanzanian and Algerian officials (Ellis, p.168). Essentially, Seychelles found itself at the center of a geopolitical powder keg, and René felt there was no option but to fully establish and secure his standing as the leader of the islands.

As mentioned earlier, this stands in stark contrast to Mauritius, who remained staunchly pro-West and never faltered. There is no mention of even a Soviet attempt to garner influence there, leading to the question of why that is. In the State Department Bulletin from the year 1968, the year of Mauritian independence, there is confirmation of an agreement to establish a U.S. Air Force facility in connection with the Apollo project, signed at Port Louis in September 1968. In the 1970 edition, there is confirmation of an agreement for “investment guarantees” that was entered into force on 11 May 1970. Ultimately these deals do not prove much other than the fact that Mauritius was willing to work with the United States. However, this may explain why the Soviets never even attempted to gain a foothold in Mauritius, as they may have viewed it as a solidly Western asset, while it was apparent to the entire world that Seychelles was willing to play ball with both sides of the Cold War.

The final major disparity between the two cases is in the leadership. In Seychelles, you have an extremely bitter personal rivalry between James Mancham and France Albert René, while in Mauritius you have Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and any number of political adversaries. The biggest difference in the leadership is that all of Ramgoolam’s adversaries were simply political, while the two Seychellois leaders essentially just wanted to get one over on the other. By numerous accounts, Ramgoolam was a very astute and sage politician (Sutton, p.240). He rarely let personal disputes get in the way of what he viewed as best for his country. However, the research here does not go in depth on the life and philosophy of Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, so we are reduced to surface level analysis for the difference in leadership.

## **Conclusion**

This research began with the goal of either validating or invalidating the national identity theory of democratic formation, so it is only natural to begin discussion of the findings by attempting to synthesize the entire previous section with that theory. Though the expectation was a solid rejection of the national identity theory, ultimately the support for a full rejection was not found. Though it is still a fact that Mauritius does not have an extremely defined sense of what it is to be “Mauritian” and there is still a severe lack of shared history, the entire political identity of the nation was built on communalism and the idea of putting the good of the nation first (Srebrnik, p.10). This was aided by the intense promotion of civil society both pre- and post-independence, something which notably did not occur in Seychelles until the 1990s. In a certain way, this could be viewed as a case that mildly supports the theory of national identity.

Further on the topic of civil society, this is also one of the theories promoted in the literature as a potential explanation for Mauritian development into a democracy, and as briefly mentioned immediately before, this theory is still well supported. There were two articles that detailed the development and extensiveness of Mauritian civil society, and little to none on civil society in Seychelles, but the small amount of information that was found backs the fact that its prominence in Mauritian society aided the

development of this communal attitude that defines their politics today, while the absence of civil society in Seychelles indicates that this could be one of our explanatory divergences.

The arguments of sequential colonialism and British constitutionalism as mentioned in the literature are not extremely well supported after completing the research process. While both of these concepts were no doubt integral to the formation of Mauritian institutions in the way that we have seen come to pass, the fact that both of these characteristics were present in the case of the Seychelles, as well as prevent either of them from being the key explanation for Mauritian democracy that we are searching for. This reasoning, to a lesser extent, also devalues the validity of the parliamentary coalition building theory, as some semblance of that process did exist in Seychelles as well. This theory cannot be as strongly rejected, however, due to the fact that a key factor in that theory is that in Mauritius, it was a *necessity* to build a coalition to impose your political will on the rest of the nation. In Seychelles, while each of the major parties was formed via coalitions to stand up to the STPA, once those parties were established as separate entities, the faulty design of the parliamentary structure allowed one party to garner a supermajority with no further coalition formation.

Ultimately, there were two theories posed as a result of this research that were not present at all in the literature, and one that was tangentially related to theories previously proposed. The theories that specifically great leadership and a near-complete removal from geopolitical issues of the time are not previously mentioned in any literature found in the preparation of this research, but appear to each have some merit. In tandem with the theory that the British specifically implemented institutional safeguards due to their fear of a Hindu takeover and the well supported civil society theory, we have some semblance of an explanation for the Mauritian question. However, the fact that none of these theories are necessarily competing and could all be synthesized into an argument stating that each of these was necessary for the formation of democracy here leaves us a bit wanting, because this means that there is no grand conclusion on democratic formation that can be extrapolated to other cases. Rather, this was a series of specific occurrences that happened in the right way, at the right time, and in the right place. This case is, to this point, a confirmation that democratic formation itself is somewhat of a miracle when compared to the way that governments have typically formed throughout human history.

With that being said, there are still a number of threads opened by this research that could be taken to a more solid conclusion for future research. The biggest one is the dive into Ramgoolam himself could be more extensive, and depending on the findings could explain whether he was one of the great men of history that willed his nation to political stability or whether the institutions in place were strong enough that he simply had to work within the constraints of that system. This would provide a better idea of what can be lent greater credit in the path to solidifying Mauritius as a democracy: a well-intentioned and astute man, or systemic strength. Another thread to be followed is further research into the United States' relationship with Mauritius, the extent of it, and why it did not result in dictatorship when very often U.S. involvement with foreign governments has that result, as well as why the Soviets never tried if the American relationship with Mauritius was not extensive. Ultimately, if these research paths are taken to their natural conclusion, a fuller answer to the question of democratic development in Mauritius may become evident.

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## **FPSA: 1972-2023**



### **Florida Political Science Association Annual Conference**

**April 22, 2023**

**Stetson University**

**DeLand, FL**

***\*\*\*All participants must register for the conference\*\*\****

**Pre-registration before the conference day** is \$75 for faculty and \$35 for students. All paper presenters, panel chairs, and discussants are asked to preregister. **Registration at the meeting** is \$85 for faculty and \$40 for students. Registration includes lunch, refreshments, and a subscription to *The Florida Political Chronicle*. For preregistration, please go to [fpsanet.com](http://fpsanet.com)



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**Program Schedule**

*\*All sessions will be in the Lynn Business Center\**

*Lunch will be hosted in the Stetson Room in the Carlton Union Building*

Registration	8:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Session 1*	8:30 AM to 10:00 AM
Break	10:00 AM to 10:15 AM
Session 2*	10:15 AM to 11:45 AM
Lunch/Meeting	11:45 AM to 1:45 PM
Session 3*	1:45 PM to 3:15 PM
Break	3:15 PM to 3:30 PM
Session 4*	3:30 PM to 5:00 PM

**FPSA 2022 Annual Meeting Travel Information**  
**Location: Lynn Business Center, Stetson University**  
**April 22, 2023**

**Lodging**

**Please use the links below to reserve rooms at either hotel**

Hotel	Location	General Information	Rate
<a href="#">Courtyard By Marriot</a>	308 N Woodland Blvd, DeLand, FL 32720 386-507-2930	Five-minute walk to the university	Queen or King: \$260.00
<a href="#">Hampton Inn</a>	20 Oak Summit Place, DeLand, FL 32820 214-622-9505	Two miles from the university	Queen/Queen: 200.00 1 King: \$210.00

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421 N Woodland Blvd, DeLand, FL 32723

**Interactive Campus Map:** <https://visit.stetson.edu/campus-maps-and-tours/deland-campus>

**Parking will be in Lynn Business Center** parking. There is also plenty of parking in the parking lots behind Flagler Hall and Allen Hall. Both of those parking lots and about 100 meters to the west of the Woodland Blvd and Minnesota Ave intersection.

### **From Orlando/Tampa (Interstate 4, eastbound)**

- Take the first DeLand exit (Exit 114) and turn left on State Road 472.
- Travel approximately three miles and follow the fork to the right onto Highway 17/92, which later becomes Woodland Boulevard.
- Travel through downtown DeLand (five miles) and you'll see the university's main gates at East Minnesota Avenue.

### **From Jacksonville (Interstate 95, southbound)**

- Take the International Speedway Boulevard (U.S. 92) exit (Exit 261B) and head west approximately 20 miles into DeLand.
- Turn left at Highway 17/92 (Woodland Boulevard).
- Travel south through two traffic lights before entering the Stetson University campus area at the main gates at East Minnesota Avenue.

### **From Miami (Interstate 95, northbound)**

- Take Exit 249 and head west on U.S. Highway 44 approximately 20 miles into DeLand.
- U.S. Highway 44 will become New York Avenue as you approach DeLand.
- Turn right onto Amelia Avenue and the Stetson University campus area will begin after the traffic light.
- Turn left onto East Michigan Avenue and right at Woodland Boulevard. The university's main gates will be at East Minnesota Avenue.

### **From Ocala (I-75)**

- Take Exit 358 and head east on State Road 326.
- Travel approximately 15 miles and turn left on State Road 40.
- Travel approximately 45 miles and turn right on U.S. Highway 17.
- Travel about 15 miles into DeLand. U.S. Highway 17 will become Woodland Boulevard as you enter DeLand.
- You'll arrive at the Stetson University campus when you see the main gate at East Minnesota Avenue.

## Cocktail Reception

The FPSA will host a cocktail reception following the conclusion of the conference. The reception will be held in the faculty/staff lounge at the Carlton Union Building

### SESSION 1: 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM

#### **Roundtable: Teaching Political Science, Room 45**

**Moderator:** Kelly McHugh, Florida Southern College, [kmchugh@flsouthern.edu](mailto:kmchugh@flsouthern.edu)

**Panelists:**

Aubrey Jewett, University of Central Florida, [aubrey.jewett@ucf.edu](mailto:aubrey.jewett@ucf.edu)

Judy Murray, Newcastle University, [judy.murray@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:judy.murray@newcastle.ac.uk)

Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan, University of South Florida, [jsm2@usf.edu](mailto:jsm2@usf.edu)

Austin Trantham, Saint Leo University, [austin.trantham@saintleo.edu](mailto:austin.trantham@saintleo.edu)

Houman Sadri, IPAC & University of Central Florida, [houman.sadri@ucf.edu](mailto:houman.sadri@ucf.edu)

Leah Blumenfeld, Barry University, [l Blumenfeld@barry.edu](mailto:l Blumenfeld@barry.edu)

Kathryn DePalo-Gould, Florida International University, [depalok@fiu.edu](mailto:depalok@fiu.edu)

#### **International Relations: Graduate Student Panel, Room 44**

**Chair & Discussant:** Liv Coleman, University of Tampa, [lcoleman@ut.edu](mailto:lcoleman@ut.edu)

*Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict: How Times of Peace Can be Predictive of Times of Conflict*

Sydney Snowden, University of Central Florida, [sasnowden@knights.ucf.edu](mailto:sasnowden@knights.ucf.edu)

*Investigating China's Increasing Influence in Latin America: Differential impacts of diplomatic ties on Chinese MNCs in Dominican Republic*

Yuanhao Tian (Victor), Florida International University, [ytian020@fiu.edu](mailto:ytian020@fiu.edu)

Sarwar J. Minar, Florida International University, [mmina010@fiu.edu](mailto:mmina010@fiu.edu)

*Political Behavior and Troop Contribution to Peacekeeping Operations*

Margaret Eduonoo, University of Florida, [m.eduonoo@ufl.edu](mailto:m.eduonoo@ufl.edu)

**Comparative Politics: *Comparative Politics & Diverse Societies (Student Panel)*,  
Room 322**

**Chair & Discussant:** Benjamin Smith, University of Florida, [bbsmith@ufl.edu](mailto:bbsmith@ufl.edu)

*Institutions, Inequality, and Ethnic Party Rhetoric: A Cross-National Examination of Within-Group Inequality and Institutional Design*

Sarah Snowmann, University of Florida, [shollmann@ufl.edu](mailto:shollmann@ufl.edu)

*The Limits of Transparency Politics: The Case of Brazil*

Francisco Jimenez, Florida International University, [fjime036@fiu.edu](mailto:fjime036@fiu.edu)

*From Confrontation to Collaboration: State-Business Coalition and Authoritarianism*

Anqi Yang, University of Florida, [anqiyang@ufl.edu](mailto:anqiyang@ufl.edu)

**Comparative Politics: *Comparative Views on Development & Its Implications (Student Panel)*, Room 319**

**Chair & Discussant:** Daniel Pedreira, University of Miami, [dpedreira01@gmail.com](mailto:dpedreira01@gmail.com)

*Populism On the Rise*

Jared DeRosa, Nova Southeastern University, [jd2959@mynsu.nova.edu](mailto:jd2959@mynsu.nova.edu)

*Chinese Investments in Africa: Blessing or Curse?*

Håkon J. Syrrist, Keiser University, [haakon.js@gmail.com](mailto:haakon.js@gmail.com)

*Empowering Women: Why it Matters to the Environment*

Kelsey Barton, Keiser University, [kelsey.barton97@hotmail.com](mailto:kelsey.barton97@hotmail.com)

**SESSION 2: 10:15 AM to 11:45 AM**

**Political Theory: *Modern Theory*, Room 44**

**Chair:** Brian Kupfer, Tallahassee Community College, [Brian.kupfer@tcc.fl.edu](mailto:Brian.kupfer@tcc.fl.edu)

**Discussant:** Edward Duggan, Tallahassee Community College, [duggane@tcc.fl.edu](mailto:duggane@tcc.fl.edu)

*Personality in Politics and Behavior: Threat or Asset?*

Edward Duggan, Tallahassee Community College, [duggane@tcc.fl.edu](mailto:duggane@tcc.fl.edu)

Robert Ortiz, Keiser University, [robertor@keiseruniversity.edu](mailto:robertor@keiseruniversity.edu)

*Critical Realism and the Question of Structure-Agency in Political Science*

Mohammad Sayyadi, Florida International University, [msayyadi@fiu.edu](mailto:msayyadi@fiu.edu)

*What Do We Mean by Prudence?*

Harry D. Gould, Florida International University, [gouldh@fiu.edu](mailto:gouldh@fiu.edu)

*Mary Wollstonecraft's Political Thought: Reason, Revolution, and Rights*

Carol M. Glen, Valdosta State University, [cmglen@valdosta.edu](mailto:cmglen@valdosta.edu)

**Roundtable/Workshop: *The Civic Leadership Project: Teaching and Learning about Local Government Using the Citizens Campaign's "10 Steps of No Blame Problem Solving" Method*, Room 45**

**Moderators:** Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan, University of South Florida St. Petersburg, [jsm2@usf.edu](mailto:jsm2@usf.edu) & Joanna Kenty, The Citizens Campaign, Curriculum Designer

During this Roundtable Discussion/Panel Dr. Kenty will share more information about the Citizens Campaign and the development of the "10 Steps of No Blame Problem Solving" method. Dr. McLauchlan will discuss how this method and project-based approach was adapted and implemented in her *Florida Politics and Government* courses (undergraduate and graduate sections). Student panelists will present their research posters, sharing what they learned about local government by researching and presenting solutions to the issues that they care about before local elected officials.



**International Relations: Undergraduate Panel, Room 322**

**Co-Chairs & Discussants:** Yuanhao Tian (Victor), Florida International University, [ytian020@fiu.edu](mailto:ytian020@fiu.edu)  
& Sarwar J. Minar, Florida International University, [mmina010@fiu.edu](mailto:mmina010@fiu.edu)

*Nationalism and Propensity to Torture*

Camellia Baki, Nova Southeastern University, [cb3097@mynsu.nova.edu](mailto:cb3097@mynsu.nova.edu)

*Superman Isn't Real: The Expectations Levied Upon the United Nations*

Lawton Bauer, Florida Southern College, [lawtonbauer@gmail.com](mailto:lawtonbauer@gmail.com)

*The United States and Cuba: A Renewed Approach*

Evan Hydock, Florida Southern College, [ehydock@mocs.flsouthern.edu](mailto:ehydock@mocs.flsouthern.edu)

*Feminism in Iraq from a Historical, Political, and Socio-economic Lens*

Caroline Moody, University of Miami, [cgm118@miami.edu](mailto:cgm118@miami.edu)

**Comparative Politics: Comparative Perspectives on Democracies & Democratic Movements (Student Panel), Room 319**

**Chair & Discussant:** Daniel Pedreira, University of Miami, [dpedreira01@gmail.com](mailto:dpedreira01@gmail.com)

*Academica and its Effect on Democracy*

Lance Dela Cruz, Miami University, [lcd79@miami.edu](mailto:lcd79@miami.edu)

*Women in Democratic Legislators: A Case Study on Nicaragua*

JoMari Chao, Nova Southeastern University, [jc4227@mynsu.nova.edu](mailto:jc4227@mynsu.nova.edu)

*Mauritius: A Question of Democratic Development, the EIU Democracy Index*

Colin Kennelly, Stetson University, [ckennelly@stetson.edu](mailto:ckennelly@stetson.edu)

## **Lunch Break and Business Meeting**

11:45 AM to 1:45 PM

Location: Stetson Room in the Carlton Union Building

### **FPSA Business Meeting**

Leah Blumenfeld, President

Barry University, [blumenfeld@barry.edu](mailto:blumenfeld@barry.edu)

### **Roundtable on Florida Politics: 2022 Results, 2024 Expectations**

Chair/Moderator: Aubrey Jewett [aubrey.jewett@ucf.edu](mailto:aubrey.jewett@ucf.edu)

Participants:

Susan MacManus, University of South Florida (Distinguished University Professor Emerita), [samacmanus@aol.com](mailto:samacmanus@aol.com)

Kathryn DePalo-Gould, Florida International University, [depalok@fiu.edu](mailto:depalok@fiu.edu)

Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan, University of South Florida, [dr\\_ism@fulbrightmail.org](mailto:dr_ism@fulbrightmail.org)

Sean Foreman, Barry University, [sforeman@barry.edu](mailto:sforeman@barry.edu)

**SESSION 3: 1:45 PM to 3:15 PM**

**American National Politics: *Media, Politics, and Popular Culture*, Room 44**

**Chair & Discussant:** Austin Trantham, Saint Leo University, [austin.trantham@saintleo.edu](mailto:austin.trantham@saintleo.edu)

*An Analysis of LGBTQ Representation and Public Perception*

Savannah Delano, Nova Southeastern University, [sd1927@mynsu.nova.edu](mailto:sd1927@mynsu.nova.edu)

*The Birth of a Nation and the Rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan in 1915: Cinema's Direct Influence on Violent Collective Action and Southern Conservatism*

Andrew McCleskey, University of Miami, [acm377@miami.edu](mailto:acm377@miami.edu)

*The Ubiquitous Nature of Conspiracy Theories in American Politics*

Caroline Moody, University of Miami, [cgm118@miami.edu](mailto:cgm118@miami.edu)

*The New Satanic Panic*

Joseph Uscinski, University of Miami, [uscinski@miami.edu](mailto:uscinski@miami.edu)

*A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: A Study on the Power of Visual Imagery*

Isabela Valdes, Wheaton College, [isa.valdes@my.wheaton.edu](mailto:isa.valdes@my.wheaton.edu)

**Public Policy/Public Administration: *Undergraduate Panel*, Room 45**

**Chair & Discussant:** Douglas Rivero, St Petersburg College, [rivero.douglas@spcollege.edu](mailto:rivero.douglas@spcollege.edu)

*Across the Board: Analyzing the Impact of Labor Relations in Thoroughbred Racing and the Jockeying Profession*

Steven Stabile, Nova Southeastern, [ss4732@mynsu.nova.edu](mailto:ss4732@mynsu.nova.edu)

*The Problem of Period Poverty and its Negative Effects*

Brianna A. Phillips, [briannap722@gmail.com](mailto:briannap722@gmail.com), Shannyn Barnett, [shannynbarnett17@gmail.com](mailto:shannynbarnett17@gmail.com), Alisia Francisco, [afan33104@gmail.com](mailto:afan33104@gmail.com), Maddie Bowman, [queenmadz@icloud.com](mailto:queenmadz@icloud.com), all Florida Southern College

*The Effects of Microplastic Pollution on Humans and the Environment*

Christopher Metzler, [cmetzler@mocs.flsouthern.edu](mailto:cmetzler@mocs.flsouthern.edu), Brandi Oliver, Na'Haviya Paxton, [npaxton02@gmail.com](mailto:npaxton02@gmail.com), Lexy Webster, all Florida Southern College

*Beach Erosion and its Critical Effects on the Florida Coastline*

Shannyn Barnett, Florida Southern College, [shannynbarnett17@gmail.com](mailto:shannynbarnett17@gmail.com)

*Get Kids Moving: Physical Inactivity in Children*

Sophie Grace Posick, Florida Southern College, [sgposick@gmail.com](mailto:sgposick@gmail.com)

**International Relations: *Issues of Security and Accountability*, Room 322**

**Chair & Discussant:** Harry D. Gould, Florida International University, [gouldh@fiu.edu](mailto:gouldh@fiu.edu)

*The Blame Game: The Ongoing Political Debate Over Who Lost the War in Iraq*

Kelly McHugh, Florida Southern College, [kmchugh@flsouthern.edu](mailto:kmchugh@flsouthern.edu)

*Feeding the World, Starving Communities: An Examination of Political Legitimacy in Global Environmental Governance of the Phosphate Industry and Usage Cycle*

Liv Coleman, University of Tampa, [coleman@ut.edu](mailto:coleman@ut.edu),

Chavelle Zackery, University of Tampa, [chavelle.zackery@spartans.ut.edu](mailto:chavelle.zackery@spartans.ut.edu)

**Comparative Politics: Iranian Policies & Politics: Domestic & International Factors (Student Panel), Room 319**

**Chair & Discussant:** Houman Sadri, University of Central Florida, [Houman.Sadri@ucf.edu](mailto:Houman.Sadri@ucf.edu)

*Feminist Theory on the Development of the Modern State: An Assessment of Protest Movements in Iran*

Laura Bea, University of Miami, [laurabea@miami.edu](mailto:laurabea@miami.edu)

*Place making in Tehran: Enghelab street & Spatialities of Changing Perceptions*

Amir Khaghani, Florida International University, [akhag001@fiu.edu](mailto:akhag001@fiu.edu)

*The Political Economy of the Symbolic Order in Post-Revolutionary Iran*

Mohammad Sayyadi, Florida International University, [msayyadi@fiu.edu](mailto:msayyadi@fiu.edu)

**Public Policy/Public Administration: Faculty Panel, Room 222**

**Chair & Discussant:** Judy Murray, Newcastle University, [judy.murray@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:judy.murray@newcastle.ac.uk)

*Event Termination Response: Or the Challenges of Chasing People*

Richard Hough, East Tennessee State University, [houghr@etsu.edu](mailto:houghr@etsu.edu)

*Climate Change Initiatives in the Caribbean: The Politics of Building Green Economies*

Robert Robertson, College of the Cayman Islands.

**American National Politics: Public Opinion and Public Policy, Room 221**

**Chair & Discussant:** Marco Rimanelli, Saint Leo University, [marco.rimanelli@saintleo.edu](mailto:marco.rimanelli@saintleo.edu)

*Religion and Politics in an Ever-Changing Society*

Evi Aliaj, Nova Southeastern University, [ea920@mynsu.nova.edu](mailto:ea920@mynsu.nova.edu)

*How Covid-19 Halted Trump's Quest for Reelection and Neoliberal Ideas*

Kyle Bolton, University of Miami, [ksb1320@miami.edu](mailto:ksb1320@miami.edu)

*Citizen Departure: Investigating Party Dissolution Between Urban and Rural Populations*

Alexander Krest, University of South Florida-St. Petersburg, [akrest@usf.edu](mailto:akrest@usf.edu)

*An Impartial Supreme Court?: Evaluating the Role of Public Opinion and Supreme Court Ruling*

Alexis Lass, Nova Southeastern University, [al2513@mynsu.nova.edu](mailto:al2513@mynsu.nova.edu)

*The Limitations of the Waters of the United States*

Lance Smith, Florida Southern College, [clsbar1852@gmail.com](mailto:clsbar1852@gmail.com)

**SESSION 4: 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM**

**Comparative Politics: *Internal Politics, Political Instability and Conflict*, Room 44**

**Chair:** Jonathan Powell, University of Central Florida, [jonathan.powell@ucf.edu](mailto:jonathan.powell@ucf.edu)

**Discussants:** Jonathan Powell, University of Central Florida, [jonathan.powell@ucf.edu](mailto:jonathan.powell@ucf.edu),

Salah Ben Hammou, University of Central Florida, [sben0906@knights.ucf.edu](mailto:sben0906@knights.ucf.edu)

*Which Military Units Receive Training? A New Variable for FMT Data*

Bailey Sellers, University of Central Florida, [baileysellers8@Knights.ucf.edu](mailto:baileysellers8@Knights.ucf.edu)

*Civilian Praetorianism & The Path to Post-Coup Personalism*

Salah Ben Hammou, University of Central Florida, [sben0906@knights.ucf.edu](mailto:sben0906@knights.ucf.edu)

*Understanding Coup Contagion in West Africa*

Jonathan Powell, University of Central Florida, [jonathan.powell@ucf.edu](mailto:jonathan.powell@ucf.edu),

Uchenna Okwara, University of Central Florida, [okwara@Knights.ucf.edu](mailto:okwara@Knights.ucf.edu)

*A Challenge to "Africa's Challenge" to the Democratic Peace*

Jonathan Powell, University of Central Florida, [jonathan.powell@ucf.edu](mailto:jonathan.powell@ucf.edu),

Michael Yekple University of Central Florida, [mm.yekple@Knights.ucf.edu](mailto:mm.yekple@Knights.ucf.edu)

**State and Local Government: *Local Movements with National Implications*,  
Room 322**

**Chair:** Austin Trantham, Saint Leo University, [austin.trantham@saintleo.edu](mailto:austin.trantham@saintleo.edu)

**Discussant:** R. Bruce Anderson, Florida Southern College, [randerson2@flsouthern.edu](mailto:randerson2@flsouthern.edu)

*Examining Movers and Stayers Theory among Texas Hispanics*

M.V. (Trey) Hood III, University of Georgia, [th@uga.edu](mailto:th@uga.edu), and Seth C. McKee,  
Oklahoma State University, [mckee@okstate.edu](mailto:mckee@okstate.edu)

*The Florida Executive Branch: Wielding Power in a Plural Executive*

Aubrey Jewett, University of Central Florida, [aubrey.jewett@ucf.edu](mailto:aubrey.jewett@ucf.edu)

*Home Rule in Florida: Legislators Preempt Local Officials to Shape Policy Outcomes*

Sean D. Foreman, Barry University, [sforeman@barry.edu](mailto:sforeman@barry.edu)

## **Comparative Politics: *Comparative Politics Themes & Topics*, Room 319**

**Chair & Discussant:** Leah Blumenfeld, Barry University, [LBlumenfeld@barry.edu](mailto:LBlumenfeld@barry.edu)

*The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes – The Case of the United States.*

Leah Blumenfeld, Barry University, [LBlumenfeld@barry.edu](mailto:LBlumenfeld@barry.edu)

*Paradox of Plenty or Oil Blessing? Counterfactual Evidence from Africa*

Muharrem Bagriyanik, University of Florida, [mbagriyanik@ufl.edu](mailto:mbagriyanik@ufl.edu)

Benjamin Smith, University of Florida, [bbsmith@ufl.edu](mailto:bbsmith@ufl.edu)

Adam Bernstein, University of Florida, [a.bernstein@ufl.edu](mailto:a.bernstein@ufl.edu)

*Chinese Vases in Latin America: Former Presidents as Agents of Democracy*

Daniel Pedreira, University of Miami, [dpedreira01@gmail.com](mailto:dpedreira01@gmail.com)

*Azerbaijan & the Non-Aligned Movement: A Foreign Relations Strategy*

Houman Sadri, University of Central Florida, [Houman.Sadri@ucf.edu](mailto:Houman.Sadri@ucf.edu)

## **Roundtable on Regional Security, Room 222**

**Chair & Discussant:** Marco Rimanelli, Saint Leo University, [marco.rimanelli@saintleo.edu](mailto:marco.rimanelli@saintleo.edu)

*The Crimean Crisis: Putin's Annexion in Light of the Russo-Ukrainian War,*

Andrew Thompson, Florida Southern College, [athompson@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:athompson@tampabay.rr.com)

*NATO vs. Russia: from USSR's Threat of World War III to NATO Enlargements to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine, 1949-2022*

Marco Rimanelli, Saint Leo University, [marco.rimanelli@saintleo.edu](mailto:marco.rimanelli@saintleo.edu)

*Italy's Royal Carabinieri Captain Ettore Chiurazzi Career: World War I to the Allies Military Commission on Constantinople & Turkish Straits to Fascist Rome to World War II, 1900s-1945*

Marco Rimanelli, Saint Leo University, [marco.rimanelli@saintleo.edu](mailto:marco.rimanelli@saintleo.edu)



**Institutions and Organizations Participating in the 2023 FPSA Program**

Barry University

The Citizens Campaign

East Tennessee State University

Florida International University

Florida Southern College

Keiser University

Newcastle University

Nova Southeastern University

Saint Leo University

Stetson University

Tallahassee Community College

University of Central Florida

University of Florida

University of Miami

University of South Florida

University of Tampa

Valdosta State University

Wheaton College

## **FPSA**



Florida Political Science Association

2024 Annual Conference date Saturday 9 March to be held at the  
University of Florida, Gainesville

Look for the Call for Papers in October 2023

Please check the FPSA website for the latest information: [fpsanet.com](https://fpsanet.com)



## FPSA Awards

- Manning J. Dauer Award
- Best Graduate Paper Award
- Best Undergraduate Paper Award

### Manning J. Dauer Award

Manning J. Dauer was a distinguished professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Florida for over half a century. When he passed away in 1986, he left a legacy that is unparalleled in the State of Florida. He had served as both a formal and an informal advisor to scores of governors, the state legislature, mayors, county commissioners, and city councilpersons. Indeed, it is said that he left his imprint on many public policies at both the state and local level. He is perhaps best known for leading a team of scholars and public officials that devised a reapportionment scheme for the State in the aftermath of the famous Baker v. Carr and Reynolds v. Sims cases. As an academic, he wrote numerous articles and books on state and local government and politics, and his work was frequently cited by other scholars. He also edited a well-received book on government and politics in Florida. Professor Dauer was a well-known figure within and outside of academia including both the political science and public administration communities, local and state government, and the media. But his heart and loyalty were perhaps tied closest to the organization that helped to co-found—the Florida Political Science Association (FPSA).

In the late 1990s, the FPSA decided that it was time to establish a lasting and fitting tribute to the person who had breathed life into our Association and devoted so much of his time and energy to the FPSA and the state he loved. To that end, the Association's officers, Executive Council, and membership in 2000 created the Manning J. Dauer Award that would be given every three years to a faculty member at a Florida institution.

Recipients of the Manning Dauer Award should have a sustained exemplary record of research, teaching, mentoring, and service related to Florida politics and policy and supportive involvement with the Florida Political Science Association. Like Manning Dauer himself, recipients of the award should be recognized experts on Sunshine State politics and have impact and recognition beyond the discipline of political science reaching out to their local community, the state, nation and/or internationally.

FPSA Manning J. Dauer Award Winners:

Aubrey Jewett (University of Central Florida) 2020  
Jonathan West (University of Miami), 2016  
J. Edwin Benton (University of South Florida), 2009  
Joan Carver (Jacksonville University), 2006  
Susan A. MacManus (University of South Florida), 2003  
Thomas R. Dye (Florida State University), 2000



## Best Graduate Paper Award

## Best Undergraduate Paper Award

The FPSA recognizes the best graduate paper presented at the annual conference. The recipient of the award is recognized at the following conference with a plaque and a \$250 check from the association. In addition, the paper is considered for inclusion in the next volume of the association's journal, *The Florida Political Chronicle*.

This year FPSA has added an award to recognize the best undergraduate paper presented at the annual conference. The recipient of the award is also recognized at the following conference with a plaque and a \$200 check from the association. In addition, the paper is considered for inclusion in the next volume of the association's journal, *The Florida Political Chronicle*.

Graduate students who present a paper at the annual conference are encouraged to **submit their paper for the Best Graduate Student Paper Award by 30 April 2023**. Please email your paper as an attachment (MS Word or PDF) to the Chair of the Best Graduate Student Paper Award Selection Committee: Sean Foreman, [sforeman@barry.edu](mailto:sforeman@barry.edu)

Undergraduate students who present a paper at the annual conference are encouraged to **submit their paper for the Best Undergraduate Student Paper Award by 30 April 2023**. Please email your paper as an attachment (MS Word or PDF) to the Chair of the Best Undergraduate Student Paper Award Selection Committee: Leah Blumenfeld, [l Blumenfeld@barry.edu](mailto:l Blumenfeld@barry.edu)

A Special Thanks to our Arrangements Chair

David Hill

and to Stetson University

## **Publications of the Florida Political Science Association**

### *Florida Political Chronicle*

<https://www.fpsanet.com/florida-political-chronicle.html>

The *Florida Political Chronicle* is an annual publication of the Florida Political Science Association and encourages submissions from all disciplinary subfields. Please contact **journal editor, Marco Rimanelli**, [marco.Rimanelli@saintleo.edu](mailto:marco.Rimanelli@saintleo.edu), for more information about submission guidelines.

### *The Political Scientist:*

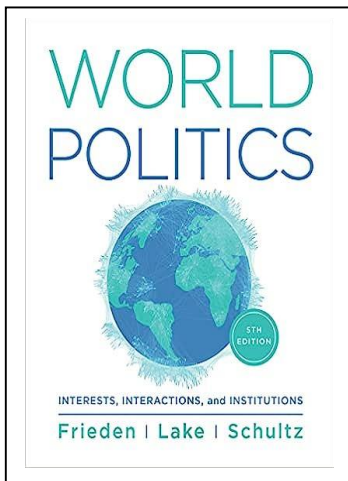
### *The Newsletter of the Florida Political Science Association*

<https://www.fpsanet.com/the-political-scientist.html>

*The Political Scientist* is a semi-annual publication of the Florida Political Science Association. Please contact **editor, Austin Trantham**, [austin.trantham@saintleo.edu](mailto:austin.trantham@saintleo.edu) for more information about submission guidelines.

website: [www.fpsanet.com](http://www.fpsanet.com)

## – BOOK REVIEW –



**Jeffrey Frieden, David Lake & Kenneth Schultz,  
*World Politics: Interests, Interactions & Institutions*,  
 5<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 2022), pages 667,  
 ISBN 9780393872231, review by Associate-Professor  
 Houman Sadri, Ph.D., University Central Florida & Deputy-Director IPAC**

This interesting book co-authored by Jeffrey Frieden, David Lake & Kenneth Schultz, *World Politics: Interests, Interactions and Institutions* (New York, Norton, 2022) is a must read for all analysts and scholars in International Relations and Political Sciences.

The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of *World Politics* is by far the best version of this fine textbook introduction to International Relations (I.R.), especially when considering other comparable I.R. texts on the market today. The authors have organized their text around 2 principles. First, they focus on major I.R. topics such as War and Peace that demand the attention of both scholars and students. Secondly, the book takes the dry research work of I.R. scholars and translates it into teaching materials that are both engaging and easily understood by I.R. students.

To help students comprehend sophisticated and complex I.R. issues, *World Politics*, provides a “toolbox” of analytic concepts common to many IR theories that can be applied to a diverse number of IR themes and issues. The ‘toolbox’ created in this text applies its analytic concepts around an organizational structure of interests, interactions and institutions. Based on these concepts, the authors present a variety of questions, including:

1. What are the interests of the main actors?
2. What is the nature of those actors’ interactions?
3. How do international institutions impact such interactions?

The textbook demonstrates how interests, interactions and institutions play different roles depending on the particular I.R. issue and challenge being addressed. Although *World Politics* is not exclusively an I.R. Theory book, it refers to traditional I.R. Theories of Realism and Liberalism, plus Constructivism to illustrate to students how various I.R. Theories make different assumptions and applications regarding the interests and interactions of actors as well as international institutions.

This book is divided into 5 major parts: Foundations, War & Peace, International Political Economy, Transnational Politics, and Looking Ahead. These 5 parts are in turn subdivided into 14 chapters, which cover a variety of topics from modern diplomatic history of I.R. to the role of both state and non-state actors in war and peace issues, as well as in international trade, development, financial and monetary issues. There are also chapters concerning international law, human rights and environmental topics. What is especially valuable is that this text introduces three separate, but interconnected levels of analysis: International, Domestic and Transnational, all of which demonstrate and explore how simple, national and international interests function in a dynamic international setting.

Finally, the book contains a concluding chapter that focuses to future global trends. Lastly, the book has a useful glossary, credits and index sections. This textbook also includes very helpful and effective supplements for both students and instructors.

In sum, the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of *World Politics* is an exceptional introductory I.R. textbook that assists students in understanding and mastering the main basic concepts, theories and methodology commonly used in the I.R. field. The writing style is both very readable and engaging. Pictures, graphics, tables and focus boxes break-up the text and focus students both on contemporary issues and the challenges of a constantly changing international community. *World Politics* is a wonderful book that clearly highlights why the I.R. field remains always a significant one and how modern international politics can be easily understood using mainstream theories and methods.

*Houman Sadri, Ph.D.*

Deputy-Director of Information & Policy Analysis Center (IPAC) of University of Central Florida,  
Associate-Professor of Political Sciences at University of Central Florida, Orlando, U.S.A.,  
Ex-Officio President FPSA (2012-2013).

### AUTHOR:

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## Florida Political Science Association's Statement of Support for Academic Freedom

The Florida Political Science Association supports academic freedom.

As defined by the American Association of University Professors:

*Academic freedom is the freedom of a teacher or researcher in higher education to investigate and discuss the issues in his or her academic field, and to teach or publish findings without interference from political figures, boards of trustees, donors, or other entities. Academic freedom also protects the right of a faculty member to speak freely when participating in institutional governance, as well as to speak freely as a citizen.*

Academic freedom includes the right of faculty members acting as private citizens to serve as objective expert witnesses in cases where their scholarly expertise helps the legal system reach an informed decision.

As such, the Florida Political Science Association supports the right of University of Florida Political Scientists Daniel Smith, Michael McDonald and Sharon Wright Austin to serve as expert witnesses in a Florida voting-rights lawsuit.

*The Florida Political Science Association is a non-partisan scholarly organization of faculty, students and community members committed to promoting political science research, education and service throughout the State of Florida.*





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With a 130-year history rooted in Catholic Benedictine values, Saint Leo University is called to be more and do more to enrich the lives of others—mind, body, and spirit—making our world a better place, one person at a time.

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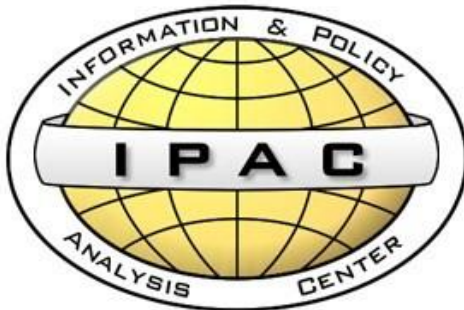
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Our Motto: *“Making positive differences in education and communication leading to opportunities for a more peaceful world.”*



Left to Right: IPAC President Dr. Sadri giving IPAC contribution cheque to President Dr. Leah Blumenfeld of Florida Political Sciences Association



Left to Right: IPAC President Dr. Sadri, IPAC PR Director Ms. Malisci meeting with Mr. Stewart, International Business Manager of Enterprise Florida

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The Information and Policy Analysis Center, Inc. (IPAC) has built a foundation of broad and deep knowledge to impact and make a difference in the most important and pertinent areas of opportunity in today’s world. Our interdisciplinary expertise in policy, communication, education, socio-economic development, defense, energy, homeland security and environmental protection combines theory with real-world experience.

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